



# Skills Series #8 Hitting Drops

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### Stuff reviewed:

- Long-travel bikes
- Protective wear
- Full-face helmets
- Meaty tires

# New Pivot Bikes

The folks at Pivot have obviously been busy, as they've launched both a new downhill race bike and a redesigned version of their trusty 100mm travel XC/marathon bike.



Phoenix DH

Pivot's new World Cup downhill race machine offers geometry and suspension travel on par with most other DH rigs on the market: 64° head tube, 207mm of travel, 13.6" bottom bracket height (unsagged), 17.25" chainstay length, 83mm threaded bottom bracket shell with ISCG tabs, and a 150mm rear spacing with 12mm rear axle.

The difference between this bike and many of the other DH race bikes on the market—even the other dw-link bikes—is the Pivot attention to detail and emphasis on frame stiffness. The 6061 aluminum frame offers an aggressively hydroformed down tube, 1.5" head tube, and the next generation of Pivot's hollow bottom bracket assembly.

The Phoenix DH's rear dropouts are a bolt-on affair that allow for adjustment of both BB height and chainstay length by swapping dropouts. For those interested in using their DH bike in a park setting, Pivot will offer a dropout that raises the BB to 13.8" and shortens the chainstay in order to make the bike more playful.

Pivot designed the Phoenix DH's rear suspension to provide the compliant and plush feel needed from a DH rig, but with the mid-stroke control and pedaling efficiency we've all come to expect from Pivot. Excellent square-edge bump absorption was also a primary design goal.

Frames will be available in January 2011.



Mach 4

The Mach 4 was one of the first two bikes Pivot launched back in 2007. Just a few years later, it's been given a pretty healthy makeover.

The 2011 Mach 4 remains at 100mm of travel, while the XS and XXS bikes now have 100mm front and rear, too—they had been 80mm. A redesigned top tube, upper shock mount, both linkages, and rear swingarm all contribute to the new frame being 5/8lbs. lighter (283g), despite going to a tapered head tube. The new bike can be run with a 100mm or 120mm fork, and all of Pivot's complete bikes will come with thru-axle forks to maximize stiffness.

The 92mm BB shell remains the same, but SRAM/Truvativ, Race Face and FSA are now

offering BB options in addition to the Shimano BB that had been the only choice when the Mach 4 was first introduced. For riders who prefer to run a single front chainring, Pivot has developed a new bolt-on ISCG 05 adapter plate for chain guide use.

The revised rear suspension uses a shorter-stroke shock, operating at a higher leverage ratio and higher shock pressures, which allows for a flatter spring curve and thus a wider range of tuning—particularly for lighter riders—thanks to the position-sensitive tuning of Fox's Boost Valve shocks. The range of ProPedal settings has also been broadened—open is more plush, while ProPedal 3 is highly efficient with a quick and responsive blowoff.

The new Mach 4 will be available shortly.

True to typical Pivot form, these bikes are both put together extremely well, with frame stiffness and suspension action—particularly mid-stroke performance—sitting on top of the long list of priorities. Check out both my Pivot blogs to get more technical info and ride impressions on both the Mach 4 and Phoenix DH. —Justin Steiner

Go to our website, find the green box to the left, and enter "53" to find the complete blogs from both press camps.

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# RockShox Base Camp

I recently attended RockShox Base Camp in Durango, Colorado, where the suspension-maker unveiled their 2011 product line. We covered a lot of ground, figuratively and literally, but here are some highlights.

Before I talk about the 2011 products that I had a chance to see and ride, I want to briefly mention the engineering that goes on behind the scenes at a company like RockShox. Throughout the presentations, and in personal discussions with engineers, it became apparent that a “continuous improvement” culture permeates RockShox. Unfortunately, small, incremental changes do not always produce the sexy, breakthrough advancements that make for titillating press. However, I’d like to recognize that continuous, incremental improvements often add up to a cumulative whole that is greater than the sum of the parts. Improve a seal here, decrease the friction there, shave few grams on various bits, increase the stiffness on key components—and you end up with noticeably improved performance.

## Cross Country:

The 2011 SID will come in an all-new 120mm version with a redesigned chassis to support the increased travel. Both the 100mm and 120mm SID will be available with 15mm Maxle Lite thru-axles and tapered steerers. I rode the 120mm/15mm Maxle/tapered-steerer model, and found that the SID has come a long way in control and performance since its introduction. The laterally stiff chassis and racy tune should put a smile on the face of longer-travel XC racers, or trail riders looking for a weight-shaving fork.

Big wheels get some longer-travel love with a new 140/130mm 29” model Reba fork that comes in one flavor: tapered aluminum steerer and 20mm Maxle Lite.

## Trail:

I rode the 2011 Revelation World Cup model with the new “Dual Position Air” spring that allows you to cut the travel down from 150mm to 120mm with a twist of a knob (available on all Revelation models in 2011). Durango provided rocky, hard-packed trails that put the Revelation’s bump-eating performance to the test, and it was a great-feeling fork. I took advantage of the reduced-travel setting during steep climbs to keep the front end from wandering, and through some twisty-fast sections to liven up the handling.

## All-Mountain:

I rode the new Reverb adjustable seatpost with 125mm of hydraulic height adjustment, actuated by a push-button Xloc handlebar remote control. Lowering my seatpost, and hence my center of gravity, offered control and cornering advantages under many circumstances, not limited to steep downhill. I felt no perceptible “side play” in the Reverb—it’s triple-keyed to keep it tight. The hydraulic remote has a “return speed” adjustment to keep your saddle from smacking you in the butt. With the seatpost in the “compressed” position, I could lift my bike by the saddle, and the seatpost would stay compressed, for easy portaging. You owe it to yourself to try one of these.

## Downhill:

Vivid Air is an all-new rear shock that shaves 400g from the Vivid coil, and has a spring curve that is virtually identical to the coil version. The shock features the Solo Air spring which fills both the positive and negative chambers through a single Schrader valve, and automatically sets the proper amount of negative air pressure. The new Hot Rod feature automatically adjusts the rebound circuit as the system heats up, which prevents the rebound force from fading on long downhills. RockShox designed the 58mm-diameter air can to fit on the same frames as the coil Vivid. I’ve been told that RockShox’s top athletes are sold on the air in race conditions. Going downhill fast!

—Karl Rosengarth

