



RIDE IN GOOD COMPANY

Duster P MTN

285mm x 140mm

C/F: 190g

Ti-Alloy: 240g

Cro-Mo: 255g



D2 EDGE FLEX
Dual injected, nylon-glass
base with rubberized
edges for optimal pedaling
efficiency

COVER MATERIALS
Soft microfiber top with
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durable Kevlar sides



NOSE PLATFORM
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for increase control
and power transfers
on inclines

PERI-CANAL
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tail with light-weight
EVA foam

FLAT-FORWARD DESIGN
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and enhanced pressure
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riding positions



#trail #shred #iran



#build #and #shred #nilgiri



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ایران



Trail shred in the Orient

Religious fanaticism, sable-rattling Mullahs and a seemingly sealed off society: Iran remains a largely cryptic country. The oriental magic of the past is nowhere to be found. A trip to Tehran and its backcountry has confronted Andrew Neethling and Holger Meyer with reality: Together with locals, the well-travelled pros explored the pearl of Persia's single trails — and experienced not just the country's top-notch trail network, but also the warmth of its inhabitants. Their perception of Iran was turned completely upside down.

 Martin Bissig

 Holger Meyer

My head pounds as the taxi driver merges into the traffic while honking like a madman. The two bike bags in the back push against me from behind. It's a miracle that they even made it into the yellow Saipa. We can't believe Tehran's rush-hour traffic with its 11 million inhabitants. Driving is a close call here. There are three lanes — but five seem to be in use. Having arrived at the hotel, we met Michel, our Swiss guide. He has planned our trip and created a very precise Swiss schedule for us. Andrew, Martin and I feel good about it. Michel's plan sounds great: A few days in Tehran, then off to the mountains around Iran's capital city, a detour into a skiing area, then up north to the Caspian Sea and finally into the desert. Sounds good! Relaxed, we finish the last sip of our tea with sugar while sitting cross-legged, as Michel reveals that he has to leave the next day. Hassan, our local guide, will be taking over for him. Alright! Different folks, different strokes — we're can't wait.

It's Friday. That's when it's Sunday in Iran. Everyone has the day off. And it seems as if everyone is into cycling here. Well, at least all of those who own a bicycle. And I feel as if all of these mountain bikers can't take their eyes off me and my tubeless tyres when they refuse to get back into their rims after our flight. I can't really come up with anything when someone approaches me and asks: "Hello, how do you like Iran?" I feel the





sweat dripping down my forehead as I pump air into the things like an idiot.

Then our guide Hassan shows up: around 1.70 metres tall, strong calves, sporty haircut. He's an Iranian MTB national coach. Tanned by the Iranian sun, he tells us — in rather poor English — that he's also a mechanic. He heads over to his Saipa — that's an Iranian car maker — and returns with a 12V compressor. My saviour! Meanwhile, we're surrounded by around 40 men and women. Yes, there are female cyclists too. The women here ride wearing long clothes, as the state requires them to cover their heads and wear long dresses, while we tackle the summer temperatures with bike shorts.

Unfortunately, Hassan's compressor can't help either. Free rider Taja has spotted the problem and offers me two CO2 cartridges. Immediately, the two unruly rubber wheels jump back into the rims. We're finally good to go. We make our way through Tehran's city park at the city's southern periphery. First on asphalt, then on gravel and then finally uphill on the single trail. Passing by the large military facilities, we slowly gain elevation, metre by metre. Hassan says: "Better no photos, please!" Otherwise, the military could arrest us on charges of espionage. We certainly wouldn't want that. Our group starts drifting apart. Everyone here is very interested in our opinion of

the country. Unfortunately, we can't say a whole lot quite yet, having just landed. Other than the ground being sandy and dust-dry, whilst the traction is rather good. During our first rest, we get to enjoy the view. All around us we see plenty of barren hills with several trails and paths. Desert landscapes as far as the eye can see; no green in sight. The route is a little irregular and unclear, now it's suddenly steep. We pant toward the summit and — having arrived on top — can't produce a single word, being so out of breath. The view is spectacular. From up here, you can see all of Tehran. Extending all the way to the horizon, the city looks like a giant carpet of a settlement that was placed across the valley, framed by the high mountains. And thus, we leave the city of 14 million behind us — luckily, no smog in sight today. "Very, very luck", says Hassan. Normally the sky looks rather brown than blue, our guide reveals in his broken English.

Up here, our group separates for good. Most of the riders take the easier route into the valley. Hassan recommends the trail route. A great suggestion. Just the right way to enjoy the many panoramas as the narrow trail, riddled with a few rock passages, gets steeper. The ground is hard and dusty, but offers excellent traction for the studs. The curves provide a great grip, whilst a few climbs here and there work wonders on the cardiovascular system. And thus, we continue on our





path for the next hour or so before making our way back into the traffic chaos of the metropolis.

