

Maxm MX-5 Bar

Here's a product to pacify a serious obsessive-compulsive disorder! That's if you're obsessive about weight and a compulsive purchaser of premium products. Maxm makes a range of lightweight, high end carbon fibre components including MTB handlebars and seat posts.

I tested the low rise Maxm MX-5 handlebar—it has a 1 inch rise, 7 degree bend and a 4 degree sweep. The shape of the bars was neat and well suited to cross country use. The red and yellow decals looked excellent on my Specialized Epic, but if you prefer, they also offer them in a blue and silver combination. The Maxm range of bars not only looks the part but they can also shave some 60% of the weight off a pair of standard aluminium handlebars. By replacing my Specialized 6061 aluminium bars I shaved a worthwhile 160 grams off my trusty steed.

Size Options

There are two other size and shape options within the Maxm range. The MX-1 cross country flat bar is 590mm wide, has a 5 degree bend and weighs in at a measly 105g! At the opposite end of the scale the MX-6 is a full 68.5cm wide. This Maxm bar has a 1.5 inch rise, 9 degree bend and a 4 degree sweep—it weighs 175g.

At 610mm in width the MX-5 test handlebars were slightly narrower than my old bars. This was a good thing at the time as the weekend after fitting them I raced the Mont 24 hour. Those who were in it would know that every millimetre was critical for fitting through some of the narrow gaps between the pine trees! As with most things this can be a trade off. The narrow bars may have slipped between the trees with less attentiveness

but they required more muscle and concentration to hang onto on fast and rocky trails. If you prefer some extra leverage go for the wider MX-6 bar.

Hidden Support


In fitting with the current lightweight trend these bars are manufactured from carbon fibre and resin. The interesting part is that Maxm have used what they call 'IsoGrid Technology'. To quote Maxm this is, "a structural reinforcement of carbon and aramid on the inside wall surface that allows for dramatic weight reduction while maintaining phenomenal strength." This special strengthening is

visible on the inside of the bar. When you look down one end of the handlebar you can see a criss-crossed network of raised fibres within the carbon material—this is the IsoGrid reinforcing. This reinforcement is said to give the carbon fibre a better strength to weight ratio and enable it to better resist bending or buckling failures.

Maxm cover their handlebars with a 'limited lifetime warranty'. This covers the original purchaser against failures due to faulty materials or workmanship but doesn't cover crash damage or failure due to incorrect fitting. Whilst Maxm says that they will repair or replace the product I am sure that most riders won't want to test their warranty procedure out—breaking handlebars can really hurt! I rode these bars solidly for just over four months with no problems but it is difficult to give judgement on their long term durability.

Despite their feathery weight these bars felt very sturdy—I certainly couldn't feel any flex when riding with them. Most of the time you hear carbon fibre touted as offering shock absorbing qualities. With a set of decent suspension forks up front it was difficult to gauge any real difference in this area. I can say that despite their relative stiffness there was no obvious increase in the vibrations that I felt coming up from the trail.

Maxm includes a very specific and easy to understand instruction sheet. Amongst other things it warns you, "An inability to follow the instruction could cause product failure." They say that the bars can be cut to size and they supply the instructions for doing so. The MX-1 flat bar has been designed for use with bar ends and is reinforced accordingly. The MX-5 and MX-6 riser bars are not designed for use with bar ends—they lack the reinforcing required to cope with the clamping pressures that bar ends can apply.

The down side of the bars is the same as most lightweight carbon components—with a recommended retail price of \$245 they are not cheap! However this is in the ballpark for this sort of product. The bottom line is, these bars save weight, feel great and look good to boot! 

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