



£2000+ MULTI-FUNCTIONAL FAMILY BIKE

CIRCE MORPHEUS OMNIBUS

Many cargo cycles carry a non-peddalling passenger; the Morpheus is different. Review by *Richard Peace*

THE CIRCE MORPHEUS is really four bikes in one: tandem (with one upright and one recumbent rider); cargo bike; child carrier; and, well, just a bike. You can buy it in various configurations. I tested the 8-speed Omnibus (£2149), with a few optional extras.

The Morpheus is a great child carrier, there being room in the front passenger/cargo space to take a child cot, while the optional rear rack is designed to take a child seat. If you have a tot who wants to pedal, there are kiddie cranks available that mount closer to the front seat.

The half-recumbent design looks to improve on the traditional form of tandem riding, where the stoker at the rear ends up looking at the back of the captain's head. With the stoker at the front and lower down, both riders have a great view. As their heads are closer together, it's a much more

sociable affair; chatting is easy. There's also a freewheel for the front chainset, so the front rider can stop pedalling independently of the rear rider. It's ideal with less experienced or less fit riders on the front. Apparently, families with disabled children have also found this useful.

LOADED WITH OPTIONS

For bulky cargo, it's easy to remove the stoker's seat and replace it with a very sturdy load-carrying platform rack. You can remove the front cranks and chain too, though this isn't vital – they are easier left on for short trips. As well as the platform rack (or front passenger), the Morpheus will carry four panniers, two on a rear rack and two on an under-frame mid-rack.

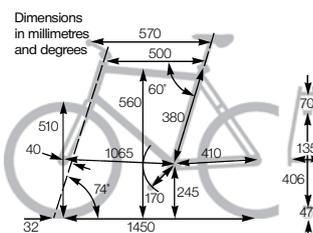
Starting in tandem mode, I tried out the Morpheus with a couple of family members on the local greenway. Any nerves due to the 'open' front seat quickly disappeared, and both were soon volunteering for the next test ride. Whilst the configuration of upright captain and linkage-steering means this isn't a bike for high-speed tandem riding, it is still no slouch, and it would be great fun for long leisure rides and extended tours.

It proved equally capable in cargo mode. The front rack was ideal for large boxes and is rated to carry 70kg. Factor in a rear rack and the mid-rack and, assuming the load is divisible, total capacity is comparable to the cargo bikes we featured last issue. ●



● This chain tensioner enables the front boom to be moved in or out to accommodate different sizes of stoker

Tech Spec



CIRCE MORPHEUS OMNIBUS

PRICE: £2491.99 (inc optional £160 platform rack, £150 heavy duty stand & £32.99 mudguards)

SIZES: One size

WEIGHT: 24.4kg as tandem, 21.9kg as cargo bike (as specified)

FRAME & FORK: Oversize aluminium frame, chromoly fork

WHEELS: 47-406 Schwalbe Marathon tyres, Alex DA16 32 spoke rims, Shimano Deore front hub, Alfine rear.

TRANSMISSION: Alfine 8-speed rear hub with Microshift bar-end shifter. 48T chainset, 16T rear sprocket. 8-speed, 30-91 inches.

BRAKING: Avid BB5 discs, 160mm

ACCESSORIES: luggage platform, mid-rack, front and rear stands, mudguards. Many other accessories available

CONTACT: circecycles.com

Also available



1) HASE PINO PORTER £3350+
Similar 'modular' semi-recumbent tandem with separable frame and front suspension. Many options for disabled riders or passengers. hasebikes.com



2) CIRCE HELIOS BRUT £1659
Circe's upright alternative to the Morpheus, the Helios is a 20in-wheel tandem that doubles as a cargo bike and child carrier. Favourably tested in June/July 2010. circecycles.com