



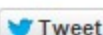
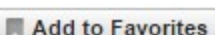
PINKBIKE REVIEWS

HT Components X1 Pedal - Review

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by **Mike Kazimer**

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HT Components X1 Pedal

If you're going to design a clipless pedal for downhill racing, you might as well involve one of the fastest racers on the World Cup circuit, and that's just what HT Components did when they brought Aaron Gwin aboard to help with the development of the X1. Gwin even won the first round of the World Cup season aboard a prototype version of the pedal, which is now in full production. The X1 uses a CNC-machined aluminum body, complete with five replaceable pins on each side, to provide a solid platform around the clip-in mechanism. The cleat is HT's own design, and there are two versions available that offer different release angles. The X2 cleats included with the pedal release at 8-10 degrees and have a claimed 4.5 degrees of float. Three cartridge bearings and one DU bushing are in place to allow the pedal body to rotate around a chromoly spindle. Dimensions: 83.5 x 92.5 x 16.7mm. The X1 is \$169 USD with ten different color options and weighs in at 475 grams per pair (*actual*). If weight is more of a concern than price, a ti-spindled version is available for \$269 that checks in at a claimed 416 grams.

www.ht-components.com



The X1 feels extremely secure thanks to the wide aluminum platform and plenty of available spring tension.

On the Trail

The X1s have a massive amount of available spring tension, which is adjusted via a hex screw on each side of the pedal. With Shimano's clipless pedals I typically have the tension nearly maxed out, but it was possible to achieve a similar feel on the X1 with them set to the halfway mark on the tension indicator. While getting everything installed, I did end up removing the two rear traction pins on each side of the pedal because they were digging into the soles of the Giro Terraduro shoes I was using, which made it more difficult to get them to release. This would be less likely to occur with skate style shoes that have a more uniform, flatter sole, but it's worth checking for any interference before heading out on a ride.

Clipping into the pedals requires the same toe-first method that anyone who's used SPD-style pedals before will be familiar with, although the front portion of the mechanism can be a little trickier to find. After a few rides it became more intuitive, but the ease of entry isn't quite on par with Shimano's offerings. Once you're in, the pedals feel incredibly solid underfoot thanks to the aluminum platform and the strong spring retention. In fact, the X1s felt more secure underfoot than any clipless pedal I've used in recent memory, and there were no inadvertent releases, even when plowing through sections of extremely rough trail. The amount of float is minimal, and it felt like there was well less than the 4.5 degrees that HT claim the pedal has - I would have guessed there was a degree or two at most. This is also likely one of the reasons the pedals felt so secure, but it does take some getting used to when switching from pedals that allow for a wider range of low-friction movement.

When it comes time to exit the pedals, if you unclip with confidence, the release is smooth and predictable, but the cleats have a tendency to hang up slightly when unclipping slowly, the type of scenario that occurs if you partially twist your foot when entering a tricky technical section, and then go to unclip fully when it becomes necessary to dab. In this type of situation, the front of the cleat would occasionally get caught under the toe bail and require an additional wiggle to get it free. I was always able to get out successfully, but there's still room for improvement when it comes to the X1's cleat design. As far as performance in muddy conditions goes, the super sloppy dark days of winter haven't arrived yet here in the Pacific Northwest, but on the handful of wet rides I took the pedals on they shed mud and grime well, and never clogged up enough to prevent clipping in. Even after those muddy rides, and many other dry dusty ones throughout the summer, the X1s are still spinning smoothly, with only a few scratches on the aluminum body to show for all the miles of rugged terrain they've been dragged through.

Pinkbike's Take:

There's certainly a spot in the clipless pedal market for HT's latest entry. The more options the better, especially if the additional competition encourages other pedal manufacturers to step up their game and create a wider range of clipless pedals with a usable platform around the retention mechanism. The X1's aren't perfect, but a little more float and a slightly smoother release is all they need to bump their performance up to the next level. For riders who are constantly blowing out of pedals that don't have enough spring tension on tap, and who place a higher priority on staying clipped in rather than ease of entry and exit, the X1 could be just the ticket. - Mike Kazimer