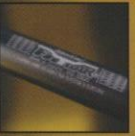


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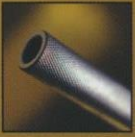
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# TEB

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# EDITORIAL

## The Cost of Living

In real terms, stuff is getting cheaper. I know this because the original Apple Mac computer which I bought in order to start the mag back in '95 and which had less computing power than you find in your average remote control, cost about the equivalent of a small studio flat in Brighton. Well, we're now on our fourth generation of computers here at TBM (with wafer-thin monitors, DVD this, megabyte that, broadband the other) and each one costs less than Charlie Boorman's lunch. The same goes for things like plasma televisions, ipods, cameras, and yes - even dirt bikes.

On the other hand, not everything costs less year-on-year. My council tax bill seems to go up faster than a Hertfordshire oil depot, train fares appear to be constantly on the move (unlike the trains themselves), and the last time I filled a 20L jerrycan it made my eyes water - though, I did drop it on my foot.

And what about property? Had I invested my money into that Brighton flat instead of into what has become a worthless piece of beige hardware, I'd now be sitting on a small fortune - and one with neighbours who know how to host a great dinner party. Because while the cost of purchasing something like a DVD player is actually cheaper than buying yourself a cinema ticket, the cost of owning a room in which to sit and watch its output has (metaphorically speaking) gone through the roof.

All of which is a very roundabout way of saying that next month's TBM is going to cost a little more - 25p more to be precise. Which will probably cause the cheapskates among you to sit down clutching your hearts, whilst others I suspect won't even notice.

The problem is you see that historically we're used to our newspapers (and thus magazines) costing pennies. That's because when Caxton

invented the Daily Mail, he made it affordable so that he could tell everyone how much their one-bedroom hovel in the forest of Birmingham had gone up since it was first valued in the Domesday book, whilst selling acres of advertising space to the suppliers of rat-catchers and wizards.

So people expect their periodicals to be cheap. Interestingly, the same goes for using services like the Royal Mail. Which because some of TBM's more senior contributors still remember using Penny-Black stamps, they expect to be able to send letters for just a few pence. Well I'm sorry, but things just aren't like that anymore. Sure you can still post a first class letter for 30p, but if you actually want it to be delivered to the correct address then you end up doing what we do, and using Special Delivery - which currently costs £3.85. Add in the cost of a bit of compensation in case they lose your valuable photograph, and you can easily be looking at the thick end of ten quid just to send a single transparency from one town to another. On the other hand you can pick up a copy of TBM and see hundreds of great pictures - all for less than the cost of delivering just one image to Swindon. How weird is that?

So there you go. TBM is officially great value as I've just proved beyond doubt. And of course if you subscribe ([trailbikemag.com](http://trailbikemag.com)), then you save yourself even more money - well you will do if you subscribe within the next month and take advantage of the existing subs price (and if that isn't a very un-subtle hint, I don't know what is). Alternatively you could always invest your £3.20 a month in a high interest savings account and at the end of ten years, well you might've just about saved up enough for a pink doorknob for your flat in Brighton...

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NO.126

FEBRUARY 2006

## Suddenly electric dirtbikes are springing up everywhere. TBM flew to Switzerland for an exclusive test of the very latest battery-bike...

**O**f all the countries around the world, Switzerland has gotta be the most highly regulated and environmentally conscientious of all. Apparently in Switzerland it's illegal to own an un-silenced alarm clock, and also against the law to take a 'leak' in the standing position after ten o'clock at night. I kid you not.

In fact, such is the Swiss people's obsession with rules and the environment that when it comes to organising their national enduro championship they run it in someone else's country! So much better than polluting your own backyard, don'tcha think?

