EZoomers a zine for NZ ebike enthusiasts

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My Electric Bike Jace Hobbs

Many people ask me what e-bike I ride. I think they expect that I am going to pull out a futuristic looking superbike that has ultimate performance and a price that only a dealer of e-bikes would be able to absorb. The truth may surprise you.

I ride the Sprint and I ride it hard. It features the same equipment that I recommend to my customers. There is seldom a day that I don't do 20 km or more on it, and I have been doing this for a year and a half. Many of you have received sizeable packages taken to the shipper carried on the back of that bike. I frankly love to ride it. Good on Wai Won Ching and Justin Limere (eZee developers) who produced this great product.

I have not kept accurate records of the distance on that bike, but it is hovering around 7000 kms. I have had no punctured tyres on the Schwalbes, no broken spokes, no failed parts at all. It's the remarkable standard build of the eZee line that needs no modification to be a great machine. I have not had a breakdown yet; thank you eZee, but I have ridden some really cold rides that I will talk about.

I have made my peace with cold weather riding; the solution is the garments. The trick is to buy some insulated gloves, a windproof skullcap to fit under the helmet, and a riding jacket that's snug at the neck and waist. Wind resistant pants are a great splurge, but with the money you are saving by not driving, it makes dollars and sense. If you gear up in the proper way, winter riding is a great way to get outside. Without the gear it's bad enough to make you hate it ….and not ride. Don't get stuck in when the cold weather hits. If you are having any trouble finding the right winter gear, write me for suggestions. I am happy to help.

My riding speed averages 34 kph on the flats, about 25 kph when riding in hilly areas. The only reason the average isn't even faster is headwinds. Often it blows against me both to and from town because of our marine pattern. I am especially thankful for my eZee Sprint when the wind would have made my ride very frustrating. 30+ kph is plenty fast. If I ride faster, I would not be as safe. It's great that zero-emission transportation is so quick and pleasant.

Many people don't know that the eZee bikes come with a limiter that can be disconnected so that the bikes go faster. Typically eZees will go 31-32 on the flat with no pedal assistance. With the limiter on, the motor will diminish after about 25 kph. Most people will be happy with the 25 kph limiter as it feels safe and makes the distance travelled per battery charge greater. I ride faster than some but I ride the same bikes other eZee riders ride, no more or less. I could not want more and it pleases me that many people are finding practical transportation with our eZees.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Did you know?

Fleet buyers are increasingly interested in electric bikes because of the growing costs of transport. Fuel price increases will add to this use.

Did you know?

An electric car took 11th place, against petrol racers, at the Goodwood Speedweek unlimited hill-climb race in England. It also smashed the course record for electric racers. E-vehicle records continue to fall worldwide.

Battery density is the only drawback for racing enthusiasts, and batteries will improve.

Guest Columnist Louis Elwood-Leach

Who are E-bikes for?

I have only been aware of ebikes for the past few years. They look great. The concept has been proven. But who are they for? And who will adopt them?

I confess that I am a car driver. And I am not persuaded to give up this freedom to a pushbike just yet. However, these new ebikes I occasionally see parked around Wellington do look like an appealing alternative.

While the technology that electric cars and ebikes use is similar, ebikes don't require the same level of infrastructure to support their use. The infrastructure they require is essentially already here. They don't need recharging stations, people can remove the batteries and recharge them in their offices, schools, and homes. The ebike is available now, they are out there and their population is growing.

The ebike is more than just an expansion of the bike market, it's also a potential new market. It may not necessarily be seen as a step forward for our conventional pedal-powered bikers. But for people (like me) who would otherwise not consider giving up our motorized transport for a push bike, the ebike has the ability to increase the number of riders. While essentially still a pushbike, the motorized element gives people who wouldn't have considered pushbikes as a viable form of transport, the opportunity to rethink. The ebike has the potential to create a greater bike presence within our communities, giving riders a stronger voice in city planing, and lowering congestion in our cities.

When I got to use one of these bikes for the first time, it was instantly competition for my car as an alternate form of transport. Living in the hilly suburbs of Wellington, getting into town on a bike now looked not just plausible but tempting. Before I wouldn't have even considered it, but now it looked easy, quick, hassle-free - it even looked fun.

Ebikes could make biking a more viable alternative for people to get out of their cars and onto a more affordable and economic mode of transport. Ebikes also open up possibilities of adding value to projects such as bike sharing systems, and dedicated bike paths, currently a big topic both in New Zealand and other cities around the world.

