

E-motion Cross Electric Bikes

Hi, I'm Alan and my wife is Kath. In May 2009 we went to the Tour de Presteigne electric bike exhibition in the hope of buying two folding electric bikes to compliment our already existing Giant Suede bike. When we arrived we were like kids in a sweet shop, never had we seen such a variety of electric bikes in one place; we forgot what we wanted and our budget too.

On Saturday we rode at least 15 bikes numerous times (including Giant, Cytronex, Kalkhoff and E-motion). We tried the full range except the drop handle bar version, narrowing it down to 5 for the Sunday.

Sunday arrived and we quickly narrowed it down to the E-motions. My wife fancied the E-motion City and me the E-motion Cross. After further riding and value for money we ended the day with 2 E-motion Cross Electric Bikes. These bikes look and feel like normal bikes and all the components, except the motor, can be renewed by myself. It has a battery that performs well on the hills, and a sporty but comfortable ride and of reasonable weight to be lifted onto the back of our motor home. We picked the bikes up a fortnight later from OnBike Kidderminster and Mike and Phil made sure we were happy and comfortable before taking our money. We were there all day enjoying ourselves. Within the week we were in the Lake District where I covered 180 miles on one battery charge (as only using it for the hills) and the wife did 140 miles with at least 25kg of junk in the panniers. The fact they ride so well without the batteries is a tribute to them, to the fact I go out and try not to use the battery except on the steepest of hills. The wife adopts to using the battery at the bottom of the hill and needless to say often overtakes me with minimum of effort. When I do use battery, I have to get used to the idea of easing back on the pedals and not push too hard and let the battery do the work; most of my use is at the lowest assist level.

We often get called cheats for having a battery powered bike and I'd say how? We've got 22kg bikes, 25kg (ish) of junk in the panniers, 8 gears as high as a road bike, no granny gears, and we are out cycling regardless.

We are now around 40 miles a ride on our local routes and about 30 miles on unfamiliar routes stopping to take in the scenery and points of interests.

Another reason for choosing these bikes is that there is no throttle, as we find it a hindrance (in our opinion); as I say there's no bad bike, just bad decision.

These bikes suited us 98 % - the bikes handle well, even with our junk fully loaded they corner well. I ride with 70% locked out forks, my wife 95% unlocked front forks as she has bad neck muscles and finds it comfortable. The seat suspension post takes the sting out of the rear end and spine area quite well, as I also have the tyres quite hard.

There are times when we haven't felt like going out, but I do say we'll use the battery then and often don't, so it's the thought it's there that gets us out. If you like and enjoy your bike, you'll get out and ride it. If you don't, you and the bike will stay at home.

Other times we use the batteries into a head wind, which I must say is brilliant, as you glide along instead of struggling, making a most enjoyable ride, not zapping your energy. Also we find even if we have a hard ride one day, we will go out again the next day using more battery assistance, where before we would not contemplate a second ride. This is great when we are away because we see more.

People always ask how far they go on a charge if battery always used, our answer *'We don't really know as we have yet to go out and use battery from start to finish.'*

The Chinese tyres 700 x35 roll well and grip well, but are soft and pick up punchers easily, no problem just carry a spare inner tube. We will change to Schwalbe Marathon tyres one day, but 15 months and 1400 miles... well soon.

As with all bikes, some components were not too keen on the winter, as these bikes are out in all weathers, sun, snow, rain, frost, etc and the gear cable rusted slightly, but I just replaced it.

When we picked the bikes up I thought I might change the twist grip gear shifter, but I think it's excellent and block changes are now brilliant, so will stay with this changer no problem. The brake pads needed replacing and I renewed the whole of the braking system, upgrading it to Shimano Deore (nice upgrade), which I didn't have to but the bikes deserved it. We swapped our pedals to those off our road bikes with toe clips for comfort, we found our feet slipped off the standard ones. I have also stripped the crank arms down and copper greased them and put frame protectors to stop cables rubbing and added a mirror. The saddle is comfortable and will stay, so will the bars and adjustable head stem with plenty of adjustment. The battery is nice and light with no memory so can be topped up at anytime, and if it is half empty then that counts as half a charge towards your total. We are often stopped and asked are they really electric bikes and end up in long conversations with people. This we enjoy mostly and confirms what we like; that they not only ride like normal bikes but look like ones too – this is why as cyclists we bought electric bikes. Another reason is we were losing confidence in our ability to ride far after illnesses and are away often in our motor home. It means we can now go out riding and enjoy the area we park up in.

15 months and 1400 miles later we can only say we really enjoy riding our bikes and it was a better option than adding a motor to one of our road bikes and we're not disappointed by our decision. We went to the Tour de Presteigne 2010 show and rode stacks more bikes, but we still come back to the E-motion Cross for us.

Like I say, each persons' need is individual and so is your choice, this was ours and as someone once said to me, *"The only bad bike is one that's not ridden"*.

One small drawback is even the small crossbar frame is quite large and my wife finds this a problem at the end of a long day stepping off.

If you are or have been a cyclist and want that bike feel again with the help of a battery and the look of a bike, you could do a lot worse the E-motion Cross or Sport range, or for a more relaxed ride the City range. I think they are excellent and love riding them.

Would we buy from OnBike again? YES 100% - not just our E-motions, but if we need to replace our Giant, as OnBike have so many models and makes under one roof, your choice is endless and added to the boys knowledge of all the bikes, their enthusiasm and the fact that they ride them as well, you get an unbiased opinion on every bike.

Keep those wheels turning and those batteries full.

Alan and Kath

OnBike / E-motion Cross customers