



CANFIELD BROTHERS EPO

TESTER: Jon Pratt AGE: 45 HEIGHT: 5'11" WEIGHT: 195 lbs. INSEAM: 31"

PRICE: \$1,700 (frame only) SIZES: M, L (tested) ONLINE: canfieldbrothers.com

Wheelbase:	46.4"
Top Tube:	24.8"
Head Angle:	66.8°
Seat-Tube Angle:	74.5°
Bottom Bracket:	12.6"
Rear Center:	16.3"
Weight:	26.4 lbs. w/o pedals
<i>specs based on size tested</i>	

The Canfield EPO is a sexy carbon 29er hardtail born from the gravity-loving minds at Canfield Brothers. Its very name is meant to take a jab at the carbon hardtail 29er racing crowd. This is by no means a bike meant for your next cross-country race, but could be ridden in one if you really wanted to. The EPO is Canfield Brothers' first carbon bike, its lightest bike to date, and follows in the footsteps of the venerable low and slack Yelli Screamy. Designed for the rider who wants an aggressive 29 inch trail bike, without a weight penalty or loss of pedalling efficiency.

The EPO has a 66.8 degree head angle with a 140 mm fork, 67.9 degrees with a 120 mm, and 16.3 inch chainstays. The EPO also features a rear 142 mm x 12 mm Maxle, ISCG 05 tabs, brake mounts on the inside of the rear triangle, threaded bottom bracket and the ability to install a direct mount front derailleur if you want to run more than a single chainring.

Canfield Brothers doesn't sell the EPO as a complete bike, so you get to pick and choose the components you most want. We built up the 3.2 pound frame with a full XTR kit, a sick Atomik wheelset (reviewed on page 64), Fox dropper post and fork, and a Grid handlebar and stem from Gravity Components (also reviewed on page 66). Canfield does offer some components like wheels and forks at a package discount when purchasing directly from its online store.

So, I'll cut right to the chase. This is an incredibly fun, capable hardtail that I would have no problem making part of my collection. Not only is it nice to look at, it just feels like it wants to be ridden hard. I like taking each new bike I review on the same loop in my local park to get a feel for how it compares to all the previous bikes I've ridden.

Immediately I could tell Canfield had something special here.

Hardtails are inherently animated on rough trail, but the EPO felt a bit more stable than I had expected. The 74.5 degree effective seat tube angle, matched to a slack head angle centered my weight nicely up and over the pedals. It kept me feeling connected to the bike and trail, allowing me to really push the bike hard while maintaining control through everything from berms, to rocks, to climbs.

Fit is somewhat subjective, but for me the EPO was spot-on. There's that fine line where a slack bike, great at descending, really gives up the ghost on climbs. A wandering front end can put a quick damper on my day. The EPO walked that line well. I never felt like it was out of its element. Let's not forget those short chainstays. Getting this bike up and over logs, roots and rocks on trail was a piece of cake! This was hands down the most fun I have had on a hardtail to date. Truly a bike that just wants to be ridden hard.

The Canfield Brothers brand has always had mystique to it, with some very loyal followers. Besides a few rides here and there, this was my first chance to spend a good deal of time on one of its bikes. I now get it. And according to Canfield, the EPO allowed the company to experiment with molds, layups and other aspects of working with carbon to lay the groundwork for future projects. After spending time on the EPO, "future projects" makes my mouth water.

If you are like me, and have been looking for a hardtail that handles pretty much everything you can throw at it, I suggest you hunt down an EPO and take it for a spin. Frames, available as medium and large only, are black with red, white or blue accents and lettering.