



MERIDA EONE-FORTY 9000

£7,000 / 29-27.5in / merida-bikes.com

NEED TO KNOW

- Short-travel e-bike with 133mm travel rear and 140mm-travel fork
- Full carbon frame, internal 504Wh battery and Shimano E8000 motor
- Trail bike ethos, designed to be fun and manoeuvrable, with climbing prowess
- More conservative geometry than the burlier eOne-Sixty, but it gets mullet wheels
- Three-bike range from £4,350

The eOne-Sixty's short-travel stablemate has features aplenty but will its less aggressive geometry help or hinder out on the trails?

Just like pure aerobically-powered bikes, e-bikes are designed with a specific kind of riding in mind. Take the Specialized Turbo Kenevo: it has a dual-crown fork and a 'shuttle mode', and is unashamedly aimed at bike park bombing. The YT Decoy we featured last month works best on big, all-mountain trails because the frame is stiff and the suspension progressive. The Merida eOne-Forty here is most definitely a trail bike, which means it's comfortable, fun and manoeuvrable, and totally suited to the kind of terrain most of us ride.

Merida's eOne-Forty is the little sibling to the well-known eOne-Sixty, and gets the same facelift, with the battery now hidden away inside the down tube. It shares the same frame design and styling too, albeit with 27mm less travel. It's also more compact, with a 10mm shorter reach and a 1° steeper head angle. Merida says this makes the bike better at slow speeds and when climbing.

Merida's definition of trail riding is obviously different from mine, as I want to have maximum confidence and control when I'm riding down any kind of trail, and that comes from long, low and slack geometry. I'd rather Merida had retained the eOne-Sixty's geometry, which incidentally might even have helped the bike climb, as it has a longer overall wheelbase and more generous reach. As such, at 6ft 1in I would definitely upsize to an XL frame.

The frame in question is easy on the eye, with sculpted carbon mated to an alloy rear end. And Merida claims those distinctive vents you see behind the head tube aren't just for show; they really help cool the motor and battery, as well as doubling as internal cable routing ports. I think they look tacky, but plenty of people seem to like them.

It boasts some other interesting features too, some of which I like, some I don't. The on/off button looks great inset in the top tube, but you have to push it hard to get it to work. The battery cover feels robust, but it's only

It's comfortable, manoeuvrable and fun to ride



Top tube power button lacks sensitivity



DT Swiss fork is sleek and works well



eOne-Forty: efficient but could be a little less uptight



secured with a rubber O-ring, which has stretched over the 500-mile life of this particular demo bike and doesn't fit snugly anymore. No matter, Merida has designed the O-rings to be replaceable, so you can always get a rattle-free fit. You can take the 504Wh battery out and charge it off the bike; the release mechanism is ingenious because you use the bolt-thru lever from the rear axle to unlock it. You can also charge the battery in the bike, although the charge port is located on top of the BB housing, meaning it was full of water every time I went to use it. Finally, there's a headset block to restrict the controls from hitting the top tube in a crash, and the chainstay protector does a great job at keeping the bike silent.

Merida has stuck with the Shimano STEPS E8000 motor, despite the popularity of the new Bosch unit. I've always been a fan of the Japanese system for its smooth operation and reliability, but I have to admit it is



Shimano STEPS E8000 motor is light and compact



Head tube venting ports double as cable conduits



The QR lever unlocks the battery



Charging port cum water feature

SPECIFICATION

- Frame** Carbon/6016 alloy, 133mm travel
- Shock** Fox Float Performance Elite
- Fork** DT Swiss F535 One, 140mm travel
- Motor** Shimano STEPS E8000, 250W
- Battery** Shimano E8035, 504Wh
- Display** Shimano E8000
- Wheels** DT Swiss Spline HX1501 ONE 30 Boost, Maxxis Minion DHF/DHR II 29x2.5in/27.5x2.6in tyres
- Drivetrain** Shimano XT crankset, r-mech and 12-speed shifter
- Brakes** Shimano XT four-piston, 203mm
- Components** Merida Expert eTR 780mm bar, Merida 35mm stem, Merida 170mm post, Merida Expert CC saddle
- Sizes** S, M, L, XL, XXL
- Weight** 22.2kg (48.94lb)

GEOMETRY

- Size ridden** L
- Rider height** 6ft 1in
- Head angle** 66.1°
- Seat angle** 72.1°
- BB height** 332mm
- Chainstay** 438mm
- Front centre** 767mm
- Wheelbase** 1,205mm
- Down tube** 726mm
- Top tube** 603mm
- Reach** 450mm

now outclassed by its German rival. Considering this 9000 model costs £7,000, it's facing some pretty hefty competition when it comes to power, refinement and battery capacity.

HOW IT RIDES

The eOne-Forty has gone full gangster, decked out in matt black with subtle

graphics, but it is approachable and friendly to ride — fluoro orange would better reflect its personality. A combination of the linear shock tune and short 438mm back end help make the bike easy to manual, and this contributes to a feeling of agility. I'd say it did a good job of flattering my skills.

The mullet wheel set-up is a popular with e-bikes and the eOne-Forty makes good use of it: the 29in Maxxis Minion DHF tyre up front grips without being draggy, while the slightly wider but smaller 27.5in DHR II helps the bike react willingly to changes in direction.

The flattery came to an end when I pushed the bike harder and faster, or on rougher trails, where the eOne-Forty ripped through its travel and left me at the mercy of its relatively conservative geometry. The flexy back feels good on the slow, muddy and natural trails we have in abundance all over the UK right now, dishing out grip where I hadn't expected to find it, but on firmer, faster

trails with berms and jumps it felt a little more vague and less trustworthy.

If you're in the market for an enduro e-bike that can hammer fast, steep and rough trails, this is not the bike for you. But if your idea of fun is sliding around in the woods on natural trails, searching for grip, and riding for pure kicks, then the eOne-Forty does a great job, albeit at a hefty price tag.

Jamie Darlow

mbr 1ST IMPRESSION

✓ HIGHS
Fun and exciting ride, easy to play with on the trail, proven Shimano motor, and boasting loads of smart features.

✗ LOWS
Too flexy when trails get faster and firmer, geometry is needlessly conservative. Too pricey.



Fox Float shock with 133mm travel