People who haven't ever considered biking, who don't consider themselves fit enough to bike, live in un-bike friendly landscapes, or have previously stopped biking for whatever reason, now have reason to start. For me the ebike takes away everything previously unappealing about biking. It's taking away all my excuses.

EZee news around New Zealand

Hamilton Council buys eZee

HC has joined the growing group of institutions that has bought eZee bikes for their fleet.

Hamilton went out on tender for electric bikes and decided on the Cadence and the Street models from the eZee line of bikes.

Interestingly, they find the Street model almost too powerful and are concerned that riders will expect something with less torque.

This may signal a new era for electric transportation. Gradually, electric vehicles are becoming known for acceleration, for fun driving, and for ease of operation. All of those are opposite to the public expectation of just a few years ago.

This sea-change of opinion is important because we need the future of transportation to have as good or better performance than our vehicles today. We need a future that attracts us to a change we must make.

EECA Electric Vehicle Expo

June 20th was a remarkable day for those advocating for a transition to a renewable transportation model in New Zealand. EECA (Energy Efficiency Conservation Auth.) hosted a conference at Te Papa on the future of electric transportation. Professors and industry representatives heard presentations on infrastructure, regulatory environment, and most importantly, the latest technology in the vehicles and their critical components.

Jace got an invitation because of his work for the Auckland Council advisory committee on EV transition. There was ample time to meet the significant people involved with the science and industry surrounding the EV rollout and there was display opportunities for eZee as well.

Incidentally, the Wellington weather was fine for the test rides.

New off-road eZee

The Forza has been transformed into an off road powerhouse e-bike. A long travel fork, high capacity battery, and other upgrade items complete the Forza.

It will be sold for the trail rider who wants to go further and higher on each ride than they have previously been able to do. It is also expected to be employed in commercial forestry and similar applications.

While there are several bikes available in the world today that fit this same usage profile, they are all very expensive and out of the price range for an average rider. eZee does it again with solid value.

The Step-thru Sprint L chosen by Nelmac - shown here with colour choices.

Regional service company acquires an e-bike

Nelmac is a publicly owned service company for the Nelson region and they have a lot of vehicles running around for repairs and all manner of civic maintenance.

But Nelmac had a problem that their new eZee Sprint has solved. The problem is short hops around the city to pick up plans, parts and attend brief meetings. Rob Fryer of Nelmac says often he walks the significant distance to Council Chambers because getting and parking a car takes the same time or longer. He says the e-bike cuts his time to 1/3 of the previous frequent commute.

This situation is repeated for the mechanics picking up parts, for instance. To go to the parts store, they check out a truck, get it out of the parking area, drive to find parking near the parts store, walk to the shop and repeat the process on the way back. It's a phenomenal waste of time and energy for a small item.

eZoomers NZ
News and views
on electric bikes

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Please pass this newsletter on to anyone who would like to get it.
To include or exclude yourself from the next issue, just email us with your wish.

Your next bike could be an e-bike

We encourage submissions about Ebikes and issues surrounding Ebikes for publication in subsequent issues of EZoomers. Simply drop an email to Jace Hobbs at the return address and your ideas or article may well find its way to the many who want opinion and information about Ebikes in NZ.

Chem Trails are Real! lol

Chem Trails are Real (They spew out of your car!)

I predict that we will look back on today with amazement about the pollution of our cars. We will think about the carcinogenic chemicals that our cars used to spread into urban areas and we will cringe. I predict that we will have public safety regulations to regulate exhaust because we will have relevant calculations to show just how damaging and costly inhaled burnt petrochemicals are to our bodies.

And we need to adopt these regulations because we are avoiding a significant harm. The list of chemicals from petrol fumes to which we subject those around us is staggering. It is like a house of horrors with about a dozen cancer-causing chemicals spewed out onto the children and elderly, for they are most at risk. It does equate to real casualties; real dead bodies. The Ministry of Health tells us that every day in Auckland, two people die from exhaust related respiratory complications. Not sick, not poisoned, plain dead. We knowingly allow thousands of New Zealanders each year to be sacrificed for the power of liquid fuels. That fuel is also costly and getting costlier which will also factor into why we will ban petrol from our cities.

Chem trails are all too real, but not in the way that some people think. They spew out of our cars, and we pay dearly for the privilege to pollute. We could solve our foreign debt and our public health debacle by moving into a zero-emission transport era. To do less is fuelish.