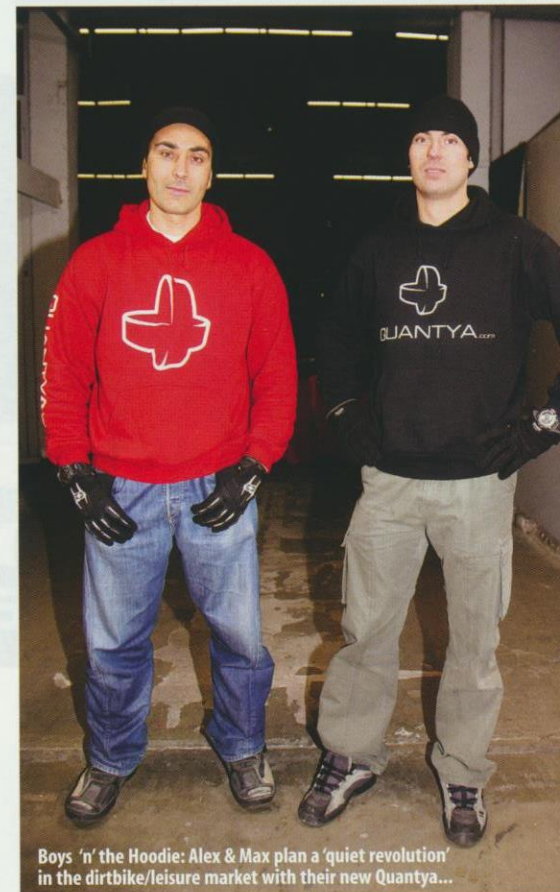
All of which nonsense means that it probably won't come as much of a surprise to you to discover that the latest *electric* dirtbike to break cover comes from the country where the act of mowing your lawn at the wrong time of day can actually land you in jail...

### Ex MX

Quantya is a relatively new company, formed just two years ago by friends Alessandro Tiberia (or Alex, as he's otherwise known) and Max Modena. Both are keen motocrossers (though we won't hold that against them...!), and like all great ideas the Quantya bike was born over a drink at the bar. 'Two double sparkling waters please, barman.'

Although Switzerland is clearly a very different kinda place to the UK, the pair realised that noise is gradually killing off dirtbiking on a global scale. And that a quiet (or in the case of an electric bike, virtually silent) machine has the potential to open up huge new riding areas not just in the countryside, but also in an urban environment! And that's exactly where TBM tested the new bike. In a warehouse in 'downtown' Lugano. Not 200 yards from the lake of the same name and in the shadow of snow-capped mountains. If only we were allowed out there!

Rather than sell the 100 Quantyas the company aim to have produced by the end of February, Alex and Max are hoping some budding entrepreneurs will set-up a number of 'arrive-and-ride' schemes across Europe. And it's one such scheme that they've organised



Boys 'n' the Hoodie: Alex & Max plan a 'quiet revolution' in the dirtbike/leisure market with their new Quantya...

in Lugano. Of course, they'll still sell individual bikes to paying punters, but by running what could be considered a fleet of demonstrators they can offer a greater level of support and keep track of how this batch of bikes are performing, whilst getting their name seen by a greater number of people. Makes sense really.

### Hall of Fame

As I walked through the giant doors into the exhibition hall which housed the Quantya track I noticed something about the circuit - there wasn't any dirt. Potted plants yes, and a few

# Quantya Leap



## Quantya Leap

wooden jumps, but there was a distinct lack of mud. 'We'd been trying to get this place for ages', commented Alex, 'and it was only two days before Christmas that they finally said we could use it'. With time at a premium, the guys set-up what is essentially an indoor supermoto-urban-SX track. A more permanent venue is planned with plenty of 'varied terrain', but for the moment ignore the lack of dirt and look instead at the potential...

