

MISFIT FUBAR HANDLEBAR

Handlebars—so simple and maintenance free that I bet you rarely think about them. Yet they are a vital component on your bike for control and comfort. Until a few years ago the design choices for your MTB were easy: flat bar or riser. However, a number of less traditional shapes with wide sweep have made their way to the market recently. Misfit Psycles has its own aluminum versions that go by the names FUbar and FU2bar.

Identical except for the width (the FU2bar is 35mm narrower), the bars are made from 6061 aluminum and come in everyone's favorite color: black. Since I can only fit one handlebar on my bike at a time and I like the wide ones, I opted for the 635mm FUbar.

The numbers look like this: 378 grams with 33° of back sweep and 26mm of rise. They also sport 20mm of forward sweep, which keeps you from needing a crazy long stem. Despite this I still needed to bump my stem length up when swapping out my similar Jones H-Bar. A bit more forward sweep would be nice in my opinion; this would negate the need for the longer stem.

The bar wall is nice and thick, good stuff for taking a beating but enough to keep them off of the weight weenie's ride. It also makes for a fairly stiff bar for transferring power. The clamp diameter is 25.4mm for "old school" stems; no over-sized option is currently available. The little skull silk-screened in the center looks cool but it's hidden by the stem's faceplate. In its place I'd rather have alignment marks to make centering the bar in the stem easier. A minor quibble though.

Just like any handlebars, set-up is key. For me this meant setting

the bar tips down at a slight angle and having them just below my saddle height. This put me in a fairly upright position with the bars resting comfortably in my hands. [See our *Alt-Bar Setup* article on page 90 for more tips. —Ed.]

Now that we have the specs and set-up out of the way it's time to get down to business: how did they ride? Putting a set of wide sweep bars on your mountain bike makes it fun, comfortable and doesn't hurt performance—at least not for me. Your wrist position becomes more natural, something you might not notice until you try a bar like this. It might take you a couple of rides to get used to this new position, but when you do you probably won't regret it. If you ever have had wrist pain it might just go away. Leverage to pull the front end up increases making those log piles a wee bit easier to handle. That extra leverage can work against you though if you are an aggressive rider. Twice during the testing period I had minor slipping of the bar in the stem. First was a long, high-speed rocky descent while the second was after landing a jump. Running a rigid front end surely didn't help, but a bit of enthusiastic tightening of the stem bolts prevented any further reoccurrence.

The fun part comes from feeling like you've got a pair of high performance cruiser bars on your mountain bike. Maybe it's just me, but I feel like I get more smiles for my miles with the swept back style while I'm still able to ride as aggressively as ever.

So, to sum up: the FUbar is a wide sweep bar for a reasonable price (\$48.95) available in black from Misfit Psycles. —Joe Whitehair
www.misfitpsycles.com

