



Bike test

GAZELLE HEAVYDUTY NL C7 HMB

Richard Hallett weighs up a Dutch utility bike equipped with electric assistance

GAZELLE'S NOMENCLATURE IS uncompromisingly literal: at 30kg, the HeavyDuty NL is a hefty lump. Massive racks front and rear, a top tube profile that makes the bike look even bigger than it is, a full chaincase, and suitably fat tyres create an imposing profile that drew admiring comments when parked outside the local shop.

What to do with the goods bought there was problematic. While sturdy, the racks have top rails 16.4mm in diameter, which is too large for most pannier hooks. (Ortlieb make optional 20mm hooks.) The rear rack's lower rail is only 12.5mm so that should work, or you might use straps. The front rack, which comes with side panels, is angled upwards, perhaps in the hope



Above: Magura hydraulic rim brakes were once popular in MTB circles for their rim-crushing power

that goods laid on top will stay put.

That's unlikely unless strapped down, if the excellent Magura hydraulic rim brakes are used aggressively. These stoppers will halt a laden tandem on a 20% descent.

The coarsely treaded but agreeably supple tyres are a good match for the HeavyDuty's geometry, which is designed for stability and to work with a heavy load. It sailed untroubled through its first outing, on freshly-fallen snow.

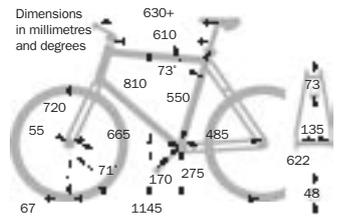
The riding experience is distinctly Dutch. Swept-back handlebars place the rider firmly in the overly-sumptuous saddle, sat bolt-upright. It's not the most effective pedalling posture but does offer a commanding view of the road.

The ideal riding pace is on the steady side of stately, not least because the Bosch e-bike transmission is here a little hard pressed uphill. The LCD display shows that full power is often in use even on moderate inclines. The ratios of the Nexus hub are nevertheless suited to the bike's performance envelope, and on the flat the bike rolls well, easily reaching 15mph.

Out of the box, the HeavyDuty feels overbuilt. But with suitable cargo receptacles, and used accordingly, it would surely deliver the composed and capable performance expected of a genuine utility cycle. **C**

Tech Spec

Dimensions in millimetres and degrees



GAZELLE HEAVYDUTY NL C7 HMB

PRICE: £1,999

SIZES: 49, 54 (tested), 59cm

WEIGHT: 30kg

FRAME & FORK: TIG-welded aluminium alloy frame, cro-moly steel fork

WHEELS: 48-622 Metropolitan Palm Bay tyres, Zac 622x19 rims, Gazelle front hub, Shimano Nexus 7 rear hub, 36x3 plain-gauge stainless steel spokes

TRANSMISSION: Bosch mid-mount e-bike drive with 170mm crank-arm chainset, Linea 2.0 chaincase, Shimano Nexus 7 hub gear

BRAKING: Magura HS11 hydraulic rim

STEERING & SEATING: Gazelle Aerowing II Vario Comfort aluminium handlebar, adjustable aluminium quill stem, 27.2mm aluminium alloy seatpost, Selle Royal Gipsy saddle, Shimano Nexus grips

EQUIPMENT: Gazelle TIG-welded aluminium racks, Curana mudguards, centre stand, frame-mounted wheel lock, Spanninga and Trelock battery lights

gazellebikes.co.uk

OTHER OPTIONS



1 Raleigh Captus Low Step Bosch £1749

Bosch-powered, V-brake-equipped pedelec with integral wheel lock and kickstand. raleigh.co.uk



2 Gazelle HeavyDuty NL 7 £749

Essentially the same bike without the motor. Equipped with 7-speed Nexus hub (3-speed available) but roller brakes and hub dynamo lighting. gazellebikes.co.uk