

Electric Bike Report

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Solex e-bike a nod to French brand's heritage

You may not have heard of Solex, but you won't forget the bike once you see it.

It's a venerable French brand that began making motorized bicycles after World War II, providing inexpensive transportation as the nation rebuilt itself.

"They sold more than 8 million mopeds," said Robert Guimond, business development manager for Solex.

In 2004, a French group bought the brand and began marketing an e-bike designed by Italian car design firm Pininfarina. Solex launched its newest bike, called the Solexity x350, in the U.S. last month at the Interbike Electric Bike Media Event.

Its distinguishing feature is a cylindrical compartment that sits on the headtube between the handlebars and front wheel.

It's an homage to the original Solex design, which featured an 38-cubic-centimeter engine with a roller transmission, carburetor and tank over the front wheel.

Today, the cylinder houses a headlight but is mostly for aesthetics; the electric motor is housed in the rear hub. Solex uses a 350-watt BionX H-Torque G2 motor. BionX, in Aurora, Canada, is best known for its popular e-bike conversion kits.

Solex is coming to market with one frame size in two colors: dark gray and pearl white. A SRAM X4 drivetrain offers eight speeds, and front and rear wheels are equipped with disc brakes.

A 37-volt, 9.6-amp lithium-manganese battery is tucked under the rear rack.



Solexity x350



Robert Guimond (right) of Solex with Tim Kruszka of BionX at the Interbike Electric Bike Media Event

Solex has been selling its e-bikes in Europe and Japan since 2010 and is now targeting North America.

"It's not a huge market, but it's a good market to enter," said Guimond, who is based in Montréal. "The boom will come. I don't know when, but it will come."

He said Solex hopes to be in about 25 to 30 retailers this year. **BRAIN**