



MY FIRST... CARGOBIKE



As the name suggests, **cargobikes** are the workhorses of the cycling family, built to carry hefty loads — whether that's kids, shopping bags, or even your small business essentials. Loads can be transported out front or behind the rider, with electric and non-electric options available. The Benno Boost pictured can carry 3x the load of a regular bike, with prices starting from £3,999.

1. FRAME

Strength and durability is the name of the game here, so aluminium and steel are the most common frame materials. Frame tubes are thicker than on regular bikes and designs are configured to cope with the stresses of carrying heavy loads. To put that in perspective, the Benno Boost has a total gross weight of 200kg (440lb) for bike, rider and cargo; the rear rack alone is rated for a maximum load of 60kg

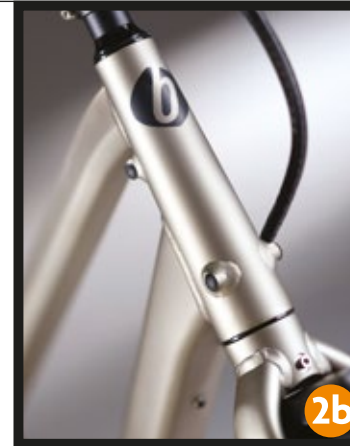
(130lb) — more than sufficient for one adult and two young children, plus luggage. The fork too is made from equally strong aluminium alloy.

2. CARRYING CAPACITY

Many cargobikes keep all their storage in one place (eg 'box bikes' or 'longtails'), but the beauty of newer designs like this one is that there's almost infinite load-carrying options. Here an interchangeable pannier

rack and rail system lets you choose from dozens of configurations: one or two kids in seats, with shopping bags; a mix of crates front and rear (a matching front

rack can take an extra 20kg); a family's worth of camping/touring gear; even a paddleboard mount. It's easy to see why they're a genuine alternative to cars.



3. MOTOR AND BATTERY

While non-electric cargobikes are still available, there's been a huge shift towards electric, with a little pedal-assist being seen as a major bonus not only for regular schoolrunners but also small businesses and tradespeople.

All Benno bikes use a powerful Bosch Performance motor mounted in the centre of the bike (mid-drive), offering 65Nm or 85Nm of torque depending on model. As they're already cumbersome, it's important that e-cargobike batteries are removable and can be charged indoors. Here the primary battery (500Wh) is mounted behind the seat-tube; a second battery can be attached to the downtube to effectively double the range (up to 260km using two).

4. SMALL WHEELS

Smaller wheels are stronger and less prone to flex than larger wheels, so many cargobikes come equipped with 24in wheels (like the Boost) or smaller. And it's not uncommon to find mixed wheel sizes either.

5. BEEFY TYRES

Wide, puncture-proof tyres (2.6in, wider than average mountain bike tyres) add a little extra comfort and forgiveness to the ride, and an all-weather tread pattern provides greater traction for multi-season use.

6. LOW GEARS

Whether your cargobike is electric or not, you still need a good spread of gears, including some low ones for hillier rides. A 48t front chainring is used by Benno, with an 11-42t cassette — a really useful combination for mixed urban and countryside trips. (The LC team has actually ridden this bike up Ditchling Beacon, the stiffest climb on the classic London to Brighton route, and it wasn't found wanting).

