

REVIEW

Stems

In a forensic analysis of the **mbr** archives, we seek out the best kit from the last 12 months

For full review see **mbr** January 2009

THOMSON X4 ELITE £74.99

Thomson uses a special plating process on its stem bolts to resist corrosion. There's a tendency to over-tighten the bolts so they bottom out, but if you keep to the torque settings they are more than secure. All the clamp edges are smooth so this unit works with carbon bars. Not being forged means it isn't as stiff as some, but there aren't many stems we'd choose before this one.



RACE FACE DEUS XC £69.95

The shot-peened finish on Race Face parts isn't what it used to be, but we can't fault the stem otherwise. Available in all the key sizes, the forged 7050 aluminium stem is mid-pack in the weight stakes. We've experienced some corrosion on the bolts, but you can always upgrade to the SL, which has titanium hardware. As a package, this stem isn't light, but it's killer value, and it's available in every size — which is the reason why we have it on our own bikes.



EASTON EA90 £69.99

The EA90 stem gets the new Top-Lock faceplate, and an oversized extension tube, but while it's debatable whether offset steerer bolts offer more clearance, the bias cut is redundant as nearly all mtb steerer tubes are aluminium. This stem doesn't get maximum marks simply because of the lack of short lengths.

