



# Jamis Durango 3

**E729** The lightest bike on test, and the advantages show on the trail

## WORKSHOP WISDOM



**MBUK'S MECHANIC SAYS...**

### Tyre quandries

Every tyre is a compromise. The Geax Barro Mountain 2.1s on the Jamis are a good compromise if you're looking for speed and grip at the expense of the extra comfort that bigger profile treads (or wheels) offer. Their light weight gives the Durango a noticeable acceleration boost, but is that enough to make up for the slightly harsher roll over bumps and increased chances of a pinch puncture? Only you can decide.

**J**amis are a long established brand who've been missing from the UK market for a while. Judging by the look, the price and the ride feel of the Durango 3, you might start to see a lot of their bikes on the trail soon.

It's better equipped than a lot of its big brand price group rivals, the 30-speed drivetrain is bound to be a big draw to many riders and the reasonable weight (it's nearly 2lb – 0.9kg – lighter than the Vitus on test, mainly because of its lighter wheels) makes for a livelier ride feel than most bikes we've tested at this price.

Jamis bikes are imported by Evans Cycles so you're effectively buying direct from the distributor.

### The chassis

The first thing most riders will notice about the Durango is its curvy tubes. The hydroformed down tube drop-curves away from the reinforced head tube, with a big gusset adding extra strength to its underside, then curves again into the bottom bracket juncture. Jamis call it an S-bend down tube – we don't know if it offers any real advantages but, like the 'sloping radius' curvy top tube, it

sets the Durango apart from the opposition and doesn't have obvious downsides.

The rear triangle continues the curvy theme, leaving masses of heel and tyre clearance. Jamis have included rack mounts on the seatstays as well as two sets of bottle cage bosses. The RockShox Tora fork is the 100mm (3.9in) travel version of the fork on the Vitus. It's better controlled than most forks on bikes at this price, with a controlled compression feel, preload adjuster dial on the left leg, decent rebound damping and a lockout that releases if you hit something hard while the lockout is switched on.

### The detail

This is the first bike we've tested with SRAM's X.7 10-speed rear transmission, with a triple ring up front. It performed flawlessly throughout the test period. So far, we've had none of the expected issues with skinnier chains or mud clogging closely spaced cassettes, although much of this test was carried out in conditions where ice and snow were bigger issues than mud.

Powerful, predictable braking duties were performed by Hayes

Stroker Ryde Comps – a light touch is required with these as there's not much modulation through the levers, but the 160mm rotors certainly offer enough stopping power.

Wheelset-wise, we've no moans either. They're the lightest wheels of our four test bikes, with Shimano hubs and Alex's tough DP17 rims shod with light, fast-rolling Geax Barro Mountain 2.1in tyres. The treads are very grippy but low profile so not great in terms of ride comfort. All the Jamis finishing kit is good quality stuff, well suited to the bike.

### The ride

We like the Evans website's description of the Durango's handling... "quick and sure without being overly darty". We don't normally take much notice of maker or distributor quotes, but in this case that's a pretty accurate description of the Durango's well rounded persona.

On the trail it manages to span the perfect middle ground between light and lively enough for the occasional competitive outing at the same time as stable and confident enough for carefree antics on challenging trails.