

TheONE review www.pinkbike.com on January 12th 2009

There are a few things in the biking world that can make or break a rider's day and when you're flying downhill you want to have quality brakes at your finger tips. We have all had run ins with the "not gonna stop me" squeal of wet v-brakes, so it's nice to see a company that has put years of research into a brake that is so dialed.

Read on to learn all about the One brake from Formula.

Picture this, you're halfway down a slick, rocky trail, wet roots and trees are blocking your lines. The ring of the Marshall's whistle is still in your ear, your lung capacity has been cut in half, your arms and legs are tired and tense, and then everything goes sideways. As you approach a corner you realize you're going way too fast. As you engage your rear brake you notice that nothing is actually happening. The extreme heat of the rotors mixed with the glazed over pads makes for an immense lack of power. After a short hesitation you add another finger to the lever, so now you got 2 fingers on those so called brakes, and still nothing is happening. You feel uncomfortable removing any more fingers from your grips, so you do the same pattern to the front brake, and nothing happens at all. So now you have your maximum pressure on both levers, you're coming in way too hot for this corner, your fore-arms and calves are hard as rocks, and yet you're not slowing down at all.

Poor brakes are a quick and easy way to wreck a race run, or even a leisurely ride with friends. Some people might not realize it, but brakes on your bike play just as big of a part as brakes on your car. If they don't work right, you're in danger, and so are the people around you.

During the summer I was building up my DH ride and wanted to find a set of unique stoppers that would turn heads and stop wheels. My looking stopped after doing some research on Formula brakes. [Formula Disc brakes](#) are hand crafted in Italy, and arguably one of the nicest brakes on the market. With a price tag to accent the quality, The One brakes from Formula were the set up that I had to try.

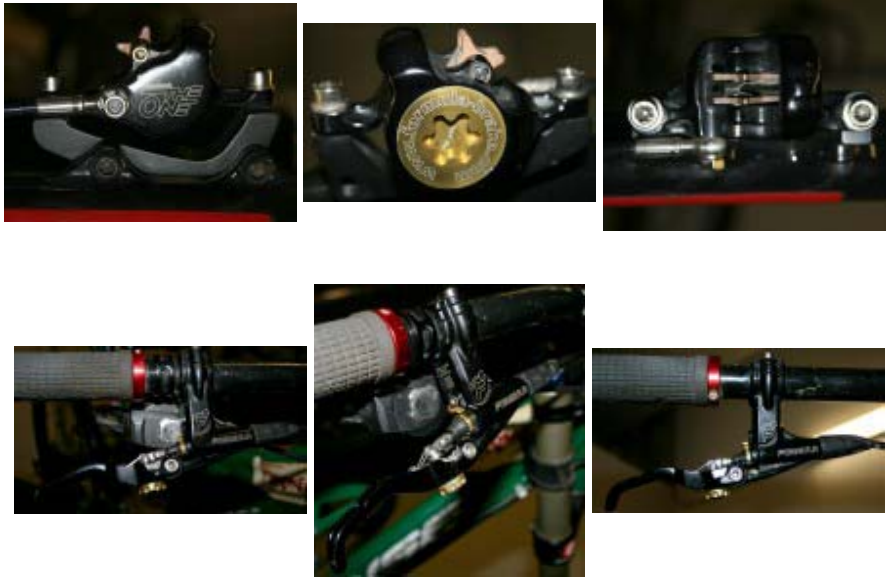


Starting with visual aesthetics, the One brakes are very clean looking. The lever body and main reservoir feature clean lines and gold accents were added for visual pleasure. Formula has thought out everything, from lever reach, to piston engagement, and everything in between. All adjustments on the lever are external, and should not require the use of a Allen key. The One brakes feature a linkage drive push rod. No, you don't get extra travel out of this linkage, rather it ensures that the contact point is consistent regardless of reach position. Formula has integrated a EBP, or Engineered braking point. This technology was adapted from motocross (imagine that), and it basically utilizes a thin slit in the back of the lever. This slit is designed as a braking point, so under hard contacts the lever won't break off at the main pivot area, but it will break at this point, which still gives you a substantial amount of lever to use on your trip down the hill. The lever break away system is also unique to the One brake. Formula has integrated a clip into the lever construction, that under hard forwards impacts is designed to break, and not destroy your lever assembly. The adjustments are not as clearly labeled like some other brakes on the market, but as soon as you turn a dial, the changes are noticeable. All adjustment knobs are CNC machined and gold anodized.



Reach and Grab adjustments

The front and rear calipers are identical, each is 1 piece forged and features 2, 24mm pistons, one on each side. These 2, 24mm pistons provide equal force on the rotor creating a surprise free lever stroke that is continuously equal. The outside of the caliper is clearly labeled with a "Formula The One" logo, while the inside of the caliper sports a gold cap that covers the internals, and is also labeled with www.formula-brake.com. The caliper's shape is a basic egg shape, which is compact and appears not to be overbuilt. Formula has machined out the heat vent on the top of the caliper wide enough for the pads to be extracted through the top, allowing the user to replace pads much faster and easier than ever before. No more removing your caliper to replace your pads. The pads are held in with a single, threaded pin that goes through both pads and the retention spring, and is held on with a c-clip.



