Four wheels good, two wheels electric.

First the London Marathon, now an electric bike. Our man with the aching legs is smitten by a whole new mode of motoring.

CHRISS EVANS

Gocycle G2

W hen bright ideas seem like the best test of a bike. I test the electric bike the week after 1’d dropped my almost 30-year-old bag of bones around the London Marathon course. Oh, I remember now – mine. The Gocycle had been due to arrive the week before, but I’d postponed as I figured it’d be too busy pedalling with pro-marathoners past crowds ‘ Courage,’ they call it: to give any mode of transport a fair review. Of course, it completely slipped my mind that, post last Sunday, merely being able to walk, go downstairs, or lower myself onto the bus would be nothing more than a simple perk. I’ve been buying a bike and pedalling around London. “It was the marathon taught people have been asking me. To whom my reply is, honestly, not to be gullible, I feared. But if you train properly, plan well, pay attention to your nutrition and hydration and set yourself a realistic goal in as far as time is concerned. And certainly nothing compared to the 26 hours that followed. There’s still and there’s marathon stuff; a cross between your legs feeling like they made a break, yet might shatter into a thousand pieces if you put too much of a pressure on them. Imagine my horror, then, when not only did the bike turn up on Monday morning but so did an enthusiastic photographer, who had set up for some action shots on the hill opposite our house. “Oh, of course,” I thought, legs trembling for the standing shots as I attempted to hide the bike in position on a steep incline. An agony compounded moments later when I had to keep cycling up the hill so the spy could get the all-important ‘Comedy At Speed’ masterpiece on the way back down.

Thank goodness, then, that this was an electric bike, one which by definition is designed to do some or almost all of the work for you – depending on your fitness, ability, agenda and mood. I first came across the Gocycle when Eddie Jordan yelled at me on the quayside in Monaco a few weeks back. “Here, Evans, you gotta try one of these contraptions, they’re bloody magick,” Eddie has a pair of Gocycles on his motor yacht Flash for guests and charter clients to use as waterbikes on their various tours around the Med. After jumping on and pressing the all-important red power button, I was fairly rac- ing towards the swimming pool section of the Secondary Men’s Grand Prix circuit, which was already being berthed out safely for the Formula E race next weekend.

It felt amazingly balanced and fast, really fast actually, accomodated by the lightness of the Gocycle. Also, though, there were so many people walking the track I couldn’t give the full run down, so I asked the sales rep for his card and suggested we give one a proper test back in Blighty. And this is how we ended up where we are today.

The founder father of the Gocycle is Richard Thrope, a quiet genious and former design engineer at McLaren Cars. He left Ben Dewey’s gang in 2003 to follow his dream of creating the first electric bicycle, which I have to say is pretty much realised.

The frame is made from injection-moulded magnesium-alloy, the some stuff they use for mobile phone cases and laptop cases. It’s the key to its super-light mass. Then there’s the inbuilt-sensing circuits, sealed against the elements not to mention any would be trickster’s sneaking tesla leg. It’s also completely maintenance-free, having been built for life, lucky old chaps. The battery, fully rechargeable via the mains in just five-and-a-half hours, and top-up able at any time, is concealed within the frame, so that can’t be seen either. Designed smoke and mirrors wherever you look. And it’s sexy, too. The whole package looks fantastic. I never imagined a paint-job could turn heads like this one does. And check out the Ferretti-style LED headlight design. No, it’s divided into three sections, left to right battery level, gear-shift indicator and speed. The legal limit, incidentally, is 25kmh on roads, although the Gocycle can be re-mapped via a clever phone app to reach up to 30mph if you’re on private land. 

The brakes are hydraulic, the gear-box is electronic and can be set to manual or fully automatic just like a paddle-shift car, and thanks to the torque sensor, motor assistance will kick in most efficiently when required. That is, unless you use the same app to give your bike a bespoke power/pedal curve all of your own, tailored to how lazy or energetic you feel on the day. Range can also be improved via the same app and its City/Enduro Demand programmes.

The other neat thing is that once you own a Gocycle it ‘knows’ its owner, and will limit its computer to lock anyone else who attempts to interface in your relationship. If separated, sadly, the Gocycle can be remotely immobilised from the company HQ at Chessington. Two lost bikes has already been located via GPS and returned to their owners.

Although the Gocycle doesn’t actually fold up, it can be disassembled and packed into a bag in five easy moves, a sequence I got down to just under a minute.

But the thing is, I’m not a cyclist. I’m a runner (I mention this on the mara-thon in 3hrs 14min!), however Nick, who adorns this column, is a regular rider, so here’s both our take: on being with the Gocycle for a week. My: Gorgeous, lived it, the elan of a motor scooter combined with the lack of fun, clumsiness and economy of a bike. The most important thing is that I took in it from my house to meet Archbishop John Sentamu at his home. He loved it too, and wanted go, but I wouldn’t let him. I wasn’t sure he was ready for Hyde Park Corner on a Wednesday afternoon at rush hour as his virgin skies. Battery never ran out on me, or even came close. Packed the seat, suspension (again, award-winning device stuff going on) and ride very comfortable, and the Carbon frame looks very snazzy and a cut-out cutting to the ride.

nick: ‘I’ve done 300 miles on the Gocycle, mostly on my commute into London. As a keen cyclist, it’s not really the bike for me (although I wouldn’t mind one on a wind day!), but it’s a very lovely thing and around town is a pretty stylish way to travel. It really comes into its own going uphill, when the extra effort you imagine you’re put to is immediately matched by assistance from the electric motor. The power delivery is sublime subtly yet significant. It comes in with such smoothness you almost don’t realise it’s happening. I liked it in having someone running alongside giving you a gentle shove from behind.

‘Don’t expect to be thefastest on the road, though, as you’ll be overtaken by decent road cyclists. They, however, will arrive home glistening with sweat and slightly short of breath, while you’ll make it in near-perfect condition.’

And that’s the point, really. The Gocycle can be used as a normal bike, but where the point? You can’t buy a car and then chuck yourself. This is a super-future-proof 21st century way to get around. And don’t just take my word for it, global sales of electric bikes topped 27 million last year alone.

EDDIE JORDAN

YELLED AT ME: ‘EVANS, YOU GOTTA TRY THIS CONTRAPTION. IT’S MAGICAL!’