BIKE TEST  EXCELSIOR TOURING

Upright roadsters are ideal bikes for urban areas. Yet they’re rare in the UK, especially at the prices post-pandemic newbies might stretch to. Not so Germany...

This entry-level Excelsior has everything you need for everyday travel – comfortable riding position, mudguards, rack, chainguard, kickstand, dynamo lighting – for just €289.95 (approx £263). Bargain!

Like most roadsters it’s heavy. The well-made frame is steel of unknown provenance, probably hi-ten, and most of the bits are also steel. Yet on the right terrain – flat roads and cycle tracks – it cruises along easily enough. The riding position provides a commanding view of the traffic and is very comfortable for short trips. It forces you to relax. There’s little I’d change, except to have a lower bottom bracket to make it easier to get a foot down at the lights.

At 60in, the Excelsior’s single gear is about right if you steer clear of hills, where it’s exhausting. The rear hub incorporates a coaster brake, which works well but complicates setting off as you can’t spin the cranks into position. For sudden stops there’s a front V-brake.

What defines the Excelsior Touring, other than its stately ride, is its equipment. I’d probably upgrade the 7mm-rail rear rack but the shiny steel mudguards might last forever, the kickstand is strong, and the chainguard is okay. The Axa Duo sidewall dynamo is decent and powers a smart front LED lamp with a switch and a rear one with a standlight. There’s even a pump!

Verdict
A comfy urban dreadnought that’s difficult to get hold of in the UK. New cyclists need access to affordable, practical transport like this; existing ones might find it changes the way they think about cycling. Recommended.