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2013

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Stromer ST1 Platinum

POWER THROUGH YOUR RIDE

Unlike most electric bikes, Stromer's ST1 looks almost like a regular city bike. I like that. But hidden in the rear wheel is a motor that can move the bike along at speeds of up to 30 miles per hour. I like that even more.

Powered bikes are already popular in Europe and parts of Asia. This model's characteristics mean it could help e-bikes catch on here: It's easy to ride, the controls are simple, and it costs less than some similar models. A range of accessories also helps make the ST1 suited for many uses. To test the bike, I spun around town, but mostly used it on my hilly, 36-mile commute.

Buy it if

You're looking to speed up your commute—and have fun along the way

I made liberal use of the motor's four settings, which deliver a boost up to three times the rider's power. The motor kicks in smoothly and the bike's weight feels evenly distributed. The ST1 handles comfortably, whether you're navigating hilly 'burbs or city traffic. The effortlessness of maintaining 30 mph while riding with the biggest boost was intoxicating, and I made full use of it to rocket up hills. As a result, the battery, which is integrated into the down tube, was good for only one round-trip before needing a four-hour charge. Riding in a lower setting—or on flatter terrain—increases battery life to 60 miles, Stromer says. As I sometimes passed cars slowed by traffic I wondered if the Stromer is even a bike. In fact, a patchwork of federal, state, and local laws currently govern e-bikes, and many impose speed limits on electric-assist vehicles. To circumvent some of those restrictions, Stromer stipulates that this bike is meant only for off-road rides. BICYCLING'S own law expert, Bob Mionske, offered another interpretation: Because the Stromer's motor won't operate if you're not pedaling, laws defining e-bikes by their "motorized top speed" don't apply.

That's good enough for me to enjoy this bike's utility, worry-free.—Brad Ford

Price

\$3,400, as tested

Weight

59.5 lb. (M)

Sizes

S, M (tested), L

Frame

6061 hydroformed aluminum

Fork

Stromer suspension

Component Highlights

FSA cranks (50/39/30); Shimano XT derailleurs and shifters (Sora shown); Magura MT2 hydraulic brakes; 500-watt (continuous) alloy cast, brushless, gearless hub motor; 36V, 14.5 amp/hr lithium-ion battery; Smart Battery management system; Schwalbe Big Ben tires

