

# Gifts for cyclists

A cross-section of cycling products selected and reviewed by CTC staff, specialist journalists and CTC members



If you want to submit a review, write or email the editor – details on page 80 – for advice on how to go about it. Each one printed wins a bottle of 'Cycles Gladiator' Cabernet Sauvignon from Patriarche Wines. Normally £6.99 a bottle, this Californian red is available by the case from [www.everywine.co.uk](http://www.everywine.co.uk). For more information about the Cycles Gladiator range, see [www.patriarchewines.com](http://www.patriarchewines.com)

## First rides for kids



### « Balance bikes £75 (Islabikes Rothan)

Reviewed by CTC Press Officer Yannick Read and son Noah

The first time I put my 3-year-old son on a 'balance bike', he sat silently for two minutes until a boy rattled past him on a conventional bicycle fitted with stabilisers. 'Why can't I have one like that, daddy?' he asked wistfully.

The theory (lost on him) is simple: remove a bicycle's pedals and you allow a child to concentrate fully on learning the tricky business of steering and balancing. Pedalling is the easy bit. And when the time comes, the child who has mastered a balance bike will find riding a conventional bicycle second nature – bypassing any need for stabilisers. It also makes your child more mobile in the interim.

Traditionally, this type of bike has no brakes; shoe leather does the job just fine when the young rider needs to stop. Some models include a rear brake, which is adjusted to make locking the back wheel in a skid difficult if not impossible. Another feature to look out for is a stop on the steering, which limits the steering lock and helps to prevent the bike 'jack-knifing'. Of course, ball bearings and pneumatic tyres help too.

The excellent Islabikes Rothan (£75) is pictured. You can buy decent balance bike for under £50 (Joey Running Bike, [www.joeyrunningbikes.com](http://www.joeyrunningbikes.com)), or spend £100 or more on the lovely wooden Likeabike ([www.likeabike.co.uk](http://www.likeabike.co.uk)) or rear drum-braked Firstbike ([www.firstbike.uk.com](http://www.firstbike.uk.com)). Any of them should help your child catch the cycling bug nice and early. They make a fine toy, too. That said, these arguments were lost on my 3-year-old; he wanted a bike with pedals and nothing less.

Details: [www.islabikes.co.uk](http://www.islabikes.co.uk) for the Rothan, or tel: 01746 710835

### Islabikes Cnoc 14 » £110

Reviewed by Campaigns Officer Adam Coffman and daughter Mia

The choice of a bike for an 'about to be' child cyclist can be confusing to say the least. A trip to your local bike shop or even superstore is likely to offer up heavy bikes that are stronger on style than function. The smaller Islabikes come in any colour you want as long as its grey! I was looking for a first bike for my 4-year-old daughter Mia who had spent the previous 18 months, learning to balance, steer and brake on a Puky Learner Bike (i.e. a balance bike, like those above).

The beauty of the Cnoc 14 bike became apparent when Mia sat on it for the first time. All the components were designed with a small child in mind – the pedals, saddle, handlebars were the perfect fit and with an adjustment for small hands the front brake lever was easy to operate and worked a treat. At first I thought the back pedal brake was going to be a hindrance to a new cyclist, but she soon got the hang of setting her pedal in the right place to move off. Within 15 minutes, Mia was riding without my help. I would highly recommend this for a first bike. A Cnoc 16 (16-inch wheels instead of 14) is available for the same price for taller beginners.

Details: [www.islabikes.co.uk](http://www.islabikes.co.uk), tel: 01746 710835



## Bright ideas for adults



### « Busch & Müller Lumotec IQ-Fly Senso-Plus

£60

Reviewed by Technical Editor Chris Juden

Generators are the rule in Germany, and since no more input power can be had without making the rider work harder, efficiency is paramount. Busch & Müller have therefore used the latest generation of super efficient LEDs in their Lumotec IQ-Fly dynamo lamp, which they claim surpasses German traffic law requirements by a factor of four! After two weeks of dark commutes, I can confirm that it is a step-change brighter (an f-stop or two) than the best halogen bulb dynamo lamps I've used previously.

The super-efficient diode doesn't get as hot as previous LEDs, so B&M don't use a heat-sink and instead mount it just inside the top of lens, pointing backwards into a reflector. This controls the distribution of light as required by traffic regulations, whilst also providing an intense central spot capable of illuminating the road at least 100 metres ahead. With a claimed four kilo-candela in the beam centre, dazzling oncomers is a real possibility if it is aimed too high. However, the lamp head can be swivelled to three positions.

The version I tested is the Plus-Senso, mounted on a home-made extender to clear the cantilever brake cable and powered by an old Schmidt hub. I found the 'senso' very sensitive, switching on the lamp whenever it's the least bit dull or shady, and the 'plus' standlight feature very bright.