Factory bleeds are something I have always been scared of. Most brakes out of the box will perform better once you get a shop technician to give it a once over. However, the Ones came pre-bled and I'll be damned, they had great lever feel from the get go, so I chose to leave them be and run em'. Remember, it's Italian quality, they know what they are doing. When you purchase the One brakes they do not come with rotors, and you're unable to utilize any other rotor you have due to the fact that Formula rotors are slightly thinner than most. Be sure to order the correct rotor sizes and adapters you'll be needing for your bike when purchasing a set of the Ones.

Pricing: The One Brakes - 333\$ per end

Rotors and Adapters:

6" IS - 48\$

6" post mount - 36\$

7" rotor IS - 54\$

7" post - 54\$

8" IS - 58\$

8" post - 50\$

(IS = International Standard)

(Formula offers rotors in 160mm,180mm,200mm, and 220mm*)

*220mm Rotor features an Alloy Carrier

The power and modulation of the One brakes is incredible. Most "generic" hydraulic disc brakes end up having brake fade, or reach issues after any extended braking. After 7 hours of riding non stop at Whistler Mountain Bike park the One brakes were still pulling the same distance, and still providing the same modulation. After a few days of this and trips to other riding destinations in BC including Mt.7 in Golden BC, there has been no signs of fade or change in lever feel. With the bite adjustment on the lever you can adjust your grab on the go, utilizing Formula's FCS system, or tools free stroke adjustment, which is located on the lever body where the piston enters the main body of the lever.



One thing I was worried about when I heard that the rotor size is slightly thinner than usual, is heat warping rotors. Heat warping comes into play when you take a super hot rotor, and either ding it off something (ie. a rock, stump, log, tree) or you add cold to the equation (rinsing your bike after riding, or a creek crossing in the middle of a long descent). Heat warping is most noticeable when your rotors get a slight wobble in them, usually not noticeable to the untrained eye, but you can hear it. Heat warp isn't a huge issue, but it is an annoyance, and I am happy to say that I have not experienced that at all with the One brakes.



The One brakes were definitely designed for hardcore DH and Freeride use in mind. The twin piston system provides perfect pressure from both sides of the brake making for the most consistent feel you can get. Formula provides you with Sintered pads as well when you purchase the One brakes. Sintered pads mean the pad material has been heated up to such a degree as the particles have adhered to themselves, creating an extremely hard substance, usually used with ceramics. Sintered pads are sometimes referred to as "high friction" pads, meaning when they get hot and wear in, they work much better than a stock pad. Be forewarned, Sintered pads typically are thinner than normal brake pads, however pad life is not reduced.



The One brakes by Formula provide you with a better braking experience. Yes, they may be more expensive than a conventional brake, but that's why we pay for heated seats in our cars, and cup warmers in our work space. The One brake is my answer to the perfect brake. More than enough modulation, which is adjustable on the go, tons of grab due to the massive pistons and clamping surface, and are designed with a "big spender" black and gold color scheme.

I tested the One brakes in the most varied riding environments I could, so this meant mud rips, dry summer rides, and even borderline snowing conditions. They have a good design that dispels mud, water, and even snow really well, keeping the rotor and caliper area clean.

One thing about the One brakes I did notice, and possibly one of the only downsides to the brake, is the small adjustments. Seeing as the backside of the lever is not covered, all the mechanics of the FCS and Reach adjustment are open to the elements. I did run into an issue after one really dirty ride, and one very postponed washing session. The tools free adjustments suddenly needed some tools, to free them, so they could be adjusted. After a minor cleaning session, the adjustments were back working fine, so I call it user error.



Photos By: [Dishboy14](#)

The look and performance of Formula's The One brakes pay for themselves. While other companies have a choke hold on the base hydraulic disc brake market, it frees up companies like Formula to appeal to the higher end market. So when you see a bike spec'd with higher end components it stands out more than the others. Like a [completely camo bike](#), the One brakes are a eye catcher. Machined unlike any other brake on the market they are very noticeable, which in turn gets you more props on your awesome build. Everyone loves unique bike builds, so be unique and "brake the bank."



Beauty and the Beast-Formula meets SpoiledGoods

All in all the One brakes by Formula are amazing brakes. They are extremely eye catching, very functional, have appropriate adjustments on the lever body, and are well thought out. Top loading pads, a great crash protection design, and wicked gold accents make these brakes worth the cash money. So, if you're interested in a bling'in pair of brakes for your DH bike this year, take a peek at [Formula](#). You won't be disappointed.