7. DISC BRAKES

All that potential portage weight requires some serious and reliable

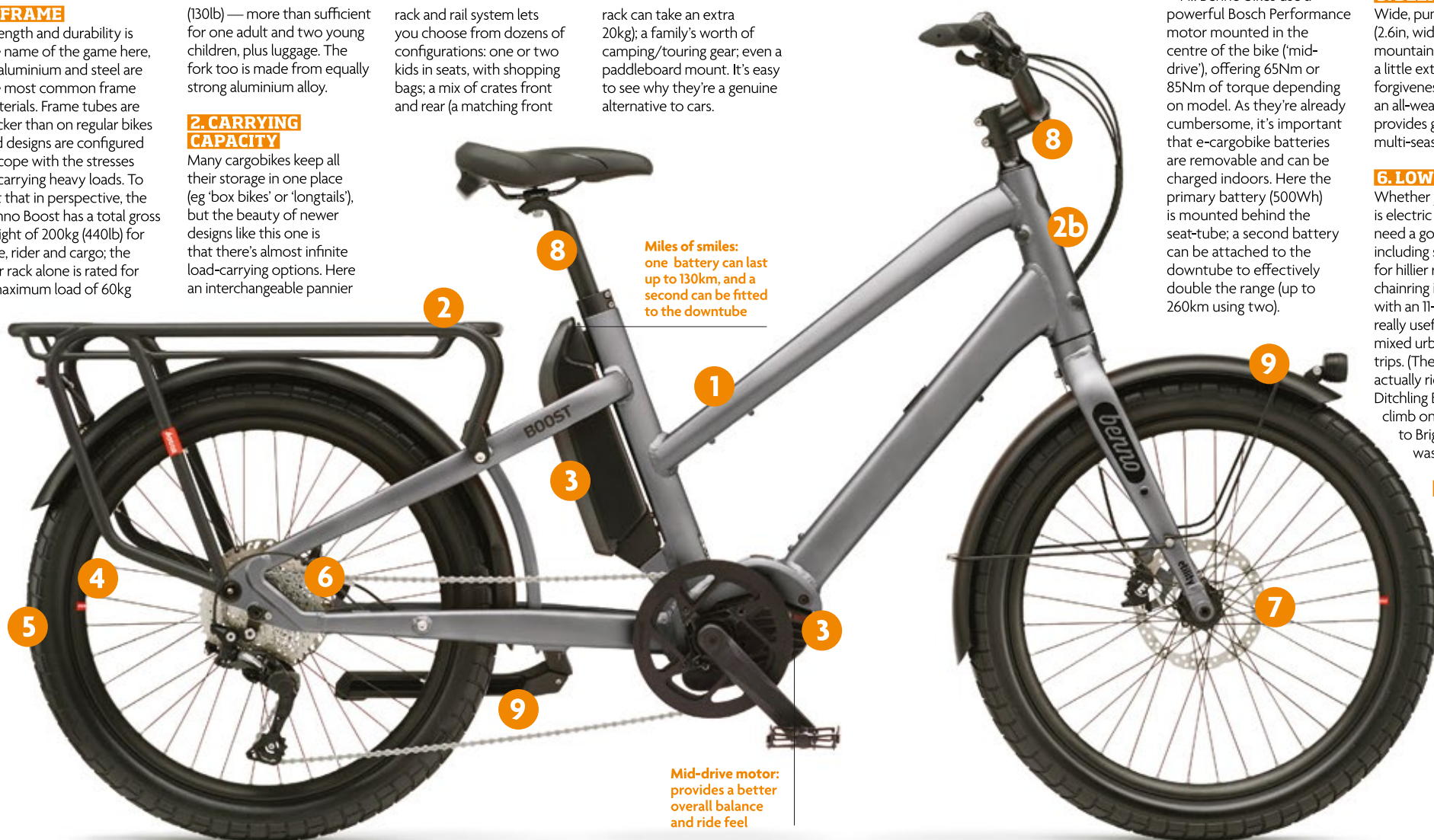
stopping power, so disc brakes with larger (160-180mm) rotors are the only way to go. Performance is predictable even in foul weather, they require minimal maintenance and the levers can be adjusted to suit small or large hands. Worth noting here is the front brake, which does most of the hard work, has four pistons compared to two at the rear.

8. ADJUSTABLE COCKPIT

One distinct characteristic of cargobikes is that they're made to fit cyclists across a broad size range, often from from 5ft11in to 6ft3in. So the seatpost can be moved up and down to tailor saddle height, while handlebars can be rotated forwards or backwards to match your preferred reach.

9. ACCESSORIES

A few key accessories go a long way to enhancing year-round utility: full wraparound mudguards for the wet season(s), a kickstand (an absolute must when lifting kids on or off), and integrated lights. These come as standard on the Boost, but otherwise ask your local dealer about an upgrade package. Luckily most panniers fit most racks, but brands do offer their own dedicated bags, child seats and extras.



Miles of smiles: one battery can last up to 130km, and a second can be fitted to the downtube

Mid-drive motor: provides a better overall balance and ride feel