Shah nostalgia and purple-coloured ski gondolas

Dizin is a ski resort that was built in the '70s. Back then, the Shah was still in charge of Iran. The gondolas from the era look accordingly safe. Like little colourful Easter eggs, they hang off the wire. At least they're painted in a contemporary purple, the chief himself even turns them on for us. Weightlessly, we glide over the 3,000-metre mark. Here in the Alborz mountain range, there are several summits that almost make it up to 4,000 metres. I immediately think of the incredible powder snow opportunities that must exist up here during winter: Wide descents as far as the eye can see. But are there any trails up here? Andrew and I connect to an old passage toward the valley. Trails? Nope. However, the word "road" does not mean in Iran what we mean when we say "road". Rough gravel takes turns with skid-proof clay soil and makes us scream out in excitement in the fast curves. At this height, it's starting to get really cold and when the sun disappears behind the mountain, we're in dire need of something warm. Either down feathers, hot soup or a tea. Ideally all of them together. "Ash" is the name of the national dish that is served at almost every corner, a large vegetarian pot of soup that cooks over

an open flame. Hassan orders it for us. It tastes good and warms us up too.

I wake up on an incredibly beautiful Persian carpet. My back may hurt, but the down feather sleeping bag was a good choice. At night, Iran's mountains get very cold. Our accommodation is a house without beds, merely equipped with carpets. That's normal here. Everyone simply sleeps on the floor — a different kind of dormitory experience! We fix ourselves a tea go on our way. At 1,000 metres of elevation, we have to start hiking instead of biking. We want to have breakfast up high under the sun. We carry and push our bikes through a mystical forest. Wafts of mist slowly give way to the incoming sun-rays, the trees are thin but are covered in thick, green moss. Many of the leaves have already assumed their golden autumn colours. The further we torment ourselves upwards, the brighter the forest becomes. Hassan cycles ahead, Andrew and I follow suit. With the increasing height, the vegetation also changes, we pedal among large beech trees and through green leaves. Suddenly, it gets as green as we would never have expected it from Iran. Although the trail serpentine through the trees, we get to have a whole lot of fun fighting for the pole position, until suddenly two huge dogs block our way.

We look up and see two shepherds having breakfast in the warm sun. The





dogs are theirs. A whistle from above and the dogs are tame. The mountain herdsman have pitched their quarters here, just like we were planning on doing. As if it's the most normal thing in the world, they invite us to join them for food and tea. Hassan translates: "Very friendly people." Indeed! There is flatbread, fresh cheese, homemade honey and some vegetables. "Very good!" Merci.

We set forth for the summit, the dogs remain on our side as our companions. We cover the last few metres by climbing up the mountain. Up here, there are no more trees, it's barren. There are a few huts at the foot of the summit. Having arrived on top, the wind whistles in our ears. A summit hut provides shelter — and a spectacular view of the 5,600-metre-high Mount Damavand. It's the tallest mountain in the Orient and glimmers snow white in the midday sun. We're excited about the descent. The first part requires a bit of skill, as it is riddled with blocked rock passages and several sharp bends, afterwards it begins to flow more and gets quite fast on the old sheep trails. There are countless opportunities to take over. Andrew doesn't try to hide his history as a downhill WorldCup rider and includes jumps wherever possible. His rear wheel turns this thing into a video game for me, as I constantly have to react to the rocks that suddenly appear in front of me. There's even more fun later in the forest, where

the leaves on the ground — having fallen victim to the autumn season — make track selection both difficult as well as slippery. Hassan had already announced it earlier: “Single track very beauty!” He didn’t oversell it. We enjoy the curves here in the forest, which we had to hike up earlier in the morning, for quite a while.

At night, we arrive at the Caspian Sea. On the beach, we meet Hassan’s biking friends. Being a national coach, he seems to know the whole country like the back of his hand — at least he knows where to find the best training spots. By the campfire, we discuss the schedule for the next day. Since the consumption of alcohol is strictly prohibited in Iran, we drink tea instead of beer again. The term “Caspian Sea” is actually deceptive; independently of that, we — of course — have to check whether the world’s largest inland lake actually contains any salt: It’s not even that cold and considering the fact that the showering situation is not quite clear yet, it feels rather good. We dry ourselves by the fire.

Our trail highlight is set to take place the next day. Andrew and I get excited like children when Hassan’s buddies Mohammed, Mehed, Tehali and Behzad tell us their story — but maybe that’s just due to the tea. 16 kilometres of single downhill trail is on schedule — that’s reason enough to get excited, alright.





