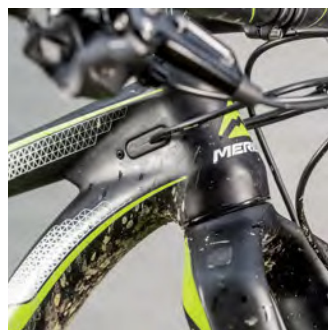


MERIDA Ninety-Six Team

Thoroughbred stock race machine



Translated from the German original by Merida.



1. The Sram XX1 Eagle provides the necessary gear range for the single chain ring drivetrain. Merida specs the Ninety-Six with a 32 tooth chain ring. 2. All cables enter the frame just behind the headtube. Underneath the cover, a clamping mechanism is hidden which prevents rattling. 3. The RS1 upside down fork of the Ninety-Six offers 100mm travel.

THE BIKE

Merida introduced the new evolution of the Ninety-Six for the 2016 season. However, the final release was rather delayed. The Ninety-Six is not completely new in the Merida family. The original model was born in 2007 and was produced up until 2011. Then it was replaced by the Ninety-Nine. The model name relates to the amount of rear wheel travel the bike offers, namely 96mm. The Multivan Merida Biking Team (which unfortunately will not be around in 2017) was massively involved in the development of this bike. The most obvious aspect of the new generation is the position of the rear shock. Merida puts the rear shock underneath the top tube, similarly to the rear shock position of the first generation. Reduced bobbing and a more direct power transfer are supposed to be the advantages of this configuration. To match the requirements of the riders, the wheel base was shortened while the reach was increased. Improved control and stability in descends, as well as a more agile handling should be the result of these geometry alterations. 'Smart Entry' is the Merida own feature for internal cable routing.

Through a clamping mechanism the cables are secured when entering the frame. This enables the cables to be clamped under tension to avoid the typical rattling noises. Cables for dropper posts, as well as cables for Di2 systems can be run internally. 'Size Specific Wheeling' refers to Merida's sizing. It allows every rider to having the same kinematic irrelevant of rider height. In simple terms, frame size S and M come with 27.5" wheels, while M, L and XL roll on 29er wheels.

ON THE TRAIL

The new Ninety-Six has a pure race geometry. The riding position is typically sporty for a cross country bike. The cockpit sits low, the bars are not too wide and the suspension set up is on the stiffer side. The Merida's suspension system is completely unaffected when accelerating and in uphill sections. A lockout lever, that is positioned on the left, allows the front and rear end to be locked out simultaneously. However, we hardly ever used this function. Due to the stiff suspension setup, it was not necessary to lock out the rear end. The new Sram XX1 Eagle drivetrain give the Ninety-Six a 500% gear ration using

12 gears. The full suspension bike is eager to climb. Even in steeper section the front wheel stays firmly on the ground and allows precise steering. We really start to appreciate the added comfort of the full suspension in comparison to a hardtail when tackling descends. Direct in handling, it is easy to negotiate even tight corners super accurately. The bike doesn't get nervous even at higher speeds and gives confidence.

VERDICT

The new NINETY-SIX gets every racer jumping with joy. Spot on geometry, a matching spec package, and convincing performance allow for some impressive lap times.

Price: €7.499

Wheel size: 29er

Weight: 10.16kg

Travel front/rear: 100/96mm

Gear inches smallest gear: 1.50m

Gear inches biggest gear: 7.48m

Speed smallest gear: 3.6km/h

Speed biggest gear: 35.9 km/h

