

MARIN ALPINE TRAIL E2

PRICE: \$6,299 / WEIGHT: 53.4 LB (M) /
CLASS: 1 / MAXIMUM TORQUE: 85NM /
BATTERY SIZE: 630WH

THE MARIN ALPINE Trail E2 is a dancing bear of a bike: big and heavy but all nimble and energetic on the trail.

It has a coil-over shock, a Fox 38 fork, and a 63-degree head angle. But I can promise you—because it surprised the hell out of me—that the Alpine Trail E2 is more lively and agile, and more capable on flatter trails and climbs, than you'd expect from a bike with those specs.

To be clear, this bike is built to fly downhill despite its relatively modest travel: 150mm (rear) and 160mm (front). It's the stiff frame, slack geometry, superb Fox suspension, mixed wheel size, and relaxed geometry that make it so capable when the world's coming at ya fast.

The smaller, 27.5-inch wheel in the rear helped Marin achieve the bike's 435mm chainstay length—one of the shortest rear ends you'll find on an e-mountain bike (the Specialized Levo in this issue has 442mm stays). That helps keep the bike snappy in corners and give it a bit more of a playful feel everywhere else.

The short rear end also helps the Marin on climbs, particularly single-track with tighter turns. The front end wanders some, but the seat angle is fashionably steep at 78 degrees, which, on a longer-travel bike with supple coil-over rear suspension like this, helps keep the rider over, not behind, the pedals as the fork extends and the shock compresses on an uphill.

On flat trails, it does take a touch more work, compared to a shorter/steeper bike, to keep the Alpine Trail

from pushing wide in the turns. But once you adapt to subtly shifting your body where it needs to be, this bike will dance amiably down the trail.

Pushing this brute around is Shimano's excellent EP8 motor, which provides plenty of torque when called upon. Its power and feel are smooth, sensitive, and easy to control, so I was able to climb in challenging traction conditions—both early-season mud and mid-season dust and kitty litter—without drama. The motor has a sharp, bright, and informative color display, and assist modes are easy to customize with Shimano's e-Tube app.

The Marin Alpine Trail E2 is a gravity bike—and a good one at that. But it's versatile and entertaining enough that getting to the gravity-fueled goods is almost as enjoyable as the downhills themselves.—*M.P.*