

A new ERA in suspension? The Extreme Racing Shox ERA Review

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A little over a year ago we had the opportunity to install the Storia V3 shock on our bicycles, manufactured by the Italian company Extreme Racing Shox. This moment remained marked in our memory, we had never experienced such control, traction and support in a shock. We understood at that moment that the Italian company EXT was simply on another level.



The Storia V3 works in an exceptional way, it was necessary to dramatically adjust our front suspensions to try to balance this feeling, the suspension performance did not feel "on par" with the shock, something was missing.

I can imagine that most users of the EXT shock were aware of this situation and it was thanks to them that the company got to work on a suspension capable of accompanying the Storia V3.



Thus came the new Extreme Shox ERA, its mission. Obtain the maximum performance, regardless of the commitments.

The director of the Italian company Franco Fratton is one of the biggest names in the world of suspensions, he has innovated with great creations for Rally cars, creations that have made a difference in the sport.

We knew that the Italian company would develop something very different for its first MTB suspension and of course, we were not wrong.



EXT ERA details

Travel: 140, 150, 160, 170mm

Shot: at the moment it is only available for 29.

HC3 Air System: Here it gets interesting, a little spring, two adjustable air chambers and a negative chamber.

Cartridge with High compression setting, low compression and rebound.

New 7050 T6 alloy forged crown design increases suspension stiffness and prevents noise.

Bars with 36mm diameter.

Offset: 44mm

Weight: 2280g (29, 170mm, uncut head tube, with thru-axle and oil)

High volume cartridge with a Ø22 mm piston, and a separate circuit for rebound and compression oil.

Low friction in all its parts – low friction system with rally materials, combined with specific EXT finishes.



How does this suspension work?

HC3 air system

This system has been developed specifically for the ERA, however it involves concepts found in the best Rally suspensions.

As we mentioned earlier, the Age uses a very different air system, we will begin by explaining a little about this hybrid between air and spring.

Let's summarize it in the simplest way possible.

At the beginning of its travel the suspension uses a small spring, this will help to start the movement with little effort, which produces an exceptional initial sensitivity.



It has two positive air chambers and one high volume negative chamber. These two positive chambers allow us to infinitely adjust the medium support and the progressivity of its travel, while the high-volume negative chamber gives us a feeling very similar to that of a spring.

The ERA does not require tokens, spacers or volume reducers, the last part of the route (Bottom Out) is controlled by air, so we have infinite possibilities for adjustment.



The cartridge features high speed, low speed and rebound compression settings. You'll have many adjustments that will help you to adapt the ERA to your taste, type of handling and terrain.



Rigidity

Extreme Shox has solved this issue in a different way, it has sought to increase the rigidity through its crown and not its bars.

The crown along with the head tube have a very particular design that helps to create a solid suspension in all directions and most importantly, free of unwanted noise and much dreaded creaking.

The photos don't do justice to the great work of this piece, you'll have to see it for yourself to really appreciate it.



The Extreme Shox ERA on the slopes!

We can talk all day about the new technology of this suspension but let's get to what really matters, how it all translates on the trails.

From the first ride we felt confident with the suspension, this thanks to the settings table provided by EXT, it is very successful! From this point on, only minor adjustments were necessary.



The sensitivity of the ERA is something very special, the beginning of the route is very smooth, and the small vibrations, roots and stones are completely erased from the trail, the force of these impacts never reaches your hands.

The first part of the route gives us an impressive grip in curves, the front tire sticks to the ground always maintaining traction.

On long tracks we appreciate the sensitivity, our hands get much less tired than before.

Suspension performance is predictable no matter how long the track is, thanks to the size of its pistons and its large volume of oil.



We can say that the mid-range support is what separates this suspension from the rest. Despite having a super smooth start, the route is used with precision, when we reach the mid-range we have a lot of support on which to push the bike, either to generate speed by pumping or by preloading before jumping over obstacles.

It is a very responsive and agile suspension, always keeping travel reserves available for any emergency.

The sprint pedaling is very efficient, we did not feel that the suspension sank and absorbed our energy, on the contrary, with each turn of the pedals we can feel the acceleration, and what is even better, this speed that we have just gained is preserved in every moment.

When passing over the rock gardens or roots, only the necessary route is used, this helps to preserve the geometry of the bicycle and our position on it, we can feel how it floats on the stones without sinking and losing speed.

During heavy impacts and steep corners, we can feel the rigidity of the chassis, it is easy to maintain a line even on very rough terrain.

At the end of our descents, we realized that we were not using all the available travel, despite this, the suspension felt very smooth and responsive at all times, a few small adjustments to the air chamber and its final progression was perfect. The big impacts were well controlled, the sensitivity and traction did not change, while the medium support was still impressive.



We believe that this suspension is extremely capable under the command of an Elite rider, that is why we asked the opinion of Edgar, who tested the suspension to the maximum and gave us his opinion, this is the result.

"After mounting the ERA on my bike, it was very easy to adjust it. Based on the recommended setting for my weight, I just had to increase the pressure in the two chambers a little (yes, it has two valves) and adjust the rebound a few clicks to feel totally comfortable with the performance.

Two things impressed me. The first was that, for such an expensive suspension it did not have any type of blocking for the climbs, after a few minutes going up the gap I noticed that the league that shows the route had not moved, even when I stopped from the seat to pedal. I don't know what kind of magic they used but it works excellent.

The second was how predictable my bike became in parts of rock gardens with large stones, it was very easy for me to maintain the line I wanted, with a feeling of total confidence. This thanks to the way the fork stays on the start of the ride, maximizing the geometry of the bike.

The fork absorbs the irregularities of the terrain using very little of its route, using more when necessary, for example on steps or drops to the plane.

This suspension is for those who do not choose components for fashion or looks, but for those who seek the best performance regardless of the price tag. It is a suspension that goes unnoticed, but if you look closely, the quality and machining of many of its parts is impressive.

After testing it, I set myself the mission of making my fork feel the same way and I really don't know if I have succeeded. "

In short, we were impressed with how the ERA works, which seems to do everything right! Thanks to its HC3 system the start is very smooth, the mid-range support is excellent, and the final progression can be adjusted without compromising other parts of the course, everything seems perfect, too good to be true? What is its defect? The price, if you want to obtain the maximum performance, is going to cost you... a lot.

As we mentioned at the beginning, this is a totally performance-focused suspension, with no compromises. Each part inside was created to avoid friction, its tolerances are extremely precise, and the finishes used are the best, only then can this level of performance be achieved.

While this is the first suspension from the Italian company EXT, it has really started on the right foot, the Extreme Shox ERA offers us category-leading performance.