



TERN ECLIPSE S18



BY NICK LEGAN

→ NOT ALL ADVENTURE riding takes place on remote or desolate roads. Although most of us conjure images of a winding tarmac heaven or a beautiful ribbon of dirt when the word comes up, many of us actually live in urban areas. So while the bliss of conquering a mountain pass is satisfying, sometimes the flow of riding in traffic can get the endorphins coursing through your veins in a short 20-minute ride.

For those in the especially cramped quarters of a major metropolis, cycling is a great transportation solution. A folding bicycle can help justify a designated commuter/grocery-getter machine if you happen to pay through the nose for the square footage in which you reside. It's also easier on the other end of your commute, making it possible to take your bike into your office instead of relying on the best that the lock industry offers to ensure your bike's safety.

BACKGROUND

Tern made a splash in the world of folding bikes several years ago. In fact this is only the company's third model year. Of course, Tern is by no means the only folding bike manufacturer. Moulton, Bike Friday, Dahon, and Brompton are all players in the folding bike market. While Bike Friday produces mostly made-to-order travel bikes, Brompton goes after the tweed set and Moulton has a cult status

in some circles. Dahon is also very popular and has a large variety of models. Tern pushes an edgier take on folding bikes. Ride quality and style are Tern's primary focus with folded size a third priority.

ÜBER COMMUTER/LIMITED TOURER

As a commuting bike, the Eclipse S18 ticks every box this reviewer has when considering an urban bicycle. Fenders? Yep. Lights? Check. Racks? You bet. Reliable tires? Affirmative. How about a kickstand? Why not!

In fact, what's most impressive about the Eclipse S18 is how thoroughly Tern has anticipated the needs of a commuting cyclist. They've even included a comfy set of Ergon grips with integrated bar-ends and a pump that's hidden in the seatpost. Essentially you just need to add a rider, perhaps a pannier and a spare tube to the mix and you're set. As a touring bike, the Tern has serious potential but only for certain riders. I like a bike with more cockpit adjustability for long rides. I'm a

fairly average 5-feet, 10-inches tall, but with a background in racing I like bikes a bit longer than many do. With only one size on offer, the Tern will either fit you or it won't. And if it doesn't, you don't have many options to make it fit. Because of the folding stem/handlebar mast, bar height and reach is limited.

That said, the Andros stem fitted to the Eclipse S18 is really slick. I couldn't stop playing with it when the bike first arrived. It allows for height, reach, and bar-angle adjustment with the flip of a latch and two levers.

The Biologic Pump Post 2.0 seatpost allows for an incredible range of height adjustment so the Tern should easily fit even fairly short riders. It's on the taller end of the spectrum that riders will start to disagree with the ergonomics of the Tern because the reach from saddle to bar is fairly short.

The front and rear racks are sturdy



SPECIFICATIONS

TERN ECLIPSE S18

Price: \$2,100 (as reviewed)

Sizes available: one size

Weight: 34.8 pounds (with quick release pedals)

TEST BIKE MEASUREMENTS

- 1. Distance: Seatpost to Handlebar:** Min: 22.4 in Max: 28.7 in
- 2. Distance: Saddle to Pedal:** Min: 31.3 in Max: 41.3 in
- 3. Suggested Rider:** 4'10" – 6'5"
- 4. Max Rider Weight:** 254 lb.
- 5. Folding Size:** 16.5 in x 35 in x 29.9 in
- 6. Folding Time:** 10 seconds
- 7. Frame:** 7005-AL with patented OCL Joint and Double Truss

- 8. Fork:** Aluminum 6061 with rack and fender mounts
- 9. Rims:** Kinetix Comp
- 10. Hubs:** BioLogic Joule 3 dynamo disc (front), Kinetix Pro, sealed cartridge bearings, disc (rear)

- 11. Tires:** Schwalbe Big Apple
- 12. Bottom bracket:** Cartridge, sealed bearings
- 13. Crankset:** FSA Vero compact, 50/34T
- 14. Cassette:** Shimano 9 spd, 11-32T
- 15. Brake levers:** Avid FR5
- 16. Shift levers:** SRAM trigger, 2 x 9 spd
- 17. Brake calipers:** Avid BB7 cable-actuated discs
- 18. Pedals:** MKS EZY QR
- 19. Seat post:** BioLogic PostPump 2.0

20. Stem: Andros 3Djust

21. Handlebar: Kinetix Pro, double-budded 7050-AL

22. Headset: Flux Pro

23. Saddle: BioLogic Phia

GEARING IN INCHES

	50	34
11	109.1	74.2
12	100.0	68.0
14	85.7	58.3
16	75.0	51.0
18	66.7	45.3
21	57.1	38.9
24	50.0	34.0
28	42.9	29.1
32	37.5	25.5

Contact: Tern Bicycles, ternbicycles.com

models and I wouldn't hesitate to use them for an extended tour. In fact, because of the small wheel size, the center of gravity of the bike is extremely low, making for great stability.

As for gearing, consider the effect of the small wheels before scoffing at the double chainring setup on the Tern. The gearing is definitely biased toward the hill-crawler side of the spectrum, meaning that a loaded bike would still make for miles of smiles. Although I'm more accustomed to Shimano shifters, the SRAM X7 mountain bike thumb shifters and their associated derailleurs shifted well both on the FSA crank and rear SRAM cassette.

