



# CYCLING'S SHOWCASE

The Cycle Show at Earls Court is Britain's biggest, with over 20,000 visitors checking out more than 400 brands. **Dan Joyce** previews this year's event

Cycling's New Year starts in the autumn when manufacturers reveal their shiny 2011 lineup to the cycling public at bike shows. To view the widest cross-section in Britain you need to get down to Earls Court from 8th-10th October, when the Cycle Show returns to London. It's open from 10am to 6pm each day, apart from on Sunday when it closes at 5pm.

CTC members get a discount on tickets bought in advance, paying £10.50 per adult instead of £12 in advance or £15 on the door; quote the code 'CTC'. Children's tickets are £6 in advance, and there are discounted tickets for families and groups. To book, visit [cycleshow.co.uk](http://cycleshow.co.uk) or call 08448 483221.

The strength of an event like Cycle is having so many different cycling products in one place, with 2011 Campagnolo groupsets separated from new Schwalbe touring tyres or Topeak's latest multitools by a short stretch of carpet. It's worth coming



(Top) Earls Court is easy to get to by bike or by tube – less so by car

(Above) There are also test tracks for commuters and mountain bikers

(Left) Top-end carbon fibre bikes turn heads, so expect to see plenty on display

simply to window-shop.

Yet it's not only an exhibition. There are three test tracks where you can get on selected bikes and take them for a spin: a commuter test track with faux street furniture; a mountain bike track that includes

North Shore sections; and a kids' test track that little ones can tire themselves out on riding balance bikes and the like. There's also an arena and 'street course' where stunt riders will leap on, off and over things that most of us wouldn't attempt *without* a bike.

There's a range of events too. Specialized will present cycle maintenance instruction and also demonstrate their Body Fit bike-fitting service. And there are talks from top cyclists and journalists. New features this year include a focus on cycling for the disabled – including bikes and trikes to try out – and Go-Ride sessions for kids.

You can also buy items in the Cycle Store, which has been expanded this year to include Dakine, Polaris, Sealskinz, Endura, Embers Merino, Foska, USE/Exposure Lights, Vitesse Pro Cycling Wear, and many more.

CTC will be there too, on stand B5. Do drop by if you've got anything to ask the staff.

# A CLOSER LOOK

With 400-plus brands and a vastly bigger number of products, it's hard to give an overview of Cycle, but here are a few things that have caught our eyes recently and that we expect to see at the show.



E35

## Brooks Cornwall Handlebar Bag

[brooksendland.com](http://brooksendland.com)

As well as Brooks' renowned leather saddles on display at the Extra UK stand, look out for their stylish luggage and accessories. This bar bag is made from water-resistant cotton canvas with leather trimmings and a waterproof map case – attached with six spare spokes. If you have to ask how much it is, well, you know the saying...

## Schwalbe's Brompton Kojak tyre

[brompton.co.uk](http://brompton.co.uk) & [schwalbe.co.uk](http://schwalbe.co.uk)

Bromptons have always been great utility-style folders, but in recent years we've started to see sportier, lightweight versions such as the S2L and S2L-X. Such bikes demand faster tyres. That used to be Schwalbe's Stelvio; now it's the Kojak, which Brompton claim is



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lighter, more puncture resistant and faster. Having used the 26in version of the Kojak for a couple of years, I don't doubt them.

