Electric Bike Sports Revolutionary Half-hour Recharge Time

by Jason Lomberg, Technical Editor

efficiency zone
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Bicycling is generally considered one of the most efficient forms of transportation. In many countries (particularly ones where the average income precludes weekly gasoline fill-ups), the bike is the primary mode of transport. Yet for a variety of reasons, the bike has yet to catch on in this country as a viable means of transportation. Schwinn [1] could adjust the paradigm with its new Toshiba-powered Tailwind [2] electric bike.

Schwinn, a constant fixture in the bicycling industry since 1895, is no stranger to the E-bike market. Their current lineup, including the Continental [3], World GSE [4], and Transit [5], gets 40-60 miles on a 4 hour charge (decent stats for the E-bike market), and costs anywhere from $1,480 to $2,080. This may seem like a steep price for a bicycle, but it’s best to think of it as an investment. Compared to the cumulative costs of a car (to include initial investment, gas, and maintenance), 2 grand is a pittance.

Schwinn’s latest E-bike entry, the Tailwind, is poised to shake up the industry. Using Toshiba's Super Charge ion Battery, the Tailwind can fully recharge in a mere 30 minutes. Sound too good to be true? The lightning-fast recharge speed has one obvious drawback: instead of 40-60 miles, the Tailwind can only go 10 miles per charge. Yet if you consider the logistics of E-bikes, this limited range isn’t so horrible. E-bikes are most useful for those with short commutes (or fitness buffs who want a morning work out). Our Editor in Chief commutes nearly 50 miles, from Brooklyn, NY to Rockaway, NJ. He’s a poor candidate for an E-bike.

But for those with shorter commutes, E-bikes (or biomechanical bikes) can be huge money-savers. Each E-bike accelerates to approximately 18 mph, which realistically eliminates them for long-distance transport. This makes the traditional 40-60 mileage capability seem superfluous. Seen in that vein, the rapid recharge time of the Tailwind outweighs its short range. The Tailwind may not alleviate rush-hour traffic, but it will definitely shake up the electric bicycle market. Schwinn’s Tailwind hits the market at $3,199.

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[1] http://www.schwinn.com/
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