The stoppers on the Eclipse S18 are Avid BB7 mechanical disc brakes, a personal favorite thanks to the easy setup, adjustability, and reliability. While they don't self-adjust for pad wear like a set of hydraulic disc brakes, mechanical disc brakes certainly have a place in the world. Many long-distance riders prefer them because they are field serviceable.

Other nice component selections include the dynamo front hub that powers front and rear lights. This is a very reliable route to take as it means you'll never have to worry about charging your lights. Schwalbe's Big Apple tires roll extremely well while providing excellent puncture resistance.

One small miss for this reviewer were the stock pedals. The quill-style platforms have the added value that they are removable without tools, but the shape of them left me wanting something more substantial. This may be nitpicky, as it's easily remedied and the stock pedals do help in tight spaces or when you're storing your bike on a boat, in a car, or a tiny apartment.

RIDE QUALITY

With the Eclipse S18, Tern nailed its design priorities of "a big ride" and an attractive bicycle. The Tern rode exceptionally well with neutral handling, even with a pannier or two on board. At times I would forget that I was riding smaller wheels.



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Funds from the Life Membership program are put into a special account to provide long-term support for Adventure Cycling Association. In the past, these funds have helped us purchase and update our headquarters building, saving us thousands of dollars in interest payments.

If bicycle travel is an important part of your life, please consider making a lifetime commitment by joining as an Adventure Cycling Life Member. To find out more, visit adventurecycling.org/membership or give Julie Huck a call at (800) 755-2453 x 214.

Thanks to these new life members who joined with their support since March:

- Bruce D Adams Jr., Stockton, CA
- Michele Baber, West Chester, OH
- Michael Barry & Jessica Mattia-Barry, Tucson, AZ
- Ken Berger, Cincinnati, OH
- Glenn & Donna Boutillier, Cincinnati, OH
- Jeff Crouse, APO, AE
- Kim D'auria-Vazira, DPO, AE
- Mike Dillon, Los Gatos, CA
- William M Doumas, Tucson, AZ



- Maryanne Gallagher, Gill, MA
- Langston J Goree, New York, NY
- Sigrid C. Haines, Gaithersburg, MD
- John & Sarah Holman, Morristown, NJ
- Krrish Jiwan, Pharr, TX
- John Mielnik, Roselle, IL
- Zane Jenkins Siple, Lolo, MT
- David A. Waters, Milwaukee, WI

joined the board of directors for Recreation Equipment, Inc. (REI) with Angel Rodriguez, who also served on the Adventure Cycling board. Then she and David signed up for tour after tour, traveling through the red rock canyons of Utah and mountains of Montana. They always found time for a trip or two each year despite increasing demands on their schedules, which were brought on in part by Catherine's position as senior vice president and general counsel at REI.

As the years and the trips grew in number, Catherine and David became interested in life membership with Adventure Cycling. "I'm a joiner. If I like an organization and believe in it, I might as well support it at a leadership level," Catherine said. "Besides, it's one less thing to remember each year! Plus there's the low-hassle factor. We don't have to worry about renewing," she said.

That gives the couple more time to dream up future trips ranging from riding Europe for the first time

— "France, Italy, or Mallorca" — to simply committing to at least one tour each year with Adventure Cycling. The couple also talks about making another cross-country trip, this time at a leisurely pace and with the flexibility to rent a car or take a train through sections they decide not to ride. "No plans, no schedule, nothing," she said.

Regardless of their route, it's unlikely you'll see Catherine and David pulling their bikes up to a hotel anytime soon. They prefer the communal atmosphere of camping to the indoor amenities — and isolation — of a hotel room.

"Even though we're older now and it's getting harder to sleep on the ground, it's hard to imagine going to hotels," Catherine said. "We'd miss that community piece of touring — hanging out and getting to know each other in a little village of tents. There's something really magical about that." **AC**

Alex Strickland is Adventure Cyclist's Managing Editor.

Of course, with only one size offered, the geometry isn't optimized for riders both big and small. But the Tern delivers good, middle-of-the-road handling that made evading potholes easy without requiring constant rider input to keep the bike on a heading.

Thanks to the wide tires, the ride was nice and smooth. If you want a racier feel, narrower tires would help, but that would be missing the point of this bike. It's meant to be robust — a sort of apocalypse bike for the urban jungle.

CONCLUSION

As a commuter bike, especially for someone with limited space at home or at the office, the Tern Eclipse S18 is an exceptional machine. It's ready to roll right off the showroom floor. At \$2,100 the S18 isn't inexpensive, but consider that you're buying a fully equipped bike. Brand-name accessories like the dynamo-powered lights, racks, fenders, an integrated pump, Ergon grips, Schwalbe tires, etc., don't come cheap.

The Tern is a better tool for the urban warrior than for the backroad meanderer though. Its somewhat limiting size will keep some touring cyclists from using it on multi-day jaunts. Another detail that limits the range of the bike is the single water bottle cage mount.

More to the urban assault point, the low-key gray paint, mostly black running gear, and the gray color-matched 24-inch rims kept me flying under the radar, nice for urban settings where flash can lead to theft. I quite like the aesthetics of the Tern. This bike is best suited for riders under six feet tall or those who like an especially upright position and are looking for a ready-made commuter bike to squeeze into their apartment. As such, the Eclipse S18 is sure to please.

AG

Nick Legan lives in Boulder, Colorado, but firmly believes that adventure is a state of mind and has little to do with geography. As a former pro cycling team mechanic, he's seen parking lots the world over and a few great roads along the way.