

{ SHOP **STOP** }

E-BIKES IN THE BIG APPLE

One man's legacy to beat the streets



The friendly staff at NYCeWheels. Left to right: Michelle Cardona, Connor Sargent, Guelmis Mora, Dennis Grishin, Janee McLean and Mark Levy.

NYCeWheels was opened in 2001 by Bert Cebular with a mission to be the city's leader in alternative transportation, specializing in portable, healthy and fun products. They started with electric scooters, but quickly also found that folding bikes were very popular in Manhattan, the borough of New York City where the store is located. Real estate is at a premium here, and for apartment-dwellers, folding bikes are easy to store and therefore very popular.

They try to only carry a selection of the best products available, explaining why they sell so many Brompton, Dahon and Tern folding bikes, as well as Easy Motion, Stromer, Bulls, A2B, Izip and a couple of others. Bert thoroughly tested and carefully selected each brand and bike he sold. He started making videos of Brompton bikes from his first small shop on the Upper East Side of Manhattan and selling them online at a time when nobody knew the potential for





online retail sales. NYCeWheels quickly became the number-one resource for folding bikes, as well as the largest Brompton importer in the U.S.

When Bert opened his doors, customers soon realized that his knowledge of the products was immense, and NYCeWheels became the go-to shop for electric bikes in New York City. He's turned that into a great business with great people and a really useful website.

Their website is an amazing resource for learning more about electric bikes—from the technology to the available bikes and kits. It's well worth spending some time there, even if you already own an electric bike. If you're trying to decide what to buy, you'll learn a lot. Their "Bike 101" section offers information on basic bike parts, riding tips for road or mountain bikes, and a lot more.

They also have a blog and a newsletter. If you sign up for their newsletter, you'll get a 5-percent discount in the store and regular updates on what's great at NYCeWheels.

A TRAGIC TURN

In December of 2013, Bert passed away in a paragliding accident. His brothers, Adolf and Phillip Cebular, took over ownership, and it's currently managed by Connor Sargent and run by a staff of people who are devoted to green transportation.



There's a reason why these guys are the number-one importer of Brompton bicycles.



Montague is the only brand of full-size folding bikes they carry.

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Talking to Connor, we asked him if the legality on electric bikes in NYC has had any effect on sales or use of the bikes. He says he sells bikes to people all over the city and sees delivery people and bike messengers on them all the time. There's never any trouble that he sees or hears about, and most of the police have no interest in enforcing it. Modern bikes are so stealthy, they don't attract attention, at least as long as riders ride respectfully. He says the only time the police talk to him while riding one is to ask about it and where they can get one.

In the past couple of years electric bikes have taken off and become the biggest sales for the company. That still fits in with their mission. They sell bikes, parts and even kits like BionX for regular bikes and their own in-house solution for electrifying Brompton bikes. Brompton owners are known for loving and customizing their bikes, and now NYCeWheels has come up with solutions, including choices on batteries, bags and more. If a customer already has a bag they want to use for the batteries, they can send the bag in with the bike for the installation. The motor and other equipment have to be installed in the shop, and the shop warranties the work and the kit, but does warn that since it is an aftermarket modification, it may void the Brompton bicycle warranty.

The kit they offer uses a 36-volt, 250-watt, brushless, gear-less front hub motor, and a choice of 8 Ah split battery (good for airline travel) and options for up to a 15 Ah battery for longer range. The final product does look like it was made just for Brompton.

They rent Bromptons to visitors for \$50 for a day (24 hours) or two hours for \$15, with a Finn smartphone bike mount with the Bike Citizens app to offer a new way to discover the city. The rental price is credited towards purchase of a bike as well, and they can ship to the continental 48 states, as well as Canada. They even offer financing.

The store just relocated in January 2016 to a larger store and is located at 353 East 58th Street. ■

www.nycewheels.com



The website is a massive resource for knowledge. You will find the “Bike 101” tab very useful.



The shop carries a full line of top e-bike brands, as well as offers an incredible amount of information about them on their website.

