

WTB Rocket Saddle & Moto Raptor MTB Tires

by David Millican

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I was very excited when I learned of my opportunity to review a product or two from Wilderness Trail Bikes. WTB, which began in a small garage near the base of Mt. Tamalpais in California, has earned a prestigious reputation in the mountain bike industry. I immediately called Chris Schierholtz, IPMBA's contact, that same day. We selected the WTB Rocket saddle and the Moto Raptor MTB tires in 2.4". He was great to talk to and sent the products out right away.

WTB Rocket V SLT Saddle

Having owned two WTB saddles in the past, I had high expectations for this saddle and it never failed to meet those expectations. This saddle is suggested for road, cross country, downhill or free riding. With its titanium rails and narrow design it weighed in at a super-light 225 grams, only 15 grams heavier than WTB reports but considerably lighter than many of its counterparts. The narrow design also allows for easy control while using your legs when off the seat.

I slapped this baby on my bike and never gave it a second thought. It was well constructed and provided a good stable platform. This saddle came with a "love channel", comfort zone, and a padded contoured nose. The love channel is made of carbon fabric and, along with the comfort zone, is designed to provide perineal and soft tissue relief. The saddle also provides what WTB calls F.I.T.S., or flat ischial tuberosity support. This is very important for the seat bones. The shell is covered in premium leather, special lightweight DNA (rubber compound) padding, and 3M Scotchlite reflective material at the rear of the saddle for better visibility. The saddle is designed to provide support in the areas that it is needed, cushion in the areas it is needed and smooth surfaces to help eliminate chafing.

This saddle is unquestionably the best saddle in their line. It's a higher end saddle, just over a hundred dollars but is well worth the price, especially if you have ever suffered from saddle sores. Bottom line – the WTB Rocket SLT is a high end saddle that is easy on your bottom end.

MOTO RAPTOR Race MTB 2.4" Tires

Moto Raptor Race tires (55/60) 2.4 inches have a lightweight casing, DNA rubber compound and a folding bead. This is a big tire with a large air volume. While this is not a fast-running or lightweight tire, its uses far exceed the uses of a normal 2-inch tire. WTB designed this tire for trail and free riding.

The large volume of air enables you to run the tires with low air pressure. The suggested air pressure for the tire is 35-55 psi. Anyone weighing 200 lbs could run these at the minimum recommended psi without fear of pinch flats. This is beneficial if you desire the characteristics of tubeless tires without having to convert. The tread is adaptable to many types of terrain. It has a low profile tread spread out with an open pattern, providing large contact surface with the ground.

Its apparent weaknesses were exactly what makes these tires perform well. WTB reports the weight as 840 grams each and the ones I received weighed in at 850 grams each. This is not a fast rolling tire, but it allows for large contact surface with the terrain. If your wheel is not centered perfectly over your hub, the spokes may flex just enough for the large 2.4" tire to rub the side of your shock brace. This was no fault of the product; rather, my equipment.

I found 40 psi to be ideal for my riding conditions. This tire pressure provided a large contact surface for stable traction. The Moto Raptor tire worked well on loose damp soil and trails covered in fall leaves. Its strengths were rolling over large rocks and the climbing ability was second to none. This is an all around FAT TIRE that was made for the Rocky Mountains. I can't wait till my next trip to Colorado.

WTB participates in the IPMBA Product Purchase Program. For more information, visit www.wtb.com or email Chris at cschierholtz@wtb.com.

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