

FOR 2010, FOX HAS CONCENTRATED EFFORTS ON THEIR TRAIL BIKE SUSPENSION COMPONENTS, REDESIGNING THE 32 FORKS AND FLOAT SHOCKS. FOX TENDS TO LINK ADVANCEMENTS IN THEIR FORKS WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY IN THEIR SHOCKS, AND THE PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT IN BOTH COMPONENTS ARE NEW DAMPING SYSTEMS.

2010 Fox 32 Talas FIT RLC & Float RP23

THE FORK TECHNOLOGY

For 2010, Fox will be offering all of their 32 model forks in 140mm and 150mm of travel with the option to have a 1-1/8-inch or 1-1/2- to 1-1/8-inch tapered steer tube (\$25 extra). In the air forks, Fox lowered the air spring compression curve and all of the 32 forks get a new damping cartridge.

FIT Cartridge New for 2010, the Fox Isolated Technology (FIT) cartridge is a sealed unit that uses an external bladder for volume compensation. Fox went to the sealed cartridge design to eliminate fluid aeration and provide more consistent damping than the previous open bath system. The FIT cartridge also uses less oil so it sheds about 71 grams off the RLC model and 67 grams off the RL model.

The inverted cartridge design – placing the compensator bladder and cartridge body on the top – changes a few things on the 32 forks. The rebound damping adjuster is now located at the bottom of the fork, while the lockout, lockout threshold and low-speed compression adjuster knobs are on the top.

THE FORK RIDE

We've tested two 150mm-travel Talas RLC forks with 15mm axles – one with a 1-1/8-inch steer tube and another with a 1-1/2- to 1-1/8-inch tapered steer tube. While the benefits of the new cartridge system provide a noticeable improvement to the damping control, the combination of the oversized axle and steer tube take trail riding to another level.

Tapered Steer Tube Although just about all steer tubes have some form of taper or butting, the steer tube design that starts with a 1-1/2-inch outer diameter at the lower headset cup and ends up with a 1-1/8-inch diameter at the upper cup is becoming known as the "tapered" steer tube. At 140mm and 150mm of travel, the weight is negligible between the standard 1-1/8-inch and the 1-1/2- to 1-1/8-inch tapered steer tube sizes, but the performance benefits of the oversized tapered steer tube are outstanding. After riding both steer tube sizes on several different types of terrain, we'd recommend the tapered steer tube wholeheartedly. It adds enough performance that it should be considered when making a new bike choice since you need a compatible head tube to use it.

Combining the oversized tapered steer tube with a 15QR axle, the 32 Talas has a noticeable increase in steering and braking precision. It also provides more confidence when plowing over rugged sections as the fork flexes less and absorbs impacts better. Compared to a fork with an 1-1/8-inch steer tube and standard dropouts, our test fork felt leaps and bounds better on technical trails and we are sure the oversized steer tube and axle

Talas Travel Adjuster

Offering three travel settings via two clicks, the Talas travel adjuster will help any bike climb better.

We rarely used the 110mm-travel setting as it lowers the front end of the bike a lot, but the 130mm-travel setting is ideal for most climbs. The adjuster is easy to hit on-the-fly and the fork remains active to absorb bumps, unless you want it to remain static, in which case you can turn on the lockout.

Damping The FIT cartridge is not only lighter, it offers better damping management. The low-speed compression damping adjuster has better control and more sensitivity than the previous design. The fork has consistent damping and absorbs impacts and multiple hits extremely well, but it can feel divvy through high-speed corners and g-outs if you ride over the front end to gain traction. On the other hand, we were impressed with how well a fork of this size can track the terrain and plow over nasty rock sections, and with the help of the Talas travel adjuster, the 32 Talas FIT RLC can cover a remarkable assortment of trails.

THE SHOCK TECHNOLOGY

The structure of the Float RP23 and RP2 rear shocks remains relatively the same; it's the internals that have changed. The RP23 and RP2 models have an on/off ProPedal to aid efficiency while the RP23 also lets the rider choose between three ProPedal threshold options – light, medium and firm.

Boost Valve The big advancement in the Float rear shocks is the Boost Valve, which is the compression damping circuit of the shock. Fox has been using this technology in their shocks for years and the recent improvements allow the valving to open extremely fast to absorb bumps, even when the ProPedal switch is engaged.

THE SHOCK RIDE

We tested the Float RP23, Fox's most popular rear shock. It's lightweight, the ProPedal switch greatly improves a bike's efficiency and it absorbs hits better than any air shock on the market.

ProPedal Fox offers several damping and ProPedal settings for their shocks so bike manufacturers can choose the right tune for their chassis design. In most cases, the three ProPedal threshold settings on a RP23 shock can be described as light, medium and firm. Turning the ProPedal on minimizes the movement of the suspension and therefore increases a bike's efficiency, and with the Boost Valve's ability to blow off so well, most riders loved the firm ProPedal setting for all-around riding. However, the three ProPedal settings give riders the choice to pick what they like.

Boost Valve The new Boost Valve design is able to open up extremely well to absorb bumps. This allows the Float rear shock to smooth out hard hits and successive impacts better than any air shock we've ridden. The shock also tends to ride lower in the travel through rough terrain, which slackens the head angle and provides more stability. Between the efficiency gains of the ProPedal adjuster and the bump absorption of the Boost Valve, this is by far the best Float shock Fox has ever made and the most impressive air shock we've ridden. □

PRICE: 32 Talas FIT RLC – \$800,
Float RP23 – \$395;

WEIGHT: 32 Talas FIT RLC (192mm
1-1/2- to 1-1/8-inch steer tube) –
3.92 lbs., Float RP23 (8.5x2.5 w/
hardware) – 311 grams;

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2010 Fox Float RP23 Shock

Sizes: 5.5x1.0, 6.0x1.25, 6.5x1.5,
7.5x2.0 (tested), 7.875x2.0,
7.875x2.25, 8.5x2.5 (tested).
Spring System: Air
Damping System: Hydraulic

2010 Fox Talas RLC Fork

Travel: 110/130/150mm

Spring System: Air

Damping System: Sealed
Hydraulic Cartridge

Adjustments: Low-speed
compression and rebound
damping, lockout, lockout
threshold, travel

