

KHS YUMA £1200

Transmission upgrade

The KHS is at the upper end of the price range we're looking at, but the extra pennies don't just get you big wheels. The Yuma sports a wide-range SRAM 3x10 transmission, not something that's guaranteed at this price even on a 26er.

Moving ahead

Conventional headsets are becoming less common these days, with semi-integrated and tapered styles gaining ground. There's not much wrong with the old style, though, particularly when it comes to sourcing replacements.



Can you feel it?

Not sure how you want your front end to feel? The RockShox Reba SL can probably accommodate your whims. Not only does it have independently-adjustable positive and negative air springs and highly-tunable Motion Control damping, it can be switched between 80 and 100mm of travel with just a few minutes of spanner waggling.

AT A GLANCE

TRAVEL 80/100mm

▲ **HIGHS** Fast rolling yet agile and decent spec for the money.

▼ **LOWS** A limited choice of sizes and it's up against some strong competition at the price.

► **BUY IF...** You want a straightforward but fast and agreeably lively bike.

KHS takes its big-wheeled offering upmarket for 2011

KHS offers two 29ers, the full-suspension Flagstaff and the hardtail Yuma. The Yuma has the same frame as last year's budget Tucson, which won sister mag *MBUK*'s 29er test a few months back. KHS has decided to go upmarket for 2011, though, pitching the Yuma against some serious competition.

The facts

KHS has kept the Yuma frame fairly traditional in style, with predominantly straight – but with a kind of tapered octagonal cross-section – tubes and a conventional straight head tube for a regular 1.125in headset. The top tube has a slight flare at the front end, while the down tube/head tube junction is beefed up by a neatly-executed open-ended gusset. All the cables run under the top tube.

There's a decent set of components bolted to the frame, with a RockShox Reba RL leading the way. It's a very good fork, with controlled damping, ample stiffness and plenty of adjustment options. Out of the box it's got 80mm of travel, but a few minutes spent juggling with spacers will give you 100mm – KHS will do the swap for you at point of sale if you like.

Finishing kit is all Truvativ stuff which presents no issues, although we reckon a flat bar would be more appropriate for most riders. Avid's Elixir 3 brakes are a highlight, a cut above the more common Juicy 3s and with much better feel than the Hayes and Tektro brakes elsewhere in this test. There's also a full 3x10 SRAM transmission set-up.

“Avid's Elixir 3 brakes are a highlight, a cut above the more common Juicy 3s”

The feel

You'd be advised to chuck away your sizing preconceptions when you're looking at the Yuma. We tested the 17in, which packs a top tube length that wouldn't look out of place on a nominally bigger bike. There's also a 19in, which is only slightly longer – very tall riders are likely to be out of luck.

That aside, the KHS is a pretty sorted bike. The 80mm Reba fork, combined with steep frame angles, delivers a very fast-handling bike – it's a bit like the early '90s all over again, only more stable at speed and

less choppy in the rough thanks to the big wheels. If you like tight, twisty trails it's inspiring, but if you favour more open, steeper stuff you might want to extend the fork to 100mm.

The Yuma is in the middle of the weight range of the 29ers tested here (12.4kg), but the fast-rolling Kenda Karma tyres and lively handling go some way to mitigating the small weight penalty compared to the lightest.

Summary

The Yuma isn't quite as compelling a value proposition as the Tucson was. At £600 the Tucson pretty much had the entry-level 29er market to itself, but at £1200 there's some impressive hardware to choose from. Still, the Yuma puts up a good account of itself and is definitely worth short listing.

WHAT MOUNTAIN BIKE ★★★★★

“The Yuma is a super-agile singletrack hound, as long as it fits you.”