



Boost dropouts front and rear bring the Bronson bang up to date with the latest hub standards

Santa Cruz's third-generation VPP suspension design offers more mid-stroke support and better small-bump sensitivity

A small heat sink in the Guide Ultimate caliper keeps the brake running cooler to maintain consistent stopping power

The option for a direct-mount front derailleur disfigures the seat tube

SANTA CRUZ BRONSON CC (+REVERB/IND NINE HUBS)

£7,599

SPECIFICATION

Frame Carbon, 150mm travel
Shock RockShox Monarch Plus RC3
Fork RockShox Pike RCT3 Solo Air, 150mm travel
Wheels Industry Nine hubs, Enve M60 rims, Maxxis Minion DHF/RII 3C/60a 27.5x2.3in tyres
Drivetrain SRAM XX1 Eagle 32t chainset, r-mech and shifter
Brakes SRAM Guide Ultimate, 180mm
Components SBC 800mm bar, Race Face Turbine R 50mm stem, RockShox Reverb Stealth 150mm, WTB Volt Team saddle
Sizes S, M, L, XL
Weight 12.88kg (28.4lb)
Contact santacruz bikes.co.uk

GEOMETRY

Size tested L
 Head angle 65.9°
 Seat angle 69°
 BB height 336mm
 Chainstay 434mm
 Front centre 760mm
 Wheelbase 1,194mm
 Down tube 704mm
 Top tube 615mm
 Reach 445mm

The year before last was a real turning point for Santa Cruz — it was in 2014 that it introduced its third generation VPP suspension layout, where small revisions to the orientation and lengths of the links had a big impact on the ride quality of its bikes.

The first model to roll off the assembly line with the refined suspension design was the Nomad. And like any first born it demanded all of the attention. Less fuss was made about the second bike, however, and even though Santa Cruz has launched numerous models since, we think the 150mm travel Bronson is the pick of the range.

Like most bikes in the Santa Cruz line, the Bronson is available in two carbon options and an alloy version. All of the Bronsons have the same geometry, and it's only price and weight that separates them.

Thanks to the higher grade of carbon used in the construction of the Bronson CC, it's roughly 280g lighter than the less expensive C version, without compromising on stiffness or strength. The last round of revisions to the Bronson saw Santa Cruz increase the reach measurements on all four frame sizes by 15mm, add Boost 148 dropouts and steepen up the seat angle for improved climbing. So while it's not the latest bike in the Santa Cruz range, it's still bang up to date.

SUSPENSION

One of the key changes to the VPP suspension layout was to move the lower link above the BB shell. Not only did this protect it from rock strikes, it also allowed Santa Cruz to snip 5mm off the chainstay length. It was the changes to the upper link and resulting shock rate that had the biggest impact on the ride quality though.

Gone was that mushy feel to the rear suspension, replaced instead by a tighter, reactive response that pretty much defines the Bronson's punchy new attitude.

With a RockShox Monarch Plus RC3 rear shock and matching Pike RCT3 fork, getting a good ballpark set-up on the Bronson couldn't be easier. And while the Pike isn't as burly as the Lyrik on the Transition, or the Fox 36 on the Intense, the Industry Nine front hub takes full advantage of the bigger surface area of the Torque Cap dropouts to increase stiffness and steering precision.

COMPONENTS

Santa Cruz has totally nailed the build kit on the Bronson CC, so you'd be crazy to change anything straight away. The SBC carbon bar has a great profile, and combined with their own grip, the width is approaching 810mm. Too wide for your local trails? Well, you can always cut it down. The Race Face Turbine R stem is a 50mm Easton Haven in all but name, so you know it's first rate too.

We loved the flat profile of the WTB saddle, and with a 150mm Reverb fitted as standard, we had no issue getting it well out of harm's way on the descents.

Even Santa Cruz's choice of rubber is perfect for the UK, the harder compound Maxxis Minion DHR II rear tyre keeping the pace high, while the softer 3C DHF rubber up front still lets you stuff the Bronson CC into corners with supreme confidence.

PERFORMANCE

The Bronson is the shortest bike in this test. It's also the steepest. So you could be forgiven for taking a cursory glance at its vital stats and instantly writing it off

as dated. To do so would be a massive mistake, however, as it's quite possibly the best 150mm travel trail bike we've ever tested.

Maybe it's the Bronson's low bottom bracket height, or the perfect balance of weight distribution afforded by the slightly longer chainstays and shorter front centre, but whatever it is, the Bronson never seems to put a foot wrong.

Pump or pedal, and it is instantly up to speed. In that respect the Bronson is an ultra-reactive bike, but somehow it never feels like you're riding on a knife edge. As such, your confidence soars with every ride as you quickly come to realise that this bike isn't just easy on the eye.

VERDICT

If ever there was a trail bike that made everything feel effortless, it's the Santa Cruz Bronson CC. Whether it's powering up climbs, smashing corners, or darting between trees at breakneck speed, the Bronson CC is always encouraging you to press ahead and test your limits.

It's one of a rare breed of bikes that gives back with interest any effort you invest. Yes, it's expensive, but there's a sparkle to the ride of the Bronson CC that few bikes match.

Don't take our word for it though, get along to a demo day and experience it for yourself. Just don't be surprised if you ride away burdened with £8K of debt.

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HIGHS

Every ride leaves you buzzing

TEST WINNER!
mbr



LOWS

More expensive than a drug habit

Surely no one would ruin those stunning lines with a front mech?

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