



# MARIN GESTALT X11

£2000 > Marin wants to get you beyond the road

Marin's long history as one of the original Californian mountain bike innovators has a big influence on the new Gestalt X11. Its design

is derived from current hardtail mountain bike geometry with longer, slacker frames and shorter cockpits. Here Marin mixes a 71.5° head-angle with a mid-height stack (measured up from the bottom bracket to level with the top of the head tube) of 59.9cm on our 56cm frame. The wheelbase is long (102cm) but with the

help of a 9cm stem, the reach is shorter than expected (38.7cm). The slightly steeper seat angle of 73° puts you in a forward, attacking position, but is offset by relaxed front end. It makes off-road handling superb, letting you stand on the pedals and sprint hard over the roughest surfaces, while the front-end tracks the terrain beautifully with no nervousness or surprise jumps offline. →

- SPECIFICATION**  
**Weight** 10.3kg (56cm)  
**Frame** Aluminium  
**Front Carbon Gears:**  
SRAM Rival 1  
(42, 10-42)  
**Brakes** SRAM Rival  
**Wheels** Marin double-wall alloy disc wheels  
**Finishing kit** FSA Gossamer chainset with 42t Megatooth chainring, Schwalbe G-One AR 35c tyres, Marin Beyond Road Concept Elite saddle, TranzX YSP11 105mm travel dropper post, Marin 3D forged alloy stem, Marin 12° flare alloy bar

Images Robert Smith



Marin's mountain-bike heritage shines through the Gestalt

**HIGHS**  
Great handling; smartly equipped and smartly priced

**LOWS**  
Weirdly shaped saddle

**BUY IF**  
You want mountain bike-like handling off-road, blended with fun handling on-road, all at a great price

That handling made us want to take the Gestalt further and further off the beaten track, and that's where the bike revealed the ace up its sleeve. Marin has cleverly provided the Gestalt with a dropper seatpost. For those of you unfamiliar with mountain bike tech, a dropper seatpost uses a hidden hydraulic unit to instantly lower your saddle. A lower saddle makes it easier for you to shift your weight around on the bike, such as when you're faced with a precipitous slope and need to get as far back as possible over the rear wheel to safely negotiate it.

Rider manoeuvrability is further helped by the steeply angled top tube, which makes for a bike that you can throw around underneath you with BMX-style abandon. On the road it's no slouch either; the aluminium frame and carbon fork feature a full range of rack fittings but are both stiff and responsive enough to make the bike feel snappier and sharper than expected. It really is a fun bike to hit the tarmac with.

Marin has opted to use standard SRAM Rival shifters instead of the single-sided units that are usually found in 1x groupsets. This means that the left-hand shifter, since it's off front derailleurs duty, can be reassigned to operate the dropper post. It's a clever hack we've seen on a few high-end, custom builds, but never on an affordable production bike like this. SRAM tells us this lever modification won't be covered under a standard warranty, but we love it nevertheless. The rest of the Rival 1 groupset performs precisely and the FSA chainset held the chain as tenaciously as SRAM's own units.

We're big fans of Schwalbe's all-condition version of the G-One fitted to Marin's alloy wheelset. At

35mm, the tyres are wide enough for all but the most extreme off-road excursions, but not so wide to make them feel sluggish on the road. If you do want to go wider, then consider a switch to 650b wheels as doing so will increase tyre clearance to 45mm.

Up front the short, 9cm stem is matched to a wide 44cm bar with a 12° flare to provide enough clearance for your wrists when you're down in the drops. The bar is wrapped in plush tape that has a sticky, rubberised finish that remained impressively grippy during wet, muddy outings. Sadly, things aren't so great at the back – the Marin Beyond Road Concept Elite saddle has a flat profile with a shallow channel and a broad flat nose. From the first outing it felt firm and weirdly wide. Granted, saddles are a matter of personal choice but we do think this one is a bit of a miss on an otherwise great spec.

Overall, the Marin Gestalt X11 mixes great design, fantastic off-road handling and clever specification into a seriously fun, good value package.

**+**  
**↓** **Below** There's clearance for 35mm tyres on 700c wheels, or wider tyres if you drop to 650b **Bottom** Hydraulic disc brakes, thru axles, and rack and mudguard mounts – everything you need for adventurous rides



## THE VERDICT

A great value gravel bike designed by mountain bikers that'll work for everyone

