



## MANITOU MCLEOD shockcraft.co.nz

Manitou is back in the shock game, and back with a vengeance.

The McLeod works a little differently to other shocks. An external Incremental Platform Adjust (IPA) lever has four settings to increase the spring threshold on the compression shim stack, allowing the rider to easily adjust the pedalling platform from plush to firm.

The compression range is also adjustable inside the air can. This shock had been set to the firmer end, and Dougal from New Zealand Manitou agent Shockcraft increased the Internal Floating Piston (IFP) pressure to suit my riding style.

The shock uses a sealed negative air chamber, so there's no problem adding oil to the air can, for example, if you want more progression, though Dougal cautions against doing this to prevent bottom-out. It's a terrible tuning tool and results in short mid stroke and rapid rebound; it's a better idea to use more compression damping.

Manitou takes an alternative approach to damping rates, and I discovered a very different feel and a seemingly greater level of traction than I'd experienced before. A higher low-speed compression adds more tractive force to the wheels during small compressions, and the high speed rebound shims keep the wheels returning quickly to the ground on the back side of bumps. This makes the bike glide over terrain.

The McLeod's impressive performance is enhanced by its slight weight (279 grams); I reckon it gives the mighty Fox X2 a run for its money, yet in a cheaper, lighter package. The IPA system works a treat. Open it up for DH runs, click it up one notch to smash berms or jumps, firm it up another click when you want to go hard and fast. And it feels consistent all the way through the stroke.

The rebound knob has no position detents, so you need to remember the position visually—my only criticism.

Endowed with a terrain-eating ability that delivers a smooth ride while still maintaining a heap of playfulness, this unit surprised me, and has made me want to have a closer look at Manitou's fork range.

Thinking about an upgrade? Don't pass this little beauty over. - Rod Bardsley