

# Powering into London: the £2,000 electric bike with a 'rocket boost'

**Benedict Moore-Bridger  
and Daisy Dumas**

IT costs almost £2,000 and travels at 15mph, but at least it won't get stuck in traffic.

The world's "fastest" electric bicycle is to go on sale in London next month, with some hailing it the answer to lazy commuters' dreams.

The push bike with an electric motor also has a "rocket boost" button for added speed during off-road riding.

There are two versions, the A2B Metro and the A2B Hybrid, which means the rider can motor along or get an added boost as they pedal.

The batteries run for up to 20 miles and can be charged using a mains plug, which costs from 7p and takes about five hours.

As the motors cut out at the legal limit of 15mph, manufacturers claim riders do not need a licence or pay road tax, insurance or the congestion charge.

With more torque and greater acceleration than any other electric bicycle, its creators believe the machine can convert London's commuters to a "greener" mode of transport.

Julie Farrington, from manufacturer Ultra Motor, said: "It is a product people are really excited by because of its quality. In the past, electric bikes have been prototypes because the technology has not really been there – but now the technology has progressed enough to mean it is a more viable option."

The popularity of electric bicycles has been growing, with 21 million sold in China last year. In Germany power-assisted bicycles are the single largest category of bikes sold.

But Charlie Lloyd, cycling development officer from the London Cycling Campaign, was sceptical about whether Londoners would follow the trend.

He said: "The disadvantage is that you have to charge it and the battery tends not to last very long if you go fast and push them hard. Plus they are much heavier than a bike and three or four times as expensive."

The bikes will be available from The Electric Transport Shop in Holloway, north London, or Digital Toys in Brentford, Middlesex, and cost £1,999.

There was confusion over whether the new bicycle would comply with UK legislation because of the "boost" button – giving it a top speed of 20mph.



**Easy wheely:**  
Stephanie Forester tries out the electric bike

The Driver and Vehicle and Licensing Agency said bikes over that speed needed licences.

However, the Department for Transport said as long as the bicycle was not ridden faster than 15mph on a public

road, no law would be broken. A spokesman said: "An electric motor on a bicycle must not be able to propel the machine when it is travelling at more than 15mph. If it does not comply to this restriction it will need to be registered, insured and

## IT'S STURDY AND FAST, BUT COSTLY

**Stephanie Forester, 23**

Law student from Chelsea. "I would not say it's aesthetically pleasing but I guess it appeals more to guys than girls. I steered my bike into a canal when I was young so I don't feel particularly safe on bikes. It might appeal to some but I would not buy it."

**Jo-Ann Compton, 43**

Recruitment consultant from Acton. "It's difficult to manoeuvre as it is heavy. The tyres are robust, good for stopping punctures. It will catch on as there are people who don't want to use push bikes but want to get to places quickly. It is a lot of money, though. You can buy a car for £2,000."



**Antonio Correia, 52**

Caterer from Shepherd's Bush. "It feels very secure and sturdy and when you pull the throttle it accelerates quite fast. The brakes are very good. Price is the problem. I am still quite fit and don't need the boost, but maybe in a few years I will, especially going up hills."



**Frey Palsen, 25**

Student at Imperial College. "It is great. I've never ridden a scooter before but this gives you a real boost when you go up hill. The problem is it is a bit heavy and a bit funny when turning. I would definitely consider it if they brought the price down."



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## CYCLE IN RHYTHM BUSKER TURNS HIS WHEELS INTO A TRAVELLING DRUM KIT

MOST cyclists try to steer clear of bangs and crashes.

But London busker David Osborne, 38, has adapted his road bike so it transforms into a drum kit with five cymbals, three snare drums and a foot pedal.

He has been invited to play Glastonbury next month after coming up with the idea when he came to London from Adelaide to try to break into the electronica band scene in London.

Mr Osborne was determined not to carry his drums on the Tube and, as a cabinet maker, realised his bike frame could be adapted into a working drum kit which would also transport them. Fashioned from charity

shop tin bowls, children's toys and old drums, Puncture Kit has an original sound.

It can be fitted into two panniers and a backpack, and the fixed-wheel bike takes 20 minutes to transform.

Now based in Camden, Mr Osborne makes enough from busking and festivals to pay his rent.

He puts his success down to the vibrant London busking and music scene.

He said: "London is a great place for doing what I do. "It's so multicultural that people from all over the world get to see me play while being small enough for word to spread – plus, I can get everywhere I need to get on

two wheels. My first trip was to Brick Lane, where I busked for an hour on a weekday and made enough money to cover a week's rent. I couldn't believe it."

Word spread and last month he was flown to play at the Milan Furniture Fair.

At the Brighton Fringe Festival two weeks ago, Mr Osborne played a solo electronica show and was approached by one of Glastonbury Festival's dance stage organisers and invited to perform.

The Glastonbury Festival will be held from 24 to 28 June.

To watch him play go to [www.myspace.com/puncturekit](http://www.myspace.com/puncturekit)

Daisy Dumas



**Music on the move:** David Osborne has been invited to play his electronica solo drum set at Glastonbury next month