

MARIN

# Nail Trail 7

£1,500

Eminently capable long range trail bike

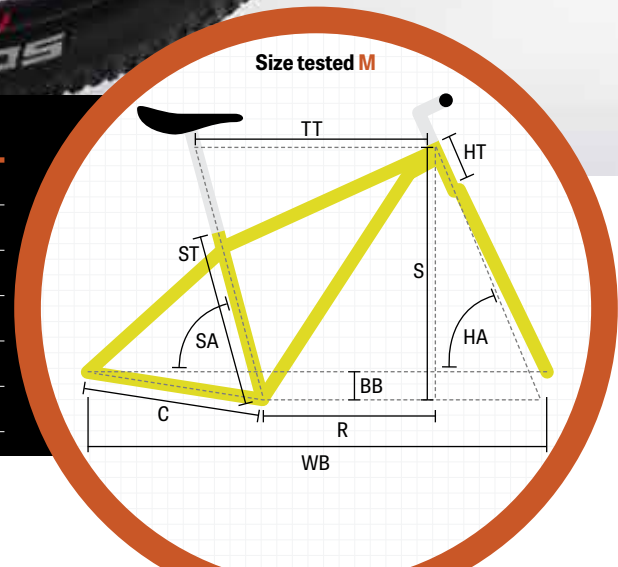


## ABOUT THE BIKE

Longer, lower and slacker. Marin is definitely billing the latest iteration of the Nail Trail as tending towards the boisterous. Featuring its ‘Right Size’ geometry, it uses either 27.5in or 29in wheels depending on the frame size, in order to provide the best fit and function for riders big and small. With a cross country-looking build kit, it nevertheless packs in a surprisingly capable fork, hinting that this is a bike with a slightly split personality.

## GEOMETRY

	Claimed	Measured			
			Head tube (HT)	110mm	110mm
Fork Travel (FT)	120mm	120mm	Head angle (HA)	68°	68°
Seat tube (ST)	431mm	430mm	Seat angle (SA)	74°	73.5°
Top tube (TT)	607mm	610mm	Chainstay (C)	435mm	435mm
Reach (R)	427mm	4270mm	Wheelbase (WB)	1,142mm	1,145mm
Stack (S)	656mm	656mm	BB drop (BB)	59mm	60mm



## The ride

**First impressions** The medium frame size is the point at which you can elect for either 27.5in or 29in wheels. We went with the latter, which, despite the Nail Trail’s rangy looks, felt like a good fit. With large wheels and light tyres, the Marin jumps eagerly forward upon turning the pedals, but the wide bars and big, staunch-looking fork suggest this definitely isn’t a traditional flighty but skittish XC racer.

**On the trail** Despite being 2.25in wide the Schwalbe

Nobby Nic and Racing Ralph tyres seem a little runty next to the plus-sized alternatives of the other bikes on test. However, as always there are pros and cons. Along with being a good deal lighter, they take very little effort to get going, while providing direct-feeling steering. Simultaneously, their lower volume is far less squirmy, meaning response when out of the saddle feels efficient. The Rockshok Yari fork is excellent and its 120mm of movement feels

perfectly matched to the bike, plush in its action yet stiff in its ability to carve through difficult terrain. It also provides plenty of knobs to twiddle, allowing riders to finesse its compression and rebound characteristics in small increments. With the big fork working at the front of the bike, holding an even course through rough terrain is a relatively untaxing affair. While not as plush as the plus-size bikes, the larger diameter wheels nevertheless

## SPEC

- FRAME**

Series 3 6061 Aluminum, Double Butted
- FORK**

RockShox Yari RC, 120mm Travel
- GROUPSET**

Shimano M7000 SLX 1x11 Speed
- BRAKES**

Shimano Deore
- CHAINSET**

Marin Forged Alloy 1x11, Hollow CrMo Spindle, Narrow-Wide 32t
- CASSETTE**

Sunrace 11-Speed, 11-42T
- BARS**

Marin Mini-Riser, 6061 Double Butted Aluminum, 780mm Wide
- STEM**

Marin 3D Forged Alloy
- SADDLE**

Marin MTB
- SEATPOST**

Tranz X, Dropper Post, 120mm Travel
- WHEELS**

Formula/Marin Double Wall, 29mm Inner, Tubeless Compatible
- TYRES**

Schwalbe Nobby Nic Performance 2.25"
- CONTACT**

marinbikes.com





# Mountain bikes

A 142x12mm bolt-thru axle keeps the rear end solidly braced

resist stalling on all but the most blunt-edged of obstacles, while the Nail Trail's skinny seatstays do a decent job of providing a modicum of additional dampening.