Although this unit has only the standardised 2.4W to go on, I find it more effective for road cycling than battery driven LED lamps of two, three, even four times the electrical power. (Those units work better off-road, where their diffuse lighting provides a clearer view of nearby obstacles.) Battery versions of the IQ are also available, as are different dynamo versions.

Details: [www.amba-marketing.com](http://www.amba-marketing.com), tel: 01392 829903

### Reelights »

£38

Reviewed by Technical Editor Chris Juden

It sounds unlikely, but these flashing lamps get their power from tiny currents induced by passing magnets fixed to the spokes. Flashing lights are legal now. But if you want to use one as anything other than a subsidiary light it must emit at least 4 candela (4000mcd) mid flash and, crucially, not have any means of emitting a steady light.

These Reelights fit the bill, and now there's a version for the UK market that mounts on the right, with magnets set behind the spokes to keep the rear sets from grabbing the chain – a problem with early right-mounted prototypes. I tried the SL120-UK model on a light tourer with a triple chainset and had no problems with chain derailment during normal riding, even in bottom gear.

Fitting and adjusting the new design was much easier than the originals – a set of which I've had on my commuter bike for a year.

The all-stainless metalwork looks smarter, too. Performance is also improved, with a constant 2Hz flash that continues after coming to a halt for over two minutes. They certainly look bright enough and according to specification (29cd front, 10cd rear) emit ample light for UK approval.

Powering the lights is effortless – almost. There has to be some resistance as these are generator lamps. Reelight's engineers admit that it takes an extra 0.12W to turn the wheels at 20kph. That's like riding up a hill that rises 1.5 inches per mile. I think we can accept that's as near as makes no difference 'friction free', and be grateful for



permanently fitted, theft resistant, unforgettable lights that will always come on and stay on! Here at last is a set of simple flashing lights that take care of your legal obligations, leaving you free to fit whatever 'additional' lights you need – which, under streetlights, might be none.

Details: distributed by 2pure, [www.2pure.co.uk](http://www.2pure.co.uk) (shop orders only). Available to buy from CTC Shop, tel: 0870 873 0069, [www.ctcshop.com](http://www.ctcshop.com)

**Stocking fillers**



**« Fastboy Fenders**

**\$75 (about £35)**

While not as effective as wraparound SKS chromoplastic, these American wooden mudguards keep the worst off and look stylish enough to appeal to those who might otherwise go without. There's even a rear guard for 'fixies' that bolts to an unused rear brake hole.

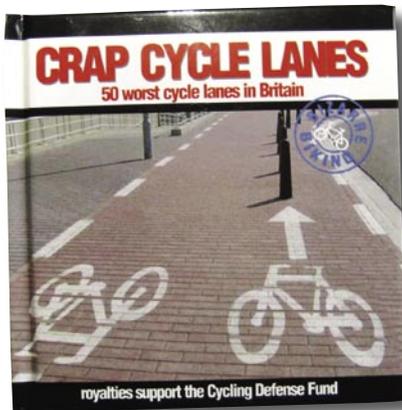
[www.fastboyfenders.com](http://www.fastboyfenders.com)

**Petzl e+LITE »**

**£25**

This tiny 26g lamp is great for getting you home, being switchable between red (constant or flashing) or white LEDs (high, low, or flashing). It's bright (high beam is 16 lumens), lasts 35-45 hours on constant and straps or clips to anything. Takes two CR2302 batteries.

[www.petzl.com](http://www.petzl.com)



**« Crap Cycle Lanes**

**£4.99**

All cyclists know of a ridiculous cycle-facility. Now Warrington Cycle Campaign's 50 daftest from across the UK have been put together in a book which, while funny, makes a serious point. Royalties go to the Cyclists' Defence Fund.

From bookshops or [www.eye-books.com](http://www.eye-books.com)

**Bike Inn DVDs »**

**£22.50 & £24.50**

Watching a professional do something and explain it is much easier than reading it in a book. Get the two-disc 'General maintenance and roadside repairs' DVD (£22.50) for new or intermediate cyclists and the 'Wheelbuilding' one (£24.50) for experts.

[www.bike-inn.co.uk](http://www.bike-inn.co.uk), tel: 01406 371273



**« Timex Ironman iControl Watch**

**£80**

A nice toy for runners and off-road cyclists who don't have to worry about traffic, this watch can wirelessly control your iPod MP3 player. It also has stopwatch, lap-counter and interval training functions. It's okay but pricey; you could get a needs-no-remote iPod Shuffle for £45.

Available in shops

**The Cyclist's Companion »**

**£9.99**

A treasure trove and facts, figures and quotes about cycling to dip into. The top 10 cycling films, Velocio's words of wisdom, the best rides in the world, the fastest, the biggest, the oldest, how to deal with an attacking dog – it's all here, and more.

Available from bookshops or direct from CTC, tel: 0870 873 0061

For more details, see advert on page 9 of this issue.

