

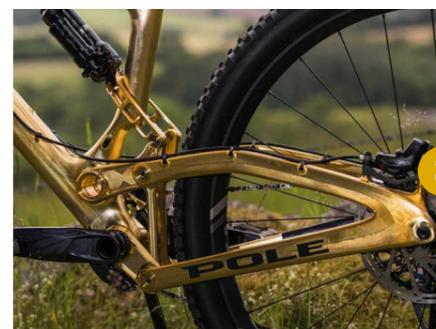
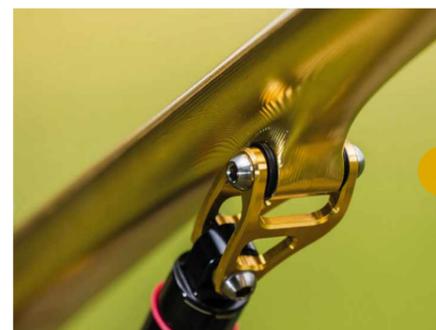
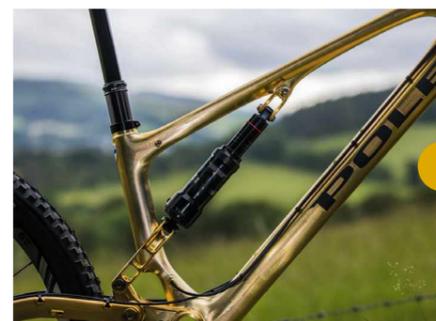


Super BIKE MBLIK

#110 POLE BICYCLES STAMINA 160 REMASTERED

Unique CNC-machined 'fun machine' with cutting-edge geometry

Words Will Stoffe Pics Ian Linton



Finnish brand Pole first came to our attention in 2016 with their Evolink 140. One of the longest and slackest bikes on the market at the time (hell, even today the large size's 64.5-degree head angle and 510mm reach are unusual for a mid-travel 29er), it garnered rave reviews. Pole (Finnish for 'pedal') followed it up with their first CNC-machined aluminium bike, the Machine, two years later. They then went back to the drawing board and refined the concept to create the Stamina you see here. The gold finish may be what first catches your eye, but there's a lot going on underneath, too.

The two monocoque halves of the Stamina's front triangle (1&2) and all the suspension links are machined in-house in Finland, from solid billets of aluminium. Why go through such a painstaking process when you could just weld prefabricated tubes together? Pole wanted to use aerospace-grade 7075-T6 alloy, which has greater fatigue, shear and tensile strength than the 6061-T6 aluminium conventionally used to build bikes. As 7075 can't be welded efficiently, they settled on CNC machining instead, and developed a cutting-edge, patent-pending method of bonding the two halves of the frame together. Pole say the special glue they use is so tough that the process is stronger than welding.

While the Machine was bolted together as well as bonded, the Stamina foregoes the bolts – Pole say these were just a precaution. The result, they claim, is a near-indestructible, seamless frame that's both light and stiff. And you don't have to take their word for it – they submitted the Stamina to independent German testing company EFBE Prüftechnik, who put it through their TRI-TEST GRAVITY process. Developed for DH and enduro bikes, and involving fatigue, maximum load and overload tests, this goes way beyond the ISO and European EN standards, and the bike passed with flying colours.

The Stamina 160 is the most adjustable frame in the range (there's a Stamina 140 and 180 too). It can be set up either as a full 29er or as a 'mullet bike' with a 650b rear wheel. In addition, frame travel can be increased from 160mm to 180mm by swapping the shock yoke and shock (2). Pole's latest swingarm has a patented 'Dogbone' strengthening link between the seatstays and chainstays. **Weight is kept down by machined parts that are hollow, like bones (3).** Other features include a SRAM Universal Derailleur Hanger, which protects the mech against chain jams by pivoting out of the way, and an integrated STFU Bike anti-chain slap device.

To connect the swingarm to the frame, Pole use huge Enduro MAX sealed

bearings for stiffness and longevity. The main pivot runs on a whopping 40mm axle, while others are 25mm. With their experience of northern European riding conditions, Pole have designed the frame with massive clearance for muddy or wide tyres, and the links have smooth surfaces so grime can pass through easily. These make the bike easy to clean, too. Another practical design element is the choice of external cable routing, using special holes in the frame, to keep maintenance simple. In addition, there's room for two bottles within the front triangle and another below the down tube, so there's no need to load excess weight on your back.

Pole are known for their progressive geometry, and the Stamina 160 doesn't disappoint. Key measurements include a slack 62.9-degree head angle (with a 170mm-travel RockShox ZEB fork fitted), a super-steep 80-degree effective seat tube angle and reach figures from 450mm to 540mm. The chainstays are comparatively short, at 450mm – Pole say the bike is for those who "prefer a gravity-oriented party ride".

An electrophoretic coating protects the raw finish of the frame without concealing the beauty of the machine-patterned surface (4). Only a few microns thick, this offers higher corrosion and wear resistance than anodising. Frames come with a clearcoat as standard, but Pole have developed two tinted opaque finishes at their on-site facility. The 'True Gold' colour certainly looks special! They also offer 'Storm Grey', and are busily experimenting to bring more options (all an extra €80). You can choose the colour of the shock yokes and links too, in case you fancy rocking a multi-coloured frame.

As well as building highly-innovative bikes, Pole take their environmental and social responsibilities very seriously. The in-house electrophoretic process ticks the Finnish company's eco boxes because it's water-based and the fully-closed system doesn't use any heavy or toxic chemicals. Manufacturing and assembling all their Staminas in-house gives the brand control over frame quality and labour standards, and also means fewer air miles for components, and therefore a smaller carbon footprint for each frame produced. Pole's CNC manufacturing process also allows them to keep their environmental impact down, and they recycle all the offcut aluminium that they can. ⚙️

INFO

Price: €3,911.29 (frame only, exc. VAT); complete bike seen here €5,604.84 (exc. VAT)
Contact: <https://polebicycles.com>
Also try: ARBR RB2, £4,250 (frame only), www.arbr.bike