In some ways the Quantya is very similar to the ElectricMoto Blade T6 we rode back in issue 123, and that's only to be expected. But in others it differs considerably. The wheelbase is shorter and the chromo-moly frame more compact (in a bid to make it easier to transport, claimed Alex), whilst the seat's a touch higher. The Quantya employs basic 35mm Marzocchi Shiver forks whilst the Blade had top-spec Ohlins items, and the wheels are slightly smaller 18in items wrapped in Kenda motorcycle tyres. Unlike the Blade, the Swiss bike does away with the rear

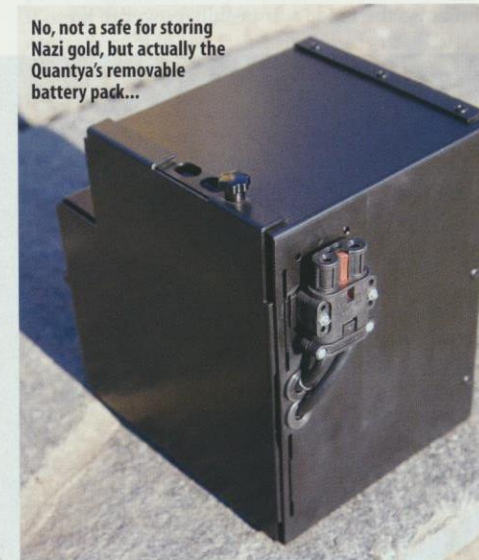
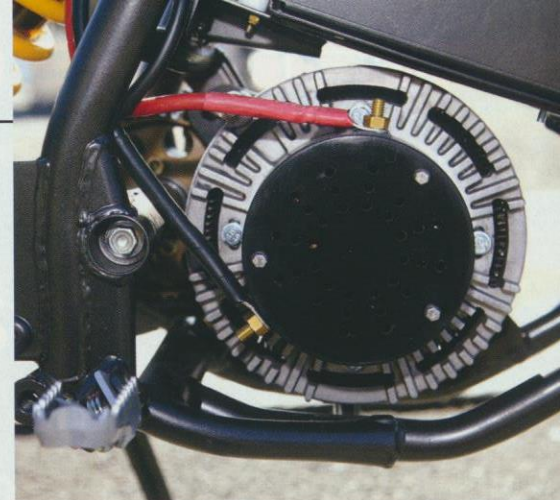
brake pedal, locating both levers for the AJP stoppers on the bars, pushbike stylee.

But probably the biggest physical difference between the two is the way in which the batteries are mounted. The Blade carried its four batteries in fixed holders on each side of the bike. Quick removal was not an option, and therefore they had to be charged in situ, meaning a break of at least 45 minutes between each ride. But the guys at Quantya immediately recognised that having a removable battery pack (containing four sealed batteries) would be a huge benefit to longer riding, and so engineered a quick-detatch facility into their design.

Unplug the 'power connector' (located just in front of the battery on the right-hand-side), then unclip the motocross seat with the single Dzus fastener at the rear. And this allows access to the clamp which holds the battery in place, and with a quick twirl of an Allen key, the 20-something kilo battery-pack can be slid out of the frame. Reverse the process, slipping in a fully charged



Push the 'start' button and... it's completely silent!



No, not a safe for storing Nazi gold, but actually the Quantya's removable battery pack...

## Quantya Leap

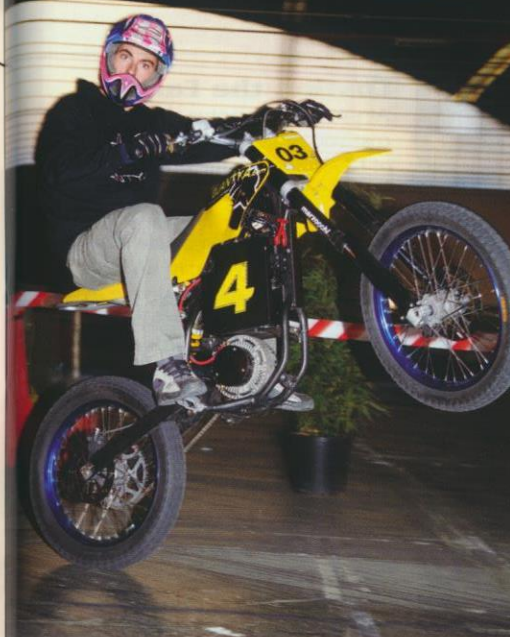


battery (like the T6, a quick-charge takes a little under an hour), and you're ready to go in just a couple of minutes - if that. This, however, still isn't quick enough for Max. 'I want it so that you don't have to remove the seat', he told me as we swapped out a flat battery pack. I countered this by reminding him that it's *only* one Dzus fastener. Max though, is clearly a perfectionist.