## Dawes Espoir 3000

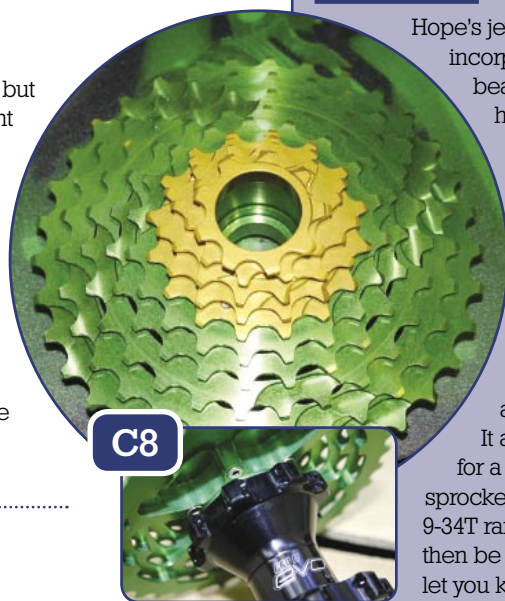
[dawescycles.com](http://dawescycles.com)

You can tell that road cycling is on a roll because junior road bikes are appearing. Dawes' Espoir 3000 was first introduced for 2010. It's an aluminium bike, available in 24-inch and 26-inch wheel versions. Both have 16-speed gearing, with Shimano 2200 STI levers and a proportioned double chainset. Cantilever brakes and decent clearances mean it can double up as a winter cross bike or – with mudguards and a 3-point fixing carrier – as a tourer. Look out for Dawes' junior hybrid too, the 24-inch wheel Tracker.

## Specialized Epic

[specialized.com](http://specialized.com)

What would a bike show be without carbon bling? It doesn't get much blinger than Specialized's Epic, their multiple race winning full-suspension cross-country bike. The bike's rear end has been redesigned, though it still incorporates its independent and active FSR suspension. Light, stiff, and strong, the Epic comes in a wide variety of iterations, from the £6k S-Works down to the £2,199 Epic Comp Carbon, and also including trail-focused Evo versions, 29ers, and more.



C8

## Hope Integrated Cassette

[hopetech.com](http://hopetech.com)

Hope's jewel-like integrated cassette incorporates the pawls and bearings usually found in the hub, though it's not a screw-on freewheel block: it fits directly onto a Hope cassette hub, as a freehub body would. The rotor body and bigger sprockets are machined from a single piece of aluminium. What's the point? It saves weight: it's 20g lighter than an Sram XX cassette on a Hope Pro 2 hub, Hope claim. It also does away with the need for a lockring and allows a top sprocket as small as 9-teeth. With a 9-34T range, a single chainring could then be all you need. Durability? We'll let you know when we've tried one.

C13



D20



B2



## Cooper T100 Spa

[cooperbikes.com](http://cooperbikes.com)

If you thought the fixed-wheel bubble would burst any time soon, a ride across London will disabuse you of that fact – as will a walk around the show. The Cooper T100 Spa follows the classic track bike look, adding only brakes (or brake if you run it fixed) and wider, 28mm tyres. The chrome finish and matching Brooks B15 Swallow saddle and green leather bar tape on the track handlebar are eye-catching. I'd want bigger clearances and more braze-ons myself, but plenty of more fashion-oriented cyclists don't – and at least this bike doesn't have a ridiculously narrow flat or riser bar.

# GETTING THERE

The easiest way to get to the Cycle Show is to ride there. The Earls Court Exhibition Centre is on Warwick Road, postcode SW5 9TA. That's a handful of miles out of the centre of London, but (for the non-Londoners out there) cycling in London is easy: it's flat, and away from arterial roads the traffic is slow. Just look out for other London cyclists – many don't stop at red lights and they may run into you when you do so!

You can plot your cycling route at [journeyplanner.tfl.gov.uk](http://journeyplanner.tfl.gov.uk). When you arrive at Cycle, you can park your bike for free at the Brompton bike park – which isn't just for folders. Alternatively the nearest tube stops are Earls Court 1 and West Brompton.

Get to the show early if you can, particularly if you want to chat to people on the stands. It gets busier around the middle of the day, between noon and 4pm. I'd recommend taking something to drink and a few snacks. There are food outlets there, and they're fine but they've always seemed a bit expensive to me. Since you are in London, you can go outside to eat – something that wasn't an option at bike shows held at Excel or Birmingham's NEC.