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Transformer Bike

20 questions about the Lapierre Passport



The arrival: A mild-mannered reporter for a great metropolitan mountain bike magazine grabs his case from baggage claim and heads for the trail. The trail? Yes, there is a bike stuffed in that bag.

Q: Is it really easy to unpack and assemble?

A: Unpacking and assembling the Passport was unbelievably simple. The Lapierre comes with instructions, but with basic mountain bike mechanical know-how, you won't need to read them. We recommend shooting each step of the unpacking and assembly process with a point-and-shoot digital camera just so you will remember how it is done.

Q: Where does the bag go once the bike is assembled?

A: The Passport is packed inside the travel case and with it is a sizable backpack. If you want to ride right from the airport, the empty travel case is engineered to fold up small enough to stuff it inside the backpack.

Q: What tools are required for assembly?

A: The Passport comes with a multitool, and the only time we used it

was to snug the pedals to the cranks. The stem and handlebar fit inside the travel case without unclamping them. The stem is tightened or removed from the steerer tube by clamping or unclamping two quick-release clamps. The seatstay, seatpost and wheels all clamp to the frame using quick-release clamps.

Q: Isn't a quick-release clamp on the stem and seat stays sketchy?

A: We never had either clamp give us any problems during testing. Once you clamp the stem to the steerer tube, stand in front of the bike, clamp the front wheel between your legs and give a good tug on the bar. If it doesn't slip on the steerer tube, you're set. We never felt any play in the seat stay area.

Q: How does the rear suspension work?

A: Better than any softtail we've ridden and not as well as any dual-suspension we've ridden. The one

inch of travel feels more like a cushion than true suspension. The chainstay pivots on an oversized bearing outboard of the bottom bracket. The seat stays are mounted on pivots also. This is what makes the rear end fold up so effectively and also makes the Passport feel better than softtails that rely on material flex for their suspension.

Q: Is the Passport going to satisfy a serious mountain biker?

A: Absolutely. Our test bike was a size large and still came in at 26.3 pounds. That's impressive. The bike hammers along with very little bobbing, and it powers up climbs. Even descending is fun. Handling is quick and the tires work well.

Q: Do all the pivots used for folding the bike make it ride wimpy?

A: No. The chassis is surprisingly rigid considering a quick-release clamp is holding the seat stays in place. Pushing a big gear, hitting a



Super softtail: The tiny air shock manages an inch of travel. That may not sound like much, but the bike's active rear suspension is a surprisingly supple ride for a softtail.

corner hard or nailing a line on an off camber section wasn't a problem for the Passport.

Q: Can the Passport be upgraded to disc brakes?

A: A mechanical disc brake could be employed up front. There are no mounts for a disc brake in the rear.

Q: What's the deal with the pedals?

A: The Shimano PD-M324s are flats on one side and clip-in on the other—a cool idea on paper, but not so hot in the real world. We'd swap them for two-sided, clip-in-style pedals.

Q: Could the Passport be my only bike?

A: Yes and no. If your life takes you to the sky a lot, the Passport makes sense. It will save you a ton of time, hassle and even money over the long run. If you only travel occasionally, \$2499.99 is a lot of money to spend on a short-travel (and we mean

"short") trailbike. The Passport is best suited for riders on the go.

Q: How heavy are the bag, bike and tools?

A: Our large bike with tools, riding

gear, hydration pack, shoes and helmet all stuffed in the bag weighed 45 pounds. That's five pounds under the airline's weight penalty. The bag has wheels so you can roll it along the ground or use a shoulder strap to heft it.



Packing: Putting the Passport into its cocoon is close to a tool-less endeavor. Removing the pedals was the only step when we had to use a tool (an Allen key from the supplied multi-tool).

Transformer



Compact Passport: The bar and stem are tucked in a bag and strapped to the reversed fork. The seatstays and chainstays fold under the downtube, and the low-normal rear derailleur tucks in perfectly between the fork sliders.

Q: Will the airlines charge me extra for the bag?

A: If you tell them there is a bike in the bag, you will probably have to pay an additional charge.

Q: Is the bike just as easy to disassemble and pack up?

A: It is not as easy as unpacking it, but with a little practice (and if you didn't overtighten the pedals) you should be able to pack it up in less than ten minutes. Of course, it is a little bit of a hassle if the bike is excessively dirty. We'd recommend cleaning ☐



Quick tricks: Quick releases are used on the seatstays/shock (shown), the seatpost and the handlebar stem. The bar does not need to be removed from the stem for packing. That saves a ton of time.



Climbing fool: Just over 26 pounds and with a solid mix of components, the Passport never feels like a folding, travel bike. It is the real deal. Travelers have never been treated to this much performance out of such a convenient package.



In the bag: Each wheel has a separate bag (the seat and seatpost are secured to one of the bags). The bags strap to the frame and everything fits perfectly inside the main case.



Bag full of tricks: That's it. The complete bike, riding gear, hydration pack and a toothbrush all fit into the Passport's case. No instructions were necessary to unpack or pack the Passport.



Lapierre Passport

Price **\$2499.99**

Country of origin **Taiwan**

Weight **26.3 pounds**

Hotline **(425) 251-1516**

Frame tested **22" (large)**

Bottom bracket height **12.25"**

Chainstay length **16.75"**

Top tube length **24"**

Head angle **71°**

Seat angle **73°**

Standover height **33.5"**

Wheelbase **42.5"**

Suspension travel (front) **3.9"**

Suspension travel (rear) **1"**

Frame material **Aluminum**

Fork **Fox F100 RL**

Shock **Lapierre**

Rims **Mavic CrossRide**

Tires **Michelin Dry2 (2")**

Hub **Mavic CrossRide**

Brakes **Avid Single Digit 8**

Brake levers **Avid Single Digit 8**

Crankset **Shimano 540**

Shifters **Shimano XT Rapid Fire**

Front derailleur **Shimano Deore**

Rear derailleur **Shimano XT**

Chainrings **Shimano XTR (44/32/22)**

Cassette **Shimano XT, 9-speed (11-32)**

Pedals **Shimano PD-M324**