

BMX PLUS!

BUDGET BUYER'S GUIDE

20 PRODUCTS THAT OFFER MORE FOR LESS

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REDLINE'S MX 20
HARO'S 300.1

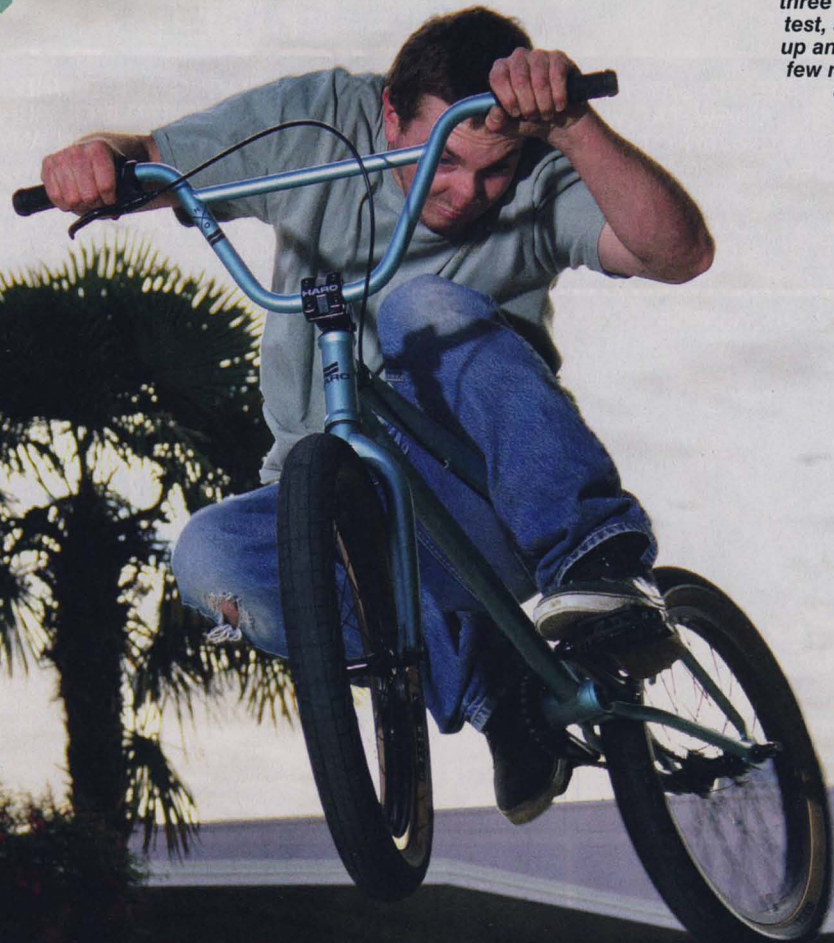
SIMPLE SESSION
ROCKS ESTONIA

\$5.99



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Mitchell fired out this trash-can hop about three seconds into the test, so we quickly set up and had him do it a few more times so we could snap a pic.



HARO 300.1

How much can you get for under \$400?



When you're in the market for a new bike, there are several things that you need to consider or features that you may look for, but in the end, most of us are limited by what's in our wallet. Fortunately for you, if you're looking to get into BMX and only have about \$400 in your wallet, your money will go a lot further these days than it would have 10 years ago. Over the years the Haro brand has gone through every phase and trend in BMX, and like most brands, they have had their hits and their misses. But over the past couple years, we've seen nothing but hits come out of the Haro factory, as they have put out some of the best-looking, and riding, bikes that we have had the pleasure of testing. Being that this is our budget issue, we asked Haro to send us over their 2014 300.1, an entry-level bike with a retail price of \$389 that we felt would truly showcase what the brand was capable of when keeping the price down was a top priority. Did the 300.1 hold up to the *BMX Plus!* test force? Let's find out.

DESCRIBING

The Haro 300.1 is designed for the budding BMXer, with features that will get you well on your way into the world of BMX. A chromoly front triangle provides some added strength to the frame, and Haro gives you the option of two top tube sizes—20.5-inch or 21-inch—depending on your height. The frame features a Mid bottom bracket shell, an integrated head tube and integrated seat clamp. The fork on the 300.1 features a chromoly steer tube with tapered legs and meets up with a forged alloy front-load stem. Due to the top tube options, Haro decided to give the riders the best fit possible, with handlebars that accommodate the individual frames, offering an 8.5-inch-rise bar on the 20.5-inch model and an 8.75-inch on the 21-inch.