The bike's industrial electric motor, again similar to the Blade's, transmits power to the

rear wheel via first a belt, then a regular chain-drive. There's no gears, no engine braking, and very little noise (45dB). The power control unit (the box of 'electricker' which links the throttle and batteries to regulate how much power the batteries supply to the motor) is the same as those found in golf carts (the kind which takes the exercise out of a game for fat Americans).

There's little in the way of bodywork on the Quantya. The bike wears a short front fender, a



front numberboard, a pair of rad shrouds and a dummy plastic tank covering the power control unit. These plastics make the bike immediately identifiable as an off-roader, which is key to the marketing off the bike. There's a distinct lack of rear bodywork on the bike, and because of how it's currently being used, it doesn't need any.

When I quizzed Alex about this he simply smiled and explained that the small loop at the rear of the sub-frame will be useful for 'when the company establishes its freestyle MX team!'

### Live and Kicking

Once aboard the Quantya it felt very similar to a regular dirtbike, though at 85kg, far lighter to chuck around. Despite the claimed 915mm seat height it also felt quite low, perhaps as the soft suspension sits well down in its stroke. With a linkless Sachs rear shock, the ride height is actually adjustable via the two-position mounting, and one of the bikes I tried was also set up for youngsters with a cut-away seat, making it particularly easy for fearless teenagers to scythe around the course, cutting everyone up.

Having plugged in the battery connector and flicked the bar-mounted kill-switch to 'on' the bike was now live, as indicated by a small green LED located below the steering head in the tank plastic. Although there was no play in the throttle, the controller meant that there was a slight delay between a closed and part-open

throttle, which made setting off and some of the slower corners that little bit more interesting.

Once underway, the Quantya exhibited a good turn of speed, though perhaps not quite as quick the Blade T6. Alex admitted that they weren't running quite the same power output as the ElectricMoto, instead these demo bikes have been 'detuned' to run about 20 percent down on the Blade's output in order 'to help the longevity of the motor' he claimed. Whatever the reasoning, on a tight track such as this, it was never a problem and, thanks to the immediate torque of the powerplant, it was easy to spin the rear tyre exiting the corners - even the faster, sweeping turns.

Once the rubber had built up some warmth (not something you normally read about in TBM!) the bike could be thrown about with almost reckless abandon. The twin-pot AJP front brake was easily man enough to slow the bike (and perform rolling stoppies), and the rear allowed plenty of controllable 'backing-it-in'.

Thanks to its sharp steering, short wheelbase and wide bars the Quantya changed direction with minimal input and would cut as tight a line as required. How this would transfer to the dirt I'm not really sure, as combined with its relatively small wheels it has the potential to transform the bike from nimble to unstable.

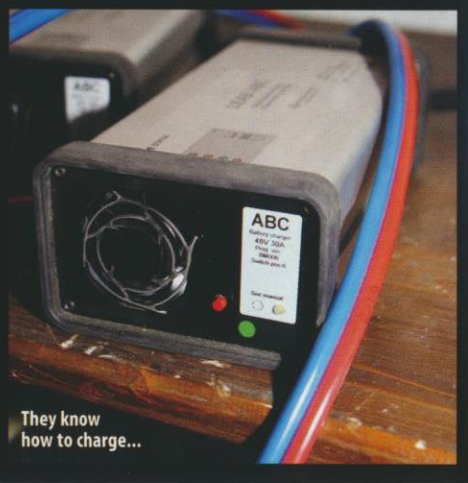
That's not to say the bike felt anything other than planted around this track, and although it proved almost as easy to jump as a BMX bike, it never felt skittish. With the batteries located centrally within the frame the bike is particularly narrow between your knees, though not *too* skinny - 'we know some people like to grip the bike with their knees', Alex reminded me.

