



## IBIS RIPLEY

\$5,600 (\$2,900, frame only) / [IBISCYCLES.COM](http://IBISCYCLES.COM)

**From the designer:** We wanted a versatile 29er trail bike and found 120 millimeters of travel to be the sweet spot for a fun, lightweight bike. We also wanted it to accelerate like an XC bike, so we used a super-efficient DW-link optimized for 29er gearing with geometry that handles like a 26-inch bike.

—SCOT NICOL, FOUNDER, IBIS CYCLES.

**Tester 1:** Ryan Palmer / 19 years riding

**Test Locale:** Southern California

Back near the end of 2011, we were on location in Brevard, North Carolina testing bikes for the Bible of Bike Tests. One of the most talked about bikes on that trip was the Ripley, a new 120mm 29er trail bike from Ibis. The thing is, we didn't even have one to test, nobody did. A year goes by and we're in Fruita, still talking about Ripley, and still no bike. If you were to ask someone at Ibis what's the most frequent question they've

been asked the past two years, it'd be, "Where's the Ripley?" We'll it's finally here, but what was all the hype about in the first place?

It comes down to a Leonardo da Vinci quote I like: "Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication." Ibis did something that hadn't been done before. They took the two external suspension links, shrunk them down, and stuck them inside the seat tube. Think of a large diameter spindle where the hole is off-center, so that when the spindle rotates the hole travels along an arc.

That's an eccentric link. If you use two of them, you can replicate what the external links do. The result is an enormously elegant, extremely simple design.

The suspension performance is impressive. I've been on a lot of bikes, and it took me riding the Ripley to realize I've never ridden a bike with perfectly tuned kinematics—until now. The bike is so completely efficient but when you need active suspension, it's there in spades. Just set the Fox CTD shock to descend mode and ride.



Simple. No pedal feedback or squatting. Sure, there are levers to flip, toggles to toggle, but you don't have to use them. The kinematics are specifically optimized for 29er trail gearing, which is typically slightly lower than the gearing you'd run on a 26er.

With a considerable amount of anti-squat built into the bike, I would definitely say that the Ripley feels more on the cross-country side of the trail category, but I never felt like the built-in pedaling efficiency negatively effected small bump compliance. The firm, yet responsive platform makes the Ripley feel fast enough to race, but supple enough to mutilate all day rides and attack chunky descents.

An XT build kit will get you XT brakes, shifters and derailleurs, e.thirteen TRS+ crank, Fox 32 CDT Trail Adjust at 120mm, KS LEV dropper post, Stan's Arch EX hoops, Specialized rubber, and a 740mm carbon flat bar that Ibis developed for the Ripley. Personally, at a half-pound more, I'd prefer the added stiffness of a Fox 34 to suit my suffer the climb, shred the descent riding style, but that's really all I'd change.

I felt altogether confident aboard the Ripley. The bike provided all of the assets of the 29er platform such as rollover and traction and paired them with the maneuverability and playfulness of a 26er, with no detectable drawbacks. This blend makes attacking bermed corners and switchbacks an absolute riot.

The true beauty of this bike, though, comes back to da Vinci and simplicity. Ripley gives you all the

tools to slay any ride, but does so in a way that allows you to just forget all that technology is there and simply ride with a big smile on your face.

**Tester 2:** Travis Engel / 19 years riding  
**Test Locale:** Southern California

When Ibis released the modern Mojo seven years ago, it stood alone in a category it virtually invented. The long-awaited Ripley does not have the same luxury. The Mojo became a household name, not because it was the first trail bike at the carbon party, but because it is an exceptional machine. And with a few carbon 29" trail bikes already mingling, let's just say we hope the Ripley brought some really good guacamole.

We've certainly had our hopes up. Ibis produced a YouTube video illustrating the bike's unprecedented linkage design in 2011, and I've been sharing it like Keyboard Cat ever since. Then I finally got to see the real thing, and quickly remembered that there's a whole bike surrounding that linkage.

Unlike many big-wheeled trail bikes, the Ripley looks and feels quite traditional. The seat tube lacks the sharp bend many trail 29ers need for tire clearance. This was quite a feat, considering the snug 17.5" chainstays. The frame even leaves some room for a water bottle, but choose carefully. A traditional cage will rub the swingarm, and large bottles will interfere with the CTD lever. Quite untraditionally, the front derailleurs mounts to the swingarm, not the

front triangle. This allows for more tire and suspension clearance, and the derailleurs follows the chain throughout the suspension travel for more consistent shifting.

My first couple rides on the Ripley were at some local lunch-loop trails, which are accessed exclusively by a short but brutal climb. Thankfully, the eccentric DW link is just as efficient and active as a traditional DW link. Our local descents are twisty and steep, but also very smooth. While pumping through turns and over rollers, the Ripley offers a slightly progressive feel. The bike is agile, but on terrain where 29" wheels were not intended to excel.

My ninety-minute local rides seemed little beneath the bike's epic potential anyway, so I headed for the mountains. The fast rocky descents I sought can only be fully experienced by climbing for two or more hours, which is a breeze on the Ripley. Those descents, though, were not quite as effortless. That firm ride I welcomed at my local trails was not as ideal when careening bashring-deep through a field of loose rocks. In these hairy sections, the Ripley felt somewhere between a slightly longer-legged XC bike and an abuse-hungry trail beast.

Versatility inspired the Ripley's creation. Never mind that it happened to introduce a promising new suspension platform. Few other trail bikes could be your all-day backcountry mule one weekend, and cutting-edge race machine the next.

**Ibis Cycles' Two Cents:** I don't know how to respond, except to say thanks. Thanks because you liked the bike, and also thanks for validating our obsession with making this the best bike we can. Sometimes we wonder if we're going too deep in sweating the details. After reading this, we know we're not. —SCOT NICOL, FOUNDER, IBIS CYCLES