



Merida's floating shock rear suspension delivers 160mm travel

A stubby 35mm stem balances the slack steering geometry perfectly

A massive 200mm front rotor and a 170mm-travel RockShox Lyrik signifies the Merida's intentions

Maxxis tyres, specifically designed for wider rims, provide awesome traction and control

MERIDA ONE-SIXTY 5000

£3,300

SPECIFICATION

Frame UD carbon/aluminium, 160mm travel
Shock RockShox Super Deluxe R
Fork RockShox Yari RC Solo Air, 170mm travel
Wheels Merida Boost hubs, Jalco Expert TR rims, Maxxis Minion DHR II WT 27.5x2.4in tyres
Drivetrain SRAM NX chainset, r-mech and shifter
Brakes Shimano M506, 203/180mm
Components Merida Expert bar 760mm, Merida Expert stem 35mm, Merida Expert 125mm dropper post, Merida Sport saddle
Sizes S, M, L
Weight 14.01kg (30.8lb)
Contact merida-bikes.com

GEOMETRY

Size tested M
Head angle 65.4°
Seat angle 69.9°
BB height 342mm
Chainstay 431mm
Front centre 768mm
Wheelbase 1,199mm
Down tube 713mm
Top tube 600mm
Reach 445mm

Merida is a huge Taiwanese bike manufacturer with an impressive R&D facility in Germany. It's probably best known for its Olympic and Worlds-winning exploits on the XC-race circuit. Even with this impressive palmarès, Merida is relatively unknown on the enduro race scene. That could be about to change, however, with the introduction of its new 'One-Sixty' enduro bike that's packed with cutting-edge tech.

The 5000 model, tested here, is the cheapest of three, all of which use a sleek, carbon front triangle with good standover clearance. Designed around a 1x drivetrain, the frame benefits from the extra stiffness this brings, while the 65° head angle and generous reach measurement keep the geometry bang on-trend. Out back, the alloy seat and chainstays converge at the latest Boost 148 dropout spacing, ensuring maximum mud clearance and wheel stiffness.

SUSPENSION

RockShox's Super Deluxe shock sports the very latest tech. A trunnion mount uses sealed bearings connected directly to the shock body, instead of the upper eyelet, while the metric sizing increases internal overlap to improve stiffness and durability. Combined with seal and damper refinements, these help maximise sensitivity; the Merida's 160mm-travel floating rear suspension feels very controlled, with smooth, supportive progression through its entire stroke. As such, bump tracking is second to none.

Keeping it RockShox, the Yari fork shares a beefy 35mm chassis with the top-rated

Lyrik, but has a cheaper, less effective damper design. With 170mm travel for more capability at high speed, the Yari is still happy smashing through the roughest trails with minimal fuss.

COMPONENTS

The stock Maxxis 2.4in Minion DHR IIs on the Merida are simply fantastic downhill, and because they get the latest WT (wide tyre) casing you get a much better profile with broad rims like the Jalco 29mm-internal ones fitted to the Merida. The wheels are a bit heavy though, and this, combined with the more open tread, makes them quite draggy, so, outside of pure downhilling, flatter trails and uphill require more effort.

NX is the latest budget 1x11 drivetrain from SRAM. Shifting is smooth and quiet, but the crank lacks hollow-forged arms, so it's not as stiff. Merida's own brand cable-activated dropper is no RockShox Reverb, but has a light-action lever that worked faultlessly. It needs 150mm of drop though. With a big 200mm front rotor, the sheer stopping power of the Shimano Deore brakes caused no complaints, but they are pretty basic considering the price.

PERFORMANCE

From the very first ride, the One-Sixty killed any idea that a brand renowned for XC racing can't make an aggressive, super-capable bike that's fun to ride downhill. The feel of the carbon front end, its shape, and the riding position it puts you in are all superb. The floating suspension design isolates you from the ground with gobs of traction, without sacrificing pop and support when pumping or jumping the

terrain. Mating this brilliant back end with a low dynamic bottom bracket height, and good lateral stiffness, allowed us to slash corners and hammer terrain as hard as any 160mm bike we've ridden.

We'd happily race the Merida at an EWS but it would be overkill for most UK trail riding. The fat tyres and tall 170mm-travel fork make it hard to generate drive on flat, draggy sections of trail. Pedalling response, however, is snappy enough for injecting speed before lips, or exiting berms, while the steep seat angle gives it good climbing legs too. That said, this entry-level model would really benefit from the lockout of the RC3 shock, found on the more expensive models, for grinding uphill on liaison stages.

VERDICT

The Merida One-Sixty 5000 is a total blast for riding downhill fast, sending off jumps and shredding corners. In the right hands, we're 100 per cent confident that it could easily win enduro races at the highest level.

The silky smooth rear suspension offers brilliant performance while the Gucci carbon front end has perfect proportions without a hint of harshness.

On the other hand, you don't have to look very closely to spot cost-cutting, most evident on the brakes, fork, drivetrain and wheels. Despite this, it's still one of the sweetest-riding, most capable enduro bikes we've tested, and comes highly recommended.

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**TEST
WINNER!**
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HIGHS

Amazing
suspension
and shape



LOWS

Sub-par
components
at £3.3k



SRAM NX rear mech
provides slick shifts
on the cheap



Cutting-edge Super
Deluxe shock tracks
the trail to perfection



Deore brakes are
effective but
hardly exotic