



HOW WE TESTED
The bikes were put through their paces on a 14-mile commute through central London. We also timed how quickly the hybrids could reach 15mph, and noted each model's top speed.

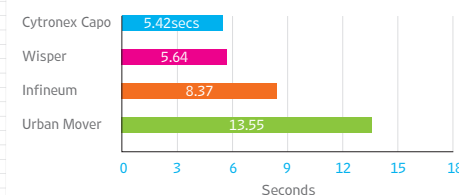
↓ CYCLE POWER

Electric bikes promise to take the sweat out of your commute

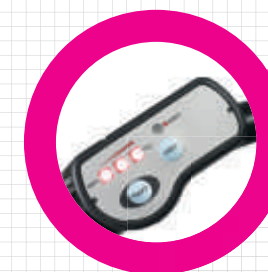
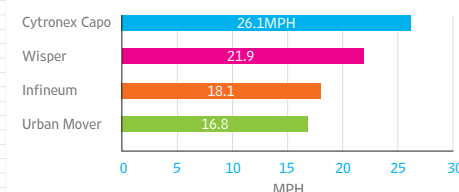
test

Electric bikes

TIME FROM 0-15MPH



TOP SPEED



1 CYTRONEX POWERED CANNONDALE CAPO

Cytronex takes road bikes and retrofits an electric drive – the front hub is a motor and a lithium-ion battery sits in the bottle cage. There's a pause before the motor starts pulling, but once assistance is active the Capo flies. Neat design touches, such as the powerful built-in lights and handlebar-mounted switch, were appreciated. But judging battery capacity caused us to worry – there's no power indicator, and we felt a loss of power at the end of our route.

WIRED Fast and flashy
TIRED Battery guesswork

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£1,650 cytronex.com

2 WISPER BIKES 906

Riding the 906 can feel like riding a moped. It's big and heavy with a powerful motor and quick acceleration. You can set automatic assistance at three power levels, and using full power on our commute drained only half the battery. The 906 is expensive, but feels well made. Its disc brakes slow the big bike quickly, and the epicyclic gearbox means you can change gears when stationary. Its weight means it's not the ideal bike if you have to carry it up a stairway.

WIRED Speedy acceleration and powerful brakes
TIRED Heavy load

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£1,795 wisper.kellsoft.net

3 URBAN MOVER UM36X

We liked the UM36X's built-in lock, which immobilises the back wheel and has a chain to wrap around a lamppost. There are low- and high-assistance modes, both of which activate promptly. There's plenty of pull on high power, but we had to use a mix of high and normal power to avoid exhausting the battery. The bike has a six-speed derailleur, but it's no fun to pedal – there's a looseness in the transmission that makes for slow acceleration.

WIRED Inexpensive; clever design touches
TIRED Glitchy pedalling

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£1,149 urbanmover.com

4 INFINEUM EXTREME

If you have a long distance to commute, the Extreme allows you to slot a spare battery in the carrier – though in our test, one battery still had half a charge remaining after cycling 14 miles to the office and back. Its 24-speed gearing also means pedalling isn't too big a chore. There's a hand throttle for the motor, and the power kicks in after a couple of crank revolutions. We found the delay annoying, so used the manual throttle for standing starts. It's not quick, but the fat tyres give a smooth ride.

WIRED Upgradeable range
TIRED Slow auto-boost

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£1,170 www.infineumbike.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVE LUDWELL