

Gear up!

A cross-section of cycling products selected and reviewed by CTC staff, specialist journalists and CTC members

Submit a review

If you want to submit a review, write or email the editor – details on page 80 – for advice on how to go about it. Each one printed wins a boxed set of three Cassini historical maps of the area of your choice. To see the whole range, visit www.cassinimaps.com. To order by phone, call 0845 458 9910.



CIRCE HELIOS DUO

FROM £899

Reviewed by CTC Campaigns Officer
Adam Coffman

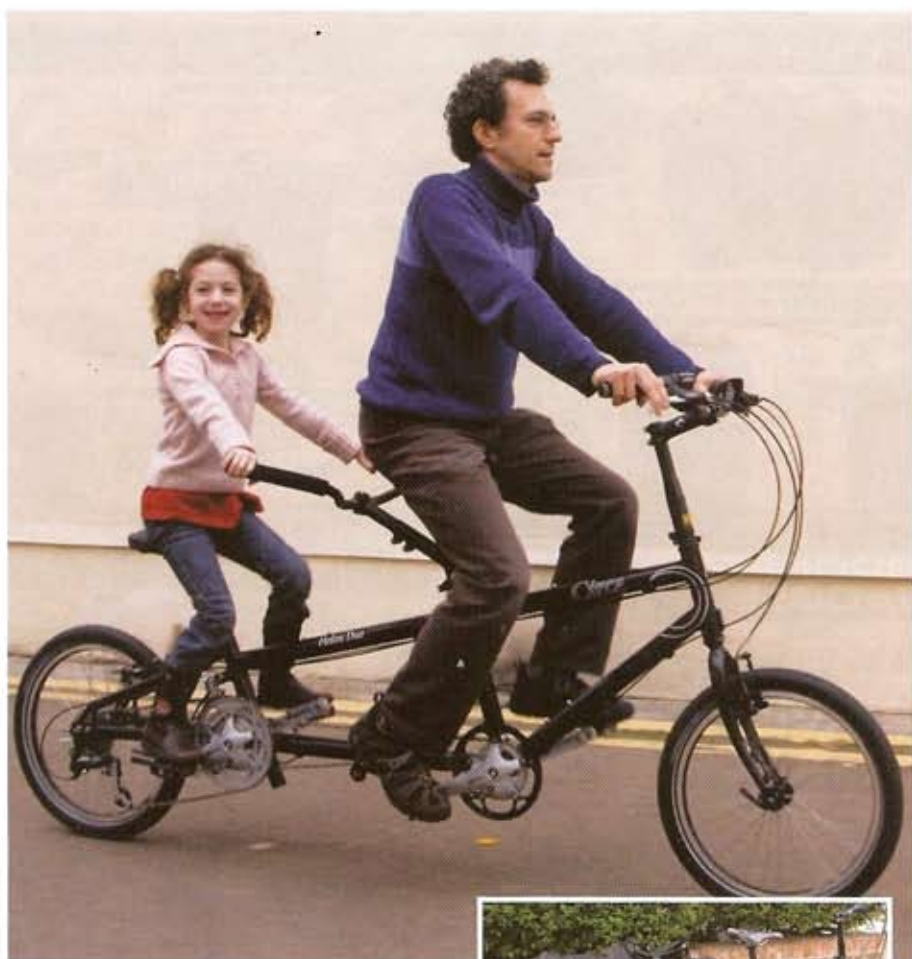
The Helios is a stylish and well-proportioned tandem aimed primarily at families. Its 20" (ISO 406) wheels, low stand-over height, and telescopic rear seatpost enable it to fit a vast range of rider sizes – from children as young as 3 ½ to tall adults. It has also been designed to carry large and heavy loads: an ingenious optional rack – which fits in place of the stoker seatpost – turns it into a kind of longtail load bike. It takes a few minutes to change the configuration.

The Helios's sit up and beg riding position suits the type of urban riding that I normally do, providing excellent visibility of the road ahead. My daughter Mia (7) is used to being a stoker on a tandem but she particularly liked being on the Circe. She said she felt very high up and could easily see lots of other children stuck in cars as we sailed past them.

It didn't feel like we were riding a small-wheeled bike. The two-inch wide Schwalbe Big Apple tyres offer the comfort and rolling resistance you'd expect from bigger wheels with narrower tyres. I was impressed with the smooth shifting of the Shimano Alivio drivetrain too. I was easily able to shift up and down through the gears as I navigated the traffic, and the shifting felt more like a normal bike than a long-chained tandem.

As well as riding the Helios with Mia, I rode it solo with the rear seat in place and also fully laden with four panniers on the optional rack. Handling was good and it was much easier than pulling a similar-sized load in a trailer.

If you are a cycling family, this bike



is well worth the investment. It's very versatile. As well as one adult to pilot it, it can be used to transport: two children in childseats; one child in a childseat plus two rear panniers; an adult or child stoker plus two rear panniers or one childseat; or four rear panniers, plus anything you can strap to the top of the rack.

Even the Henry Ford choice of colour is fine, given the standard of the paintwork. My only criticism for use around town is that everything is



quick release, from saddles to racks to handlebars. So invest in security skewers! It weighs 20kg with its custom rack and 18kg set up for a stoker.

Details: www.circycles.com,
01954 789284