

TREK MANHATTEN

Chris Juden reviews a US-designed, Dutch-inspired roadster



Apart from Cambridge, London and York, roadsters are rare in the UK and are likely to remain so until everyday cycling becomes fashionable in *New York* and the big bike brands get on board. But it's happening! Enter the Trek Manhattan.

The frame is aluminium but that doesn't make it light. The bike weighs a hefty 19kg and has only three gears, none of them really low. It's a flat city bike – for slow pedallers. Most people *do* pedal slowly. The cranks of Dutch commuters don't turn much faster than the sails of their windmills. But there's room in this

chaincase for a rear sprocket with lots more teeth than the 17 fitted.

Apart from rather a high bottom-bracket, the geometry suits the purpose of this bike, providing the upright posture appropriate to unhurried short-distance transport in normal clothes. For in addition to the trouser (and chain) protecting chaincase there are coat-guards by the rear wheel.

The unusual grouped spoking design serves no practical purpose and requires non-standard rims. Fortunately you should never need to replace them, since braking is at the hub. Shimano roller-brakes are

reliable and long-lasting but are not particularly sharp. A slipping clutch inside the front hub stops an inexperienced rider going saddle-over-handlebars due to panicky braking. I like to be able to lock the front wheel, however, and couldn't.

The front hub also houses a generator, rated 2.4W to power just the headlamp. This has a halogen bulb, which seems dim compared to the LEDs I'm now used to, but is actually quite bright. The rear lamp uses batteries.

Other equipment includes a massive tubular steel rear carrier, a good quality wheel lock, and a top quality propstand. I'd prefer the

propstand at the rear dropout to support the size of load the carrier invites, and 6mm screws rather than 5mm for the same reason. The steel fork has low-load carrier eyes too.

The Schwalbe tyres rolled quite easily. Their SmartGuard puncture protection adds weight, but will be wanted to avoid the time and fiddle of removing a wheel – especially the rear.

The Manhattan's reach is a bit longer and the saddle thinner than Dutch city bikes, suiting riders used to something more sporty. It's practical nevertheless. Whenever you want to pedal somewhere local without changing into Superman first, this bike will be ready, night and day.

NEED TO KNOW

Price: £500

Contact: trekbikes.com

Sizes: 50, 55, 60cm

Weight: 19.06kg (55cm)

Frame & fork:

Aluminium alloy frame, steel fork, all the usual fittings.

Wheels: Schwalbe City-Plus 40-622 tyres, alloy rims, 36 2.0mm stainless spokes.

Transmission:

Shimano 3-speed internal: 46, 62, 85 inches.

Braking: Shimano roller brakes

Lighting: Shimano 2.4W hub, Basta halogen headlamp, Hermanns Goggle rear lamp

Equipment: SKS mudguards, Hesling chaincase, Axa wheel lock, Atran Velo propstand

RIVALS



Pashley Roadster Sovereign

£665
Traditional UK roadster with ISO 630 wheels, 5-speed hub gearing, drum brakes, and lights. pashley.co.uk



Raleigh Superbe

£560
A similar steel roadster to Pashley's, with 5-speed Sturmey-Archer gearing, brakes and hub dynamo. 700C wheels. raleigh.co.uk



Gazelle Chamonix Pure

£675
Fully-equipped Dutch roadster with 7-speed hub, lighting, wheel-lock, etc. cycleheaven.co.uk