**Handling** With a long top tube, there's plenty of room to move about. This marries well with the short stem and very wide bars. In keeping with the bike's practical trail-riding credentials, there's a decent amount of standover above the straight top tube. The head tube angle of 68 degrees pitches the Nail Trail solidly into the capable all-rounder camp. There's none of the flip-flopping that can make climbing on slacker bikes a chore, yet there's enough suspension for anything you might encounter on the average trail. With 27.5, 27.5-plus and 29er wheels all popular, choosing the bike to match your riding style can prove tricky. If you're set on a 29er, we wouldn't hesitate to recommend the Nail Trail. However, there were moments where we missed both the chatter-smothering qualities of the fatter-tyred bikes, along with their Velcro-like grip.

## The Spec

**The frame** The most striking thing about the frame is the contrast between front and back. To the fore, it's chunky, with a bulbous head tube and flattened hydroformed tubing. Backwards of the seat tube, though, it's a different story. The fastback-style seatstays, which join below the top tube, are kept thin to build in a degree of compliance, while their bridgeless design provides clearance for wide tyres and a dose of British mud too. At their far end, the cutback dropouts neatly enclose the rear brake calliper, while keeping the wheelbase nice and short. A standard threaded bottom bracket shell means servicing and spares won't be an issue. In common with the other bikes on test, a 142x12mm rear thru-axle keeps the back of the bike solidly braced. For ease of servicing, the rear brake cable runs along the down tube, while the cables for the rear derailleur and dropper post are internally routed. Given the bike's clear long-range abilities, it would have been nice to find a second set of bosses, either for hauling water, or for adding bikepacking gear to the frame.

**Groupset** Shimano's SLX shifter and rear mech are excellent. The cranks and chainring are cheaper forged models, but the only penalty there is a few extra grams. Brakes are basic but powerful Deore-level models, while the wide-ratio cassette is made by Sunrace, and we wouldn't have been able to tell the difference with a Shimano model without consulting the spec list. The Tranz X dropper post provides 120mm of travel, and its gear shifter-style activation lever is convenient, although the



action of the post itself can be slightly slow to return.

**Finishing kit** Regardless of the frame size, Marin specs a 60mm stem on the Nail Trail. This is because stem length has a fixed effect on the bike's handling, irrespective of the rider's height. Twinned with the wide and low bar, there's plenty of leverage, and if you find it a bit too broad you can always bust out the hacksaw! Saddle and grips are inoffensively designed and should stay in place until they eventually wear out.

**Wheels** The combination of a grippier tyre up front with a faster-rolling rear works well to balance speed and control. It's far more common, and dangerous, to have your front tyre wash out from under you, so to add traction there makes sense. While speed-heads will love their low weight and speed, more aggressive riders might want to swap them for something wider and more robust. The wheels themselves are good quality, if unremarkable-looking, 32-spoke models and can be set up tubeless.

They feature splined disc mounts, which makes swapping rotors easier and are more durable in the long haul.



The skinny hydroformed seatstays (above) provide a degree of compliance, while the flared head tube (right) is designed for stiffness



## RATING

### FRAME

Built for all-day comfort and agile handling

### COMPONENTS

Excellent groupset and smart finishing kit choices

### WHEELS

Light, fast tyres are perfect for speed-heads

### THE RIDE

Fast and stable handling on any trails

## OVERALL

8.4/10

With large wheels and light tyres, the Nail Trail jumps eagerly forward upon turning the pedals