



Cube Attention Disc

£449

A lively, well equipped bike for the price. So is there a downside?

WORKSHOP WISDOM



MBUK'S MECHANIC SAYS...

Forking out

There's always something on sub-£500 bikes that's an obvious price-cut to make way for a few attention grabbing bits. Here it's the fork. Its suspension action was stiff to the point of feeling notchy, the lockout feature made the fork knock when riding out of the saddle and there were times we wished for the extra 20mm of travel offered by the other bikes. SR Suntour XCR forks seem to vary a lot at this price.

Cube is another one of the big German bike brands who have become very competitively priced over the last few years. Cube's UK dealer network is evolving fast and their range is comprehensive, so you'll be hearing a lot more about them in the near future. The Attention is one of their RFR (Ready For Racing) competition line, but don't let that put you off. It's a well put-together, easy-riding bike that exhibits, to be frank, some quite stunning componentry choices for the price.

The chassis

The Attention's Aluminium Lite frame is designed for several models in the range, starting at a lower price than this and going higher. It comes with brake bosses for both disc and cantilever brakes (as does the fork) and also has bottle and rack bosses. The down tube is biaxially ovalised for maximum weld strength, with a big bridge gusset linking it to a machined head tube. The rear stays curve out at the tyre and in for heel room and the chainstay already has a neoprene sheath fitted to deflect chain slap.

If a 100mm (3.9in) travel fork had been fitted to the Cube, frame geometry would have been almost the same as the Specialized and the Focus. It has an 80mm (3.2in) travel fork fitted though (the ubiquitous SR Suntour XCR). This steepens the geometry a little, sitting you slightly further forward on the bike and making you work the fork more than on bikes that have slacker geometry.

The fork action was stiffer than the other three bikes, and very clunky if you encounter even small bumps with the lockout applied. The preload dial wasn't very effective, but factory set rebound damping was OK. It seems that the fork is the budget compromise that makes room for the upmarket componentry on the Cube. Something always has to give in this price range.

The detail

The parts highlight on the Cube is the drivetrain. Like the Focus, it has a Shimano Deore XT rear mech with Deore shifters and front mech. Shifts are slick and the upper levers shift either way (starts at Deore level), but we still got chain skip on the middle ring of the Octalink crankset on the

bumps from time to time for the first two rides. Shimano's hydraulic discs are powerfully reliable in all conditions and have nothing less than a superb reputation for long-term reliability.

The Cube's wheels are pretty impressive too, with tough eyeleted rims, Shimano hubs and grippy fast-rolling Schwalbe Smart Sam treads. While many riders feel they should choose heavy-duty all-round tyres, don't underestimate the speed advantage of lower profile tread patterns. They don't offer as much grip in the wet, but they go much faster in the dry and make the bike feel much lighter than big treads that fill with mud.

A low budget Ritchey riser bar, stem and integral headset grace the front end. Even the saddle, a Fi'zi:k Aliante Sport, is a nice offering on a bike at this price.

The ride

The Ready For Racing geometry of the Cube makes for noticeably lively handling and you'll feel a little more pushed towards the front of the bike than on a longer top tubed bike like the Specialized Hardrock. Because of this, you'll still get fairly decent performance »



UPGRADES ELSEWHERE STILL LEAVE IT LOOKING LIKE A BIT OF A BARGAIN

from the underwhelming fork. However, there are often times on persistently rough terrain where you wish the bike had 100mm (3.9in) of plusher fork travel, like on the other bikes, rather than the wooden 80mm (3.2in) on offer here. Basic comfort gets a slight boost from the big tyres and comfy ride position though, and the overall handling character of

the bike is excellent. The fast rolling tyres, the fast handling and the lower than average overall weight of the bike (only the Focus is lighter here) help quite noticeably in acceleration, on climbs and on technical singletrack. But that quicker handling and the stiff shorter travel fork start to show their limitations on difficult descents.

The Cube Attention is the classic case of a cleverly specced sweet riding bike that's slightly let down by a single componentry compromise, the fork. This is a typical scenario at this price, and upgrades elsewhere still leave it looking like a bit of a bargain, so the not-quite-there fork isn't a big deal. The Cube still rides better than we are used to at this price. »

✓ SO GOOD

- Light, lively fast rolling ride character
- Excellent tyres
- XT rear mech, 27 speed Deore elsewhere

✗ NO GOOD

- This particular SR Suntour fork offered pretty underwhelming performance
- Occasional chain skip in middle ring



Some SR Suntour XCR forks seem worse than others



Shimano hydraulic disc are a great choice on a bike at this price



An XT rear mech on a £450 bike is unusual and welcome

MBUK VERDICT



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An excellent overall bike package offering a lively ride that's only slightly let down by obvious budgeting on the fork choice