

# Montreal's iGo

Changing the Face of Canada's e-Bike Industry

BY LISA EVANS

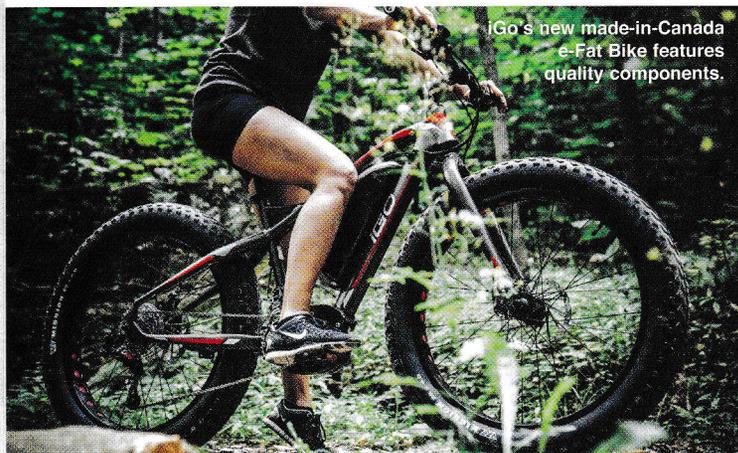
**A**t a time when technology production is increasingly moving offshore, Montreal, Que.-based electric bike company iGo is seeking to revolutionize the e-bike industry by building e-bikes locally. Established in 2006, iGo is soon introducing its first homegrown high-performance e-bike, designed and manufactured in Montreal.

Up until now, all of its bikes have been manufactured in China. "A year and a half ago, we looked into the possibility of building our own electric bikes with better technology and better components," said iGo president Gary Richman. Producing them in Canada would allow the company greater control and allow for customization.

The company recently launched a crowdsourcing fundraising campaign on Kickstarter, seeking \$100,000 for its new e-Fat Bike, the first of a line of four made-in-Canada e-bikes that iGo plans to manufacture and launch in 2015.

"The Kickstarter campaign is going to create an awareness that there's finally a company in Canada that's going to be building electric bikes rather than importing them," said Richman. The money raised will be used toward its first e-Fat Bike production run in February.

Equipped with a SRAM X9 Type 2 derailleur, Schwalbe Jumbo Jim fat-bike tires, Ergon saddle and grips and an MPF motor, this new high-performance e-bike aims to be the solution to problems that can plague conventional users. "One of the biggest problems we found with electric bikes is the rattling that occurs with the battery," said Richman, who tackled this problem by designing a proprietary side-mounting battery.



iGo's new made-in-Canada e-Fat Bike features quality components.

The bike's MPF motor allows iGo to fully eliminate the throttle system. Torque sensors provide a pedal assist when you start to lose power in your legs while pedaling. "As soon as you start to climb a hill, the motor knows you're working harder and returns that power in electric power back to your pedaling ability," said Richman. "It's not what people are used to perceiving, as an electric bike being for a lazy person. It's more of a conventional bike on steroids," says Richman.

While iGo will still continue to sell its current line of economical e-bikes, Richman hopes the new line of made-in-Canada e-bikes will be a game-changer in the industry in Canada, placing homegrown e-bikes on par with high-performance, high-quality European-made brands.

"We felt that we could produce as good a high-quality bike as [Europe does], but produce it domestically and at a much more attractive price," said Richman. iGo's new e-Fat Bike will sell for \$3,995, which he claims is approximately 20% less than comparable bikes. Now that's something to get revved up about.

## Quebec Cuts Funding to Route Verte



**A**s part of the Quebec government's new austerity measures, \$2.8 million has been cut from programs to maintain the Route Verte, a 5,358-kilometre network of bike paths across "La Belle Province." As a result of the cuts, Vélo Québec, the bicycle lobby group that championed the creation of Route Verte over past decades, predicts the closing of certain sections of the network in 2015.

Vélo Québec's director general, Lucie Lanteigne, said that many municipal officials told her they do not know how they can continue the maintenance in the wake of the announced cuts.

Lanteigne also maintains that the Route Verte spurs economic development in Québec. Vélo Québec provided *Pedal* with a copy of a 2000 study that estimated that cyclists on the Route Verte spent some \$95.4 million annually, generating revenues of \$15.1 million for the government of Quebec.

Lanteigne further pointed out that the Route Verte has achieved international recognition and often serves as a model for others to follow. The unique network joins some 400 municipalities across Quebec. There are also cycling connections to New Brunswick, Ontario and the U.S.

An open letter asking for the government to reconsider the Route Verte cuts was signed by 17 prominent Quebec personalities, including Serge Arseneault (Grand Prix Cycliste Quebec and Montreal), Lyne Bessette (two-time Olympian), Raymond Dutil (Procycle), Felix Gauthier (Cycles Devinci), Pierre Lavoie (Grand Défi Pierre Lavoie), Paul MacKenzie (Arkel) and Yvan Martineau (TV host). — JS



MPF multifunction backlit display unit



SRAM X9 Type 2 derailleur



New MPF 5.2 motor eliminates the throttle system.

photos: iGo