

# Bike test

## In the frame

Photos: Simon & Shirley Withers



There are inevitably some bigish jumps as the sprockets reach the size of side plates, and in the two largest the more extremely angled chainline results in a little chain noise. Yet in spite of my deliberate efforts at clunky, ungainly gear changes and rapid back-peddalling, I could never get the chain to unship – and that’s without a chain guide. The Cues derailleur has a clutch, while the chainring uses Shimano’s ‘Dynamic Chain Engagement’ – teeth that are broader and taller and with a hooked leading edge. This is designed for ‘superior chain retention’ and a ‘lower driving sound’. Well, one out of two isn’t bad!

The braking is excellent, offering control and power with minimal effort, and there was no squeaking or squealing in the rain.

The FE part of the Cube Nuroad’s name denotes that it’s fully equipped, and it really does have the lot: chunky kickstand, tough mudguards and a rear rack that’s as solid as a rock, albeit incompatible with a rack-top bag. All these products bear the name of Cube’s component brand ACID. (The same bike is available as the Nuroad Pro without the extras for £1,199.)

The lights are powered by a front hub dynamo. The front is bright enough for urban riding but you’ll need assistance on unlit routes. Both lights stay lit when you stop, the rear staying on longer than the front. The neat-looking bell could have been louder, but that’s a very minor gripe!

### Ride

Hit your cruising speed and you’ll be in a good place – as you will be in pretty much every situation. The riding position is quite upright, putting no strain on your lower back, and the contact points are good, contributing to excellent long-distance comfort. I liked the shortish saddle, the slightly ovalised bar tops and the grippy bar tape. I was a little surprised there wasn’t more flare to the bar on a bike with touring and gravel in its sights, but it’s not a deal-breaker.

Apart from in the bigger sprockets, the drivetrain is smooth and silent when you’re pedalling, and the freewheel isn’t that loud when you coast. The bottom gear is low enough for seated climbing. If you do get out of the saddle, the frame is stiff and efficient, so you could even use it for training. It’ll never be super-fast and you’ll spin out eventually on the 102in top gear – though at a cadence of 100 you’ll be doing 30mph.

I tested the Nuroad Pro FE on poor tarmac (all too easy to find...), light gravel, canal towpaths and more, and it took them all in its stride. The tyres feel like they major on toughness over suppleness, and were unmarked after a month of riding. Their 40mm width still helps to take the sting out of everything, as well as offering reasonable rolling resistance on the road and decent grip away from it.

The Cube also boosts confidence on descents, where it offers great control and first-rate braking.

**Above left:** An SP dynamo hub is a very useful addition for touring and commuting  
**Above:** Unlike some practical bikes, the Nuroad FE doesn’t feel laden when you’re out of the saddle

## Other options



### BOARDMAN ADV 8.9 £1,200

Aluminium-framed all-rounder that covers a lot of the same bases. While lighter at 10.5kg, once you factor in guards, rack, lights and kickstand it’ll be much the same. [boardmanbikes.com](http://boardmanbikes.com)



### TREK CHECKPOINT ALR 3 GEN 3 £1,400

Aluminium-framed, Shimano Cues-equipped adventure bike that comes set up tubeless. At 10.4kg it’s a very similar weight to the Boardman. [trekbikes.com](http://trekbikes.com)

## Verdict

Well-priced and versatile all-rounder that covers a lot of cycling bases. If you’re looking for one bike for commuting, leisure rides, weekends away and credit card touring, this could be it. It’s great on bad roads, towpaths and not-too-rough unsurfaced routes. While I wouldn’t take it on challenging gravel as specified – with stand and guards – those components come into their own the rest of the time.

The bike has very good long-distance comfort, yet is surprisingly lively when you put the hammer down. The components are well chosen, the gearing low enough for all but very heavily laden touring, and the braking is excellent.