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Santa Cruz Tallboy (frame with Fox shock) (10) | \$2442

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BikeRadar verdict

★★★★★

"Super-light yet stiff, and eats rough miles for breakfast"



Specification

Name: Tallboy (frame with Fox shock) (10)
Built by: Santa Cruz
Price: **\$2442.00**
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By [Guy Kesteven](#), Mountain Biking UK Thu 4 Mar 2010, 8:00 am GMT

Santa Cruz have gone straight in at the top with their all-new, trail-flattening 29er. They deliver all the speed-carrying, traction-multiplying and trail-smoothing advantages of 29in wheels without the usual weight and stiffness vices.

Ride & handling: The best long-haul trail bike we've ever ridden

Santa Cruz have done a superb job of addressing the two typical weak points of 29in-wheeled full-suspension design. They've worked hard to minimise weight, meaning the Tallboy is comparable with 26in wheel race bikes, and front and rear stiffness is also outstanding for a 29er.

There's no avoiding the fact it does take longer to accelerate than a 26er. Threading it through tight singletrack is more awkward and you just can't throw it around like a conventional wheeled bike. But get it rolling and keep the wheels on the ground, and the Tallboy is simply astonishing.

Once we'd swapped the original 90mm stem for a 70mm one, the handling was spot-on and the tight frame means it hits lines more accurately than other super-light 29ers we've tried. With a 12.2kg (26.8lb) complete weight and with the decelerating effect of every root and rock effectively shrunk by the bigger wheels, the Tallboy's ability to carry speed is outstanding.

The combination of VPP suspension and 29in wheels means unbelievable traction levels too, with performance gains over 26in bikes getting more obvious the rougher the trail gets. In fact, its ability to put huge gaps between you and the riders behind you, or cruise over chaos without effort is almost obscene.

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Frame: Super-light but still impressively stiff chassis

The Tallboy shares a lot of chassis design features with Santa Cruz's [carbon Blur XC](#), reconfigured for bigger wheels. That means a slightly shorter, steeper angled, tapered steerer-compatible head tube and a 5mm drop in travel to 100mm (3.9in). Mud clearance is still okay and you get the grease-injected bearings that were debuted on the [Blur LT](#), which we've run for two years without a glitch.

Equipment: Pick your own or go for a complete build

Our bike was made up from a frame with a £100 Fox shock upgrade but Santa Cruz do two complete bike options – the Shimano XT based SPX XC for £3,999 and the bling XTR SL at £5,299.

In terms of significant issues on 29ers there are two things you really need to know. First is that a screw-through axle of some type makes a massive difference to front wheel accuracy and obedience by resisting the extra inertia of the bigger wheel and longer contact patch.

Secondly, that longer patch means even summer tyres like the Small Block 8 will hook up well even in silly situations like 6in of snow. Low weight and fast-rolling tyres are also crucial to offsetting the extra mass you need to accelerate, so when you're choosing tyres think semi-slick, not knobbly, for a better ride.



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"Low weight and fast-rolling tyres are also crucial to offsetting the extra mass you need to accelerate, so when you're choosing tyres think semi-slick, not knobbly, for a better ride."



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