Haro's Team grips will keep your hands where they're supposed to be, and if you need to stop, you've got a set of alloy U-brakes with soft brake pads that will help speed up the process. A pair of three-piece chromoly cranks with

an eight-spline spindle spin freely on a sealed Mid bottom bracket, and a steel 25t sprocket meets up with a one-piece nine-tooth driver at the rear hub. Both front and rear hubs are laced up to a set of Alienation PBR rims, and you get a fat 2.4-inch Haro La Mesa tire up front, while the rear gets the 2.2-inch version of Dennis Enarson's signature La Mesa tire. Haro's recycled plastic pedals and one-piece padded seat help to keep the weight down, and the 300.1 comes in three different colorways so there is an option for everyone.

TESTING

Our first thought when looking at the 300.1 was that this was definitely a good-looking bike for the money. Usually, when dealing with less expensive bikes, it is easy to look at them and tell where costs were cut and money was saved, but the 300.1 had a quality look with all the details in all the right spots. To help us out with our test, we once again enlisted the skills of our resident test rider, Mitchell Gambel, to give the Haro his special treatment.

We met up with him at a local school to clock a street-session break-in on the 300.1 before heading to a skatepark to finish off the test.

In true Mitchell fashion, we handed him the bike, he felt the brakes, bounced it on the ground, got on, and then proceeded to take five strong pedals in a straight line and bunnyhop a trash can—so much for the warm-





up period. With the session kick-started into high gear, the 300.1 got a high-speed introduction to the world of street riding, and we couldn't help but be pleasantly surprised at its performance. When it came to the geometry, we felt right at home with the 21-inch top tube and 13.75-inch rear end, a geometry that is great for all types of riding and perfect for taller entry-level riders.

Pulling up for manuals felt easy but controlled, while bunnyhopping and spinning felt comfortable and stable. When paired up with the front-load stem, the 8.75-inch bars felt just right, giving us enough height to be comfortable while allowing for us to get over the front end of the bike a little easier than with a shorter setup. Perhaps our favorite feature on the Haro was Dennis Enarson's signature La Mesa tires, which were just the right size and offered plenty of grip, never leaving us feeling uneasy. There are not a lot of bikes out there in this price range that you can find with a set of quality aftermarket tires, but Haro pulled it off, and, in our opinion, it really helped raise the value of the bike and added to its overall appeal.

We rode around a schoolyard for a couple of hours, pedal-grinding ledges and doing barspins and 360s down a small three-set, always with ease and often forgetting that we were on a test bike. Once we were content with our session, we loaded up and headed off to a local skatepark for a quick session



before the sun went down. Zipping around the park felt similar to our street session, with the geometry once again leaving us feeling comfortable and confident as we blasted airs and ripped around bowl corners this time around. We had no problems tweaking a few inverters and turndown airs, and even got a little tech on the coping with some footjam variations. As the sun was setting, we capped off our session with a couple of tailwhips before we packed it up and called it a day.

ANY ISSUES

Despite our time on the 300.1 being extremely enjoyable, there were just a couple of small hiccups that we need to mention. Our first speed bump came in the way of the stem slipping. No matter

how much we tightened it up, whenever we did a high bunnyhop or drop where we were putting a lot of torque on the front end, it would eventually slip. While we know that we may have ridden the bike a bit harder than any beginner rider would have, we're sure that if we sanded down the bars and scuffed up the clamping surface on the stem it would fix the problem. In the end, we think it just had to do with the stem being unable to hold under the torque of such tall bars. As good as the front end felt, we think that a top-load stem with 8.5-inch bars instead of a front-load stem with 8.75-inchers would cut down on the torque while still delivering the same feel.

The only other issue we had was

with the brakes and gray brake pads easing us to a stop instead of giving us a satisfactory lock-up. It is rare that any stock brakes will lock up on the bike with black anodized rims without clear brake pads, so we are pretty used to this, and something as simple as upgrading the pads for 10 bucks would be a quick and permanent fix.

THE VERDICT

No matter how many bikes we ride, we are constantly amazed at how far completes have come, and the Haro 300.1 is a perfect example of just that. With a price point that is within reach of many beginner riders, and two geometry options depending on rider size, Haro has really done their homework with the

300.1 in making it a logical option for most any rider. Despite the couple of small issues that we had, the bike rode great, and we don't see any of those as an absolute deal-breaker. Sand the paint from the clamping surface of the bars and invest in some clear brake pads (if you even intend to run brakes) and you are left with a bike that is in a league all on its own. The components package is great, and with aftermarket features like the La Mesa tires, soft Haro Team grips and Haro recycled plastic pedals, you end up with a bike that not only rides well but looks good too. □

HEAD TUBE: 75°
SEAT TUBE: 71°
TOP TUBE: 20.5" or 21"
CHAINSTAY: 13.75"
WEIGHT: 25.5 lb.
PRICE: \$389

HITS:

- Great geometry
- Quality tires
- Clean finish

MISSES:

- Stem slipped
- Brakes didn't lock up

This high wall ride from flat was no match for the 300.1.