



01



02



03

WHEELER DEALERS —Friedrichshafen

Preface

The world of cycling shifts up a gear for the Eurobike trade fair: the stage for all that is state-of-the-art in the industry. Monocle took the best of the show for a spin.

WRITER

Henry Rees-Sheridan

PHOTOGRAPHER

Oliver Fiegel



04



05

- 01 Eurobike crowds gathering in main hall
- 02 Detail of Moulton Bike
- 03 Markus Fritsch (left) and Eurobike show director Dirk Heidrich
- 04 Innovations such as the Viks carbon set the standard at Eurobike 2015
- 05 Bikeparkitect's example track

Markus Fritsch is in buoyant mood when MONOCLE meets him in the Pressgarten of the Eurobike trade fair in Friedrichshafen, on the German shore of Lake Constance. “The bike industry is getting very playful, trying new things, experimenting,” says the publisher and managing partner of German cycling trade magazine *Vélobiz.de*. “With e-bikes generating a lot of turnover there’s more space to invest in innovation.”

This explains the abundance of eye-catching bells and whistles on display across dozens of stands, all promising to inject some novelty into the lives of jaded bike aficionados who think they’ve seen it all. But closer inspection reveals an undertone: the best bikes here are shining examples of how responsive the industry can be when it comes to translating technological advances into products that consumers actually want.

Take German brand Schindelbauer: marrying a stark, understated aesthetic with high-performance engineering, these bikes are suited to a discerning class of city-dwellers. “We make bikes for people

who want to be mobile and healthy, and have an interest in design and technology,” says engineer Jörg Schindelbauer, who established the brand in 2009. Every German-made Schindelbauer is fitted with a carbon-belt drive: an alternative to a conventional chain, which is quieter, easier to maintain and that (according to Jörg) “keeps your trousers clean”.

In the midst of all this impressive engineering, there was room for a bit of luxury at Eurobike 2015 as well. The cyclist looking for a showpiece could do worse than a Moulton, an English brand manufacturing the designs of renowned British engineer Alex Moulton. First launched in 1962, the bikes are characterised by small wheels fitted with high-pressure tyres, rubber suspension systems and a trademark “space frame”.

Not every delegation at the fair was manufacturing two-wheelers though. There was Bikeparkitect for example, a company that specialises in bike-infrastructure design and won a gold award this year for its Modular Pumptrack System: a series of artificial berms and banks that fit together like a 3D jigsaw puzzle to produce a course that cyclists can “pump” around without pedalling. It has seen designer Erik Burgon’s company garner plenty of attention from both the cycling community and city-planners.

It’s not hard to see that the world of cycling is developing fast, both as a mode of transport and a recreational activity. But if there’s one lesson to be taken from Eurobike 2015 it’s that manufacturers need to harness this enthusiasm and turn their innovations into products that people will want to buy. — (M)