Hassan sleeps outside, but in the middle of the night, he joins us on the flying carpet. It had started raining. The next morning, none of us can believe their eyes, because it's raining buckets outside. For now, the dream trail will remain but a dream. Our schedule is tight, and so we decide to continue riding toward the desert to see our luck there.

Hassan's downhill team riders Taheli and Behzad join us. Full of motivation, they want to show us their country from its best side. That, incidentally, is something all Iranians seem to be quite fond of, as they always have time for a quick chat: Where are you from? Do you want tea? Bavaria, Munich? Borussia Dortmund? Götze? Selfie? And always in that order.

On our way to the desert, we stop at a local downhill track. Wide, tree-free slopes make for a completely different mountain biking experience. Once again, we are as impressed by the trails as we are by the landscape. Hassan is extremely proud that we like it so much. To him, this strip of land is his personal "rampage track": "Like Utah — don't you think?"

In the desert city of Kashan, we encounter tourists for the first time. Prior to that, our visit seemed like a journey into another epoch. Nothing but locals and authenticity in a completely remote land. Kashan is very historic, the palaces and old buildings are beautifully

furnished, everything is kept in beige and brown colours. The inner city reminds me of the scenery in Star Wars. Andrew emerges from around the corner on his bike like Luke Skywalker from his space glider. Together, we explore the bazaar, haggle, and still can't come to terms with the money and all the zeros. Then we come across the old city walls of Kashan on which hundreds of years of erosion have resulted in a kind of pump track. Andrew tries out a few jumps, but then we move on before the wall collapses.

The next few trails are once again near Tehran, where we do a few final rounds together with our new Iranian friends. Soon, it's time to say goodbye. To a country that couldn't be more diverse and more contradictory. The people here are incredibly open and think in very Western terms, quite different from the picture we had of them and what one might expect based on media reports.

One thing is certain — Iran, we will be back.

ایران





X FUSION

MANIC

(AM/XC/ENDURO)

FEATURES

Internal cable routing only
New shifter style remote
Double key-way design prevents lateral twisting
Wide range of seatpost angle adjustment
Two bolt style head

SPECIFICATIONS


Travel: 125mm
Weight: 610g
OD: 30.9mm / 31.6mm
Color: Black
Length: 421mm
Insertion Depth: 285mm



RIDER: Mesum Verma **PHOTO:** Nishant Shah



Chain Adventures

A man in a white t-shirt and black shorts is bent over, using a pickaxe to dig in the soil on a rocky trail. The background is a grassy hillside. Another person's legs are visible in the upper right corner.

Mountain biking is more than just a rush, riding a bike through the woods is the way we interact with nature. The hum of the forest, the ticking of our hearts, the rhythm of our breathing, the sound of tyres against dirt. The more you ride a mountain bike, the greater your thirst for adventure. That thirst for adventure brings with it a need to explore, to experience nature, to form that primeval bond.

Rishab putting his back into shaping that beautiful loamy soil

A full-page photograph of a mountain biker in mid-air, jumping over a rocky ridge. The rider is wearing a helmet, a light-colored t-shirt, and dark shorts. The background features a range of mountains under a clear sky, with large trees in the foreground framing the scene.

Rishab Gowda, the
16 year old showing
everyone how its done!

So, off in search we went to a quaint little town in the foothills of the Nilgiri mountain range in the south of India. Chain Adventures partnered with LBB(Life Behind Bars) Cycles to realise their shared vision to make riding of this kind available to the average rider, they christened it the Build 'n' Shred weekend. The idea was to set off on Friday night after work and drive the night to able to find trails, build and ride Saturday and Sunday and to head back for the city on Sunday evening. A perfect weekend of spending time in nature and shredding.

We thoroughly underestimated how time-consuming building would be. Moving dirt under the afternoon sun was truly an experience, and gave us a new-found appreciation for people that build and maintain trails.

There's nothing quite like the feeling of riding trails, no matter how short, that you poured your sweat into, "there is a pleasure in the pathless wood" Oh, that beautiful red loam.

A full-page photograph of a man riding a mountain bike on a dirt trail. The man is wearing a black helmet, a grey t-shirt, orange shorts, and checkered socks. He is looking down at the trail ahead. The background features a dirt trail, trees, and mountains in the distance.

Karthik Gottumukkala
holding on for dear life

*Rishab Gowda sending
it sideways*



A man wearing a black helmet and a bright yellow t-shirt is leaning into a turn on a black mountain bike. He is wearing black gloves and is riding on a dirt trail. The background shows a dense forest with many trees and a utility pole. The text "Hemesh S.K. leaning into them sweet loamy berms" is written in a stylized blue font in the top right corner.

Hemesh S.K. leaning
into them sweet loamy
berms

If there was one thing this trip did for everyone who came, it was to set ablaze their sense of adventure, to go further to find their vision of their perfect trail. To explore the wealth of beauty the wilderness in our country has to offer, to find our paradise.

