

E-bikes:

 Light Lounge Studio

changing lives and lifestyles

By Bill Doyle

MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE **DISCOVERING E-BIKES.**

Take Mike, a 58-year-old weekend cyclist, who years ago joined a small group who go on outrides from Cape Town every week from the Foreshore to Camps Bay and then through Hout Bay, over Chapman's to Cape Point, and back. Basically the Cape Town Cycle Tour in reverse.

"My group was mostly 20 years younger than me," says Mike. "I found myself falling behind and although they are very kind and waited for me, especially the girls, I felt I was letting them down. I also found I was riding less often as I needed more time to recover."

Mike's e-bike changed all that. He now gets out every week,

and while he still cannot lead the peloton, he seldom keeps anyone waiting. And he is able to recover fully, is out in the sun and fresh ocean air, pumping the pedals.

Making it easier

William is an artist who retired 15 years ago after a life in journalism. "I have ridden a bike all my life," says William. "I rode 30 Argus Tours, later Cape Town Cycle Tours. Then four years ago I had a heart attack. I recovered completely, but I started putting on weight because I could no longer cycle. One day, I saw Henry Owens, the Managing Director of WOW E-Bikes, on a visit to Grotto Bay where he lives.

"He was testing a new e-bike in one of the little roads in Grotto.



I asked for 'a spin'. It was like a dream, taking me back 10 years to when I last rode a bike. I came back after my 20-minute spin, and Henry was worried I had fallen off."

William's doctor encouraged him to continue cycling and lose 10kg, which would help his heart, and reduce his weight, and even stop his ankles from swelling. "But please don't fall!" she warned.

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William has lost 10kg, stopped taking the diuretic he needed to prevent his ankles swelling, cut back on some of his heart pills, and feels stronger and more energetic. He is planning a 200km trip on back roads between George and Knysna, over old passes and through the forest.

"I just need about 120km between charging points. I will drag a light trailer with a sleeping bag and a spare bike battery. A whole new life has opened up for me. I could never have managed what I do now. I ride every day, and my computer tells me how far and what energy I have used. My breathing is better, and I sleep better."

E-bikes make it easier for injured, less fit, and older riders or riders with disabilities to access cycling, as there is less stress on joints. Medi-Wheels, a business specialising in the medical market, promote e-bikes.

The South African Electric Bicycle Report 2027 predicts a boom in sales over the next four years.

Eco-friendly tours

WOW E-bikes was established in Paternoster in 2020. They chose Paternoster for their assembly factory because they could run eco-friendly tours through the beautiful little coastal town, along the beaches and through the coastal flowers of Cape Columbine Nature Reserve, right on the doorstep of their shop. "Local is Lekker" is a slogan of the shop, and



every bike proudly bears a South African flag.

"I believe that for price, we offer easily the best value" says Henry.

The business has flourished and employs local people who work closely as a team assembling the bikes.

"We are very fussy about the quality of the bikes we make, and we try to build rugged, reliable machines. If you compare our prices with bikes of similar quality, you are getting something at a very good discount" says Henry.

Minimum maintenance and robust

They are also constantly testing prototypes of different bikes, different batteries, and computer controllers, to stay ahead in the technical field and to produce a machine which requires minimum maintenance and is robust enough to take a hammering on dust roads and off-road.

Annelize Ziehl-Owens, Marketing Director, says that new clients, often walk-in tourists, take an e-bike tour through the flowers from the shop, and come back to buy their own bike, tailored to their size and needs. "They arrive as strangers and leave as part of the WOW E-Bike family," says Annelize.

"E-bike delivery services and the growing market for bikes for commuting and recreation are already boosting sales. Some tour operators from other provinces have ordered bikes as a fleet. We also offer free delivery, nationwide," says Henry. "We render a trustworthy after-sales service, and we have to know that we have the spares to serve customers for years ahead."

Booking for eco-tours is advisable, because sometimes all the tour bikes and guides are out. "And also," says Annelize, "we can only do the beach rides at low tide."

www.wowebikes.co.za