



## VERIFIED DECLINE BIKE TEST



# DAKAR XAM 2.0

**I**N ITS THIRD YEAR of production, Jamis has reworked their All-Mountain chassis. Using manipulated tubing and lowering the swing link, the Dakar XAM is a stronger, lighter frame with more standover clearance. Jamis also worked with Fox Shox to specifically tune the suspension with the DHX 5.0 Air, producing a bike made to cover all types of terrain.

### THE TECHNOLOGY

Jamis makes two Dakar XAM models that use the same frame with different parts specs. Jamis also sells the frame separately, for those who want to specify their own list of components. All three variations utilize the XAM MP3 suspension design with a Fox DHX 5.0 Air shock to control 133mm of rear travel and a very low leverage ratio of 2:33:1. The frame uses sealed bearings at all of the frame pivots and the swing link attaches to the down tube, which allows more standover clearance. The down tube is oversized and becomes ovalized at the head tube where it is braced by a gusset. The top tube is heavily manipulated, using an "8" shape that turns oval where it meets the seat tube. The bottom bracket and main pivot are forged as one unit for strength and to ensure perfect alignment.

Our test bike was the XAM 2.0, which comes with more than a few upgrades over the 1.0 model. Starting with the suspension, the XAM 2.0 features Fox's 32 Talas RLC up front and DHX 5.0 air rear shock. The 32 Talas RLC has adjustable rebound and compression damping, lockout, lockout threshold and the Talas II travel adjuster. The rear shock offers adjustable rebound damping, compression damping by regulating the air pressure in the Boost Valve, and a ProPedal that aids pedaling. It comes with Shimano XT shifters and cranks, and a XTR rear derailleur along with an Easton Havoc seatpost, Vice stem and EA70 MonkeyBar handlebar. Jamis even includes a set of Crankbrothers Candy C pedals and lock-on WTG grips.

### THE RIDE

The combo of light all-mountain wheels, a little help from the ProPedal adjuster on the rear shock and the Travel adjuster on the fork make the XAM well-equipped to propel you up the mountain. Sitting at 73 degrees (17" frame), Jamis also gave

the XAM a seat angle that lets you get over the top of the pedals for maximum power output. For those that like to sit off the back, a laid-back seatpost design should suffice.

The suspension design doesn't require much ProPedal to remain efficient, particularly during seated climbing, which helps keep the suspension active. With a quick flip of the Talas II adjuster, the fork can swap between 140, 120 and 100mm of travel, which is not only convenient, but it's a big help on steep and extended climbs. The Talas travel adjuster can also be used with the lockout on smoother climbs, locking the fork out in any travel position.

With the main pivot in line with the small chainring, the XAM is very adept at navigating technical climbs, maintaining an active rear end that sustains traction without retarding your pedal stroke. In the middle ring, the bike motors up mellow grades, across flats and rolling terrain, keeping pace even if the trail is rippled with uneven surfaces.

Going Down - Equipped with top-of-the-line Fox suspension components, Jamis ensured that the XAM was going to handle itself on rough trails. It also has a full-length seat tube to let you drop that saddle as low as you need it. The bottom bracket sits a little lower than most bikes at this travel, which adds stability at the sacrifice of a little ground clearance. We didn't have problems whacking the pedals on rocks and the low BB helps balance the 68.5-degree head angle when speeds pick up or the trail gets rough. The rear suspension can hang up on large obstacles, but for straight up all-mountain riding, the bike holds its own. The XAM has a nimble feel when dicing through the trees and railing tight turns. It is easy to pick up to float over rocks and ruts but doesn't shy away from running directly over them. The Fox 32 Talas has a progressive feel to it while the DHX 5.0 Air rear shock has enough adjustability to set it up exactly how you ride.

### OVERVIEW

The Jamis Dakar XAM 2.0 comes well equipped with Fox's top model 32 Talas RLC fork and DHX 5.0 Air shock, Shimano XT/XTR drivetrain, Easton components and geometry that balances the ups and downs of all-mountain riding. Between its all-around capabilities, high-end spec and suspension, the complete package of the XAM 2.0 is solid, making the bike a fantastic deal.