Shashank C.K. the dude
behind Chain Adventures
showing the rookies how
its done





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TITANIUM HEADSET CAP INCLUDING TITANIUM BOLT 8GRAMM



AES NEPAL 2018



#page47

Henrik Møller





In central Nepal in the town of Nargakot, over 100 competitors from more than 20 countries met to battle over 2 days on 8 fantastic stages. The AES 2018 Nepal.

Yours Truly was attending the venue as photographer but had the pleasure of riding one day ahead of everybody else. And i must say the organizers, Gravity Nepal and Freedom Adventures, had selected some fantastic trails. Speedy, gnarly, technical and above all FUN.

If you haven't been to Nepal your jaw will be dropping from the moment you set foot in Kathmandu. The buzz and vibe is just like nothing you have ever seen before. Make sure you have some days to explore this fantastic country besides just the amazing riding.

The competition was planned with 2 days






of practice and 2 days of racing, 4 stages a day. Accommodation was in the outskirts of Nargakot at Country Villa Resort. The hotel is placed on a steep hill and the views will take your breath away. With a clear sky you can see the Himalayas in the back and pretty much anywhere you are in this fantastic hotel you have spectacular scenery.

Every morning started with a magnificent breakfast buffet. The buzz around the whole hotel was a sight to view. Riders getting ready and sorting whatever issues they had. Outside the Country Villa the organizers had both a small workshop, and a wide selection of spare parts. Very very handy as no bikes get ridden without things happening. That's riding, that's life.

The evenings was spend telling tales from the



trails. New friendships were made as everyone was bonding and enjoying first the fantastic food and later a coffee or drink with the sun setting behind the mountains.

After the first 2 practice days riders were finally ready to race. I was very curious about how they did the timing, but on that issue they were on top of things too. Everyone had a chip mounted to the bike making the next day's timing easy and accurate.

As always there were many categories. Starting from the juniors up to the old-timers in Master C. The pride and joy of Nepal was also racing in the elite category. Rajesh Magar has just been featured on National Geographic channel as Adventurer of the year. A Yeti Team rider with a history as amazing as his riding. Coming from riding bikes modified with junkyard parts to now



riding a top of the range bike. And besides all that still being a down-to-earth guy with a smile and handshake for everyone around him.

Raceday one went well. And the evening was a mix of people just having a big laugh about the whole thing and others looking at GoPro footage from next day's stages, trying to find the best lines and those extra seconds they needed to climb up the order of merit.

Describing the atmosphere of a place is always difficult. But being put in a luxury hotel on a mountain in Nepal with over 100 people you don't know could sound a bit strange. But the interest of mountain biking brings every one together, creating this special bond. So even if you go to these events on your own, rest assured you will make a tons of new friends.

Raceday 2. The final day. The day where the last seconds could be won or lost. And seconds were lost and found as a glorious day of racing came to an end, with riders smiling and grinning. The „the heart“ of the whole operation, the trucks, brought all the riders back to base and the terrace of country villa quickly became the place to hang out with cold beers and big smiles.

The 4 days of riding the hills of Nargakot was coming to an end. But not before the grand finish ceremony. The podium was set up and medals were handed out. Girls, boys, women and men of all nationalities were celebrating. Everyone agreeing that this was truly one very well-organized venue. There are so many small details to keep your eyes on. So many small things that can go wrong. But they sure did pull it off. Gravity Nepal and Freedom Adventure





know what they are doing, from the planning of the stages to the design of the medals. It's all so very well planned.

Next day was farewell as we headed to Katmandu and a couple of days sightseeing. BUT if you choose to go next year i would highly recommend that you put in some extra days and head up to Pokhara. Or for that matter any other place you find suitable for whatever you want to see. Nepal has so many places to visit that one trip is for sure not enough. Sunrise of the Himalayas? Hiking to Mount Everest base camp? Heli-biking to the world's highest pass? Whatever you want to do, just get in touch with the organizers and let them assist you. My next trip is gonna include biking the Annapurna circuit. More about that next year. I hope.

FIFTY-FIFTY



Guidering 104 PCD

AL-7075 T651, Black Blue Red Green

Range: 30T 32T 34T 36T

Compatibility: 9/10/11 speed

Size/PCD: 104PCD

Weight: 36g(30T) 36g(32T) 48g(34T) 60g(36T)



Chainguide DHR Series

AL-6061 T6, Black Blue Red Purple Green Orange

Plastic Parts: High molecular nylon, black or white

Range: 32-36T or 38-40T

Mounting Standards: ISCG03/OLD or ISCG05

Weight: 150g (ISCG05 32-36T)

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#special #thanks

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