

# KHS ALITE 2000 £550



**Stop right there**

Hayes Stroker Ryde hydraulics aren't the most progressive feeling of brakes, but there's no lack of power here and they outclass the cable disc brakes that many rival bikes sport.

**Big wide bar**

Some cross-country bikes with race aspirations come with handlebars narrow enough to appeal to a fixie fashionista. The Alite has a 680mm bar, which helps steady the handling for day-to-day singletrack.

**Chainstay protector**

Sure, you can make one from an old inner tube, but it's nice to be given one. Neoprene cuts out the distracting clatter of the chain on the chainstay, protects your frame and makes descents feel more 'stealth fighter' and less 'dropped cutlery draw'.



**AT A GLANCE**

▲ **HIGHS** The First fork alone chops the best part of 2lb off the bike weight.

▼ **LOWS** Kenda Small Block Eights are a mixed blessing: ace for racing, but sketchy in the mud.

► **BUY IF...** You want a bargain race bike or just plan to put the hurt on your riding buddies on pedally bits.

## Another bargain-priced singletrack rocket from online seller KHS

In the value-for-money fight, direct sellers such as KHS will always have the edge over dealer-sold bikes. With the Alite 3000 (reviewed in issue 104) we saw a cracking bike, not just a spangly spec sheet. This is the next model down.

**The facts**

The hydroformed and butted aluminium frame's main triangle is lean rather than brawnily overbuilt, with a big wedge gusset to support the down and head tube joint. The rear triangle, on the other hand, uses chunky and angular stays that threaten to trade comfort for power transfer.

We're guilty of mauling RST for its cheaper forks, but we like its M-29 air fork a lot and this First air fork looks like it's built to the same standard. Adjustable rebound and compression finesse the pump-to-what-you-want air spring, it's nice and light, and it doesn't noticeably suffer from stiction.

Quando hubs are only okay, yet they're laced to quality Mavic XM317 disc rims with eyelets, and the tyres are race-ready Small Block Eights. The groupset is gobsmackingly good, with a 27-speed mostly Deore set-up that includes an SLX rear mech and Truvativ GXP external crankset.

**The feel**

Frame reach is open enough to lean into the breeze and start pedalling seriously. While there's a full-width bar to stop the bike misbehaving, the Alite 2000 will be most at home with an angular-calved pace-pusher in the saddle.

That's because it's one of the lightest bikes in the test, a benefit that will be felt best by those carrying less dead weight of

**"One of the lightest bikes, with a gobsmackingly good groupset"**

their own. The excellent-at-the-price fork also suits fast singletrack better than black route bombing runs. Run fairly soft, it's sensitive enough to take the edge off trail chatter and smooth the way for the firm feeling back end. Over bigger stuff, there is some flex and fork-tip twist. Skinnier riders going fast enough to steer with their hips will feel this far less than slower movers putting their shoulders into every turn.

Even the wheels spin up to and hold their speed well. That's down to their fast Kenda

tyres. While they admittedly grip like a curler's slider shoe in UK rain, the Alite is a bike on which you'll want to put the hammer down so it makes sense to have tyres that reward this well when you do.

Apart from on slippery climbs, the Alite ascends very well. It's light and its cassette goes right down to a 34-tooth sprocket, giving you a choice of climbing gears.

**Summary**

The softly softly air fork keeps the Alite smoothly grounded on staccato surfaces that can make bikes with unresponsive forks skip (if they're light) or stumble (if they're heavy), which means you can carry on winding up the gears. Bigger riders and those who bang and thrash down the trail will get less from it than those who ride lightly – but it's a bargain for anyone.

WHAT MOUNTAIN BIKE ★★★★★

**"Great value-for-money cross-country lightweight that best suits whippetty wheels-on-the-ground riding."**