## HRIS EVANS

Gocycle G2 ★★★★

a bike instead of a car the week after I'd dragged my almost 50-year-old bag o' 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 I'd be too busy panicking with pre-marathon paranoia ('maranoia', 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 on to the loo would be nigh-impossible, let alone hop on a bike and pedal around London.

'So was the marathon tough?' people have been asking me. To which my reply is, honestly, not as tough as I'd feared, not if you train properly, plan well, pay attention to your nutrition and hydration and set yourself a realistic goal as far as time is concerned. And certainly nothing compared to the 48 hours that followed. There's stiff and there's marathon-stiff, a cross between your legs feeling like they're made of lead, yet might shatter into a thousand pieces if you put so much as an ounce of 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, joy of joys,' I thought, legs trembling for the standing shots as I attempted to hold the bike in position on a steep incline. An agony compounded moments later when I had to

Gearbox Three speed auto/ manual with predictive shifting Electric drive top speed 15.5mph Recharge time Range Up to 40 miles Weight 16.1kg And the verdict? 'Gorgeous. Hoved it. The F1 car of electric bicycles. And it's sexv. too' Chris after last Sunday's

tech spec

gocycle.com

Motor 250 watt

First the London Marathon, now

an electric bike! Our man with

the aching legs

is smitten by a

of motoring

whole new mode

keep cycling up the hill so the snapper could get the all-important 'Comedy Chris 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 velled at me on the quavside in Monaco a few weeks back: 'Here, Evans, you gotta try one of these contraptions, they're bloody magical.'

Eddie has a pair of Gocycles on his motor yacht Blush for guests and charter clients to use as runabouts on their various travels around the Med. After jumping on and

Four wheels good, two wheels...

pressing the all-important red power button, I was fairly racing towards the swimming pool section of the legendary Monaco Grand Prix circuit, which was already being barriered off ready for the Formula E race next weekend.

It felt amazingly balanced and fast. really fast actually, accentuated by the lightness of the bike, Alas, though, there were so many people walking the track I couldn't give it the full beans, 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 founding father of the Gocycle is Richard Thorpe, a quiet genius and a former design engineer at McLaren Cars. He left Ron Dennis's gang in 2002 to follow his dream of creating the F1 car of electric bicycles, which I have to say he's pretty much pailed.

The frame is made from injectionmoulded magnesium-alloy, the same

stuff they use for mobile phone cases and laptop cases. It's the key to its superlight mass. Then there's the invisible self-tensioning chain, sealed against the elements not to mention any would-be troublesome flailing trouser leg. It's also completely maintenance-free, having been lubricated for life, lucky old chain. 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. Technical smoke and mirrors wherever you look.

And it's sexy, too. The whole pack-age looks fantastic – I never imagined a push-bike could turn heads like this one does. And check out the Ferrari-style LED handlebar dash. It's divided into three sections, left to right; battery level, gear-shift indicator and speed. The legal limit, incidentally, is 15.5mph on roads, although the Gocycle can be re-mapped via a clever phone app to reach up to 25mph if you're on private land.

The brakes are hydraulic, the gearbox 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 very own, tailored to how lazy or energetic you feel on the day. Range can also be improved via the same gizmo and its City/Eco/On Demand programmes.

The other neat thing is that once you own a Gocycle it 'knows' its 'yours', and so tells its computer to block anyone else who attempts to interfere in your relationship. If reported stolen, the Gocycle can be remotely immobilised from the company HQ at Chessington. Two lost bikes have already been located via GPS and returned to their owners.

And although the Gocycle doesn't commute into London. actually fold up, it can be disassem-bled 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 (did I mention I ran the marathon in 4hrs 53mins?). However Nick. who edits this column, is a regular rider, so here's both our takes on living with the Gocycle for a week

Me: Gorgeous, loved it, the elan of

a motor scooter combined with the lack of fuss, clumsiness and economy of a bike. The most important trip I took on it was from my house to meet Archbishop John Sentamu at his hotel. He loved it too, and wanted a 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 outing. Battery never ran out on me, or even came close. Found the seat, suspension (again, award-winning clever stuff going on) and ride very comfortable, and the custom security lock very reassuring and off-putting to would-be two-wheeled tea leaves.

Nick: 'I've done 100 miles on the Gocycle, mostly on my As a keen cyclist, it's not really the bike for me (although I wouldn't mind one on a windy day!), but it's a very lovely thing, and around town is a positively luxurious way

'It really comes into its own going

to travel

## **EDDIE** JORDAN **YELLED AT ME:** 'EVANS, YOU IT'S MAGICAL







Event Magazine. The Mail on Sunday

'Don't expect to be the fastest 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

uphill, when the extra effort you imagine you're about to put in is immedi-

ately matched by assistance from the

electric motor. The power delivery is sublime; subtle yet significant. It comes

in with such sweetness you almost don't realise it's happening. I liken it to

having someone running alongside giving you a gentle shove from behind.

Gocycle can be used as a normal bike, but what's the point? You don't buy a canary and then chirrup yourself. This is a super future-proofed 21st century way to get around. And don't just take my word for it, global sales of electric bikes topped 37 million last year alone.

WAY TO GO! ★★★★★ GO FOR GLORY ★★★★★ GO. BUDDY. GO ★★★★★ GO SLOW ★★★★★ WAKE ME UP BEFORE YOU GO GO ★★★★★