The over-riding impression is one of a bike that's amazingly easy to ride - once you get the hang of the 'electric' power delivery. This was evident when the local 'scooter boys' turned up to ride the Quantyas after school had turned up, and we watched their riding improve lap on lap.

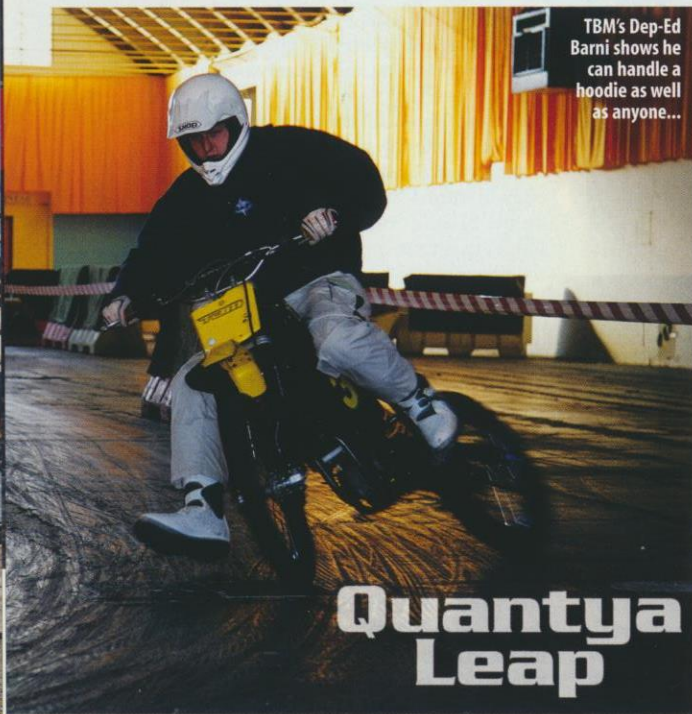
Kids such as these are really Quantya's target market and Alex sees the bike being sold primarily as an urban off-roader for use in back-yards, nearby woods and urban BMX tracks (and even summertime ski resorts!) - marketed purely by Pester-Power. In fact such is Quantya's wish that their product is targeted at the X-Box generation, that they requested we rode in baggy trousers and a hood! Which explains why I returned from Switzerland minus a large piece of skin which used to cover my right elbow.

### On Charge

Just like with a mobile phone or anything else which runs on solid-state batteries, the Quantya's 48-volt power-packs and chargers, have a finite lifetime depending upon the amount of usage. The regular charger which is supplied with the bike and which takes 3.5hrs to fully recharge the batteries will last on average 900 charge cycles (or the life of two battery packs). And by inference each battery pack should last for 400-450 charge cycles before it needs replacing. If the optional fast charger is utilised it requires just 50mins to fully charge a battery pack and will last for approximately the same length of time as a set of batteries. Currently replacement (four-battery) power-packs cost approximately £200 at today's conversion rates.



They know how to charge...



TBM's Dep-Ed Barni shows he can handle a hoodie as well as anyone...

## Quantya Leap

### Future Perfect?

The next step for the Quantya is the use of a new brushless motor, a part which has only been in production since mid-2005. This new motor should offer more reliable performance, and with less vent-holes will also be better suited to the off-road application. Simply finding a controller which would be compatible with the new motor caused a few problems, though this has now been resolved and the components are currently undergoing testing.

In the short term, the company will be producing around 200 bikes a year, with a facility in Italy enabling them to make use of the tax breaks EU membership allows (Switzerland is outside the EU). Long-term aims are to have a range of models, each using a motor specific to that bike. A fully waterproof motor was muted, though as Alex pointed out, you'd have to be careful not to 'cook' it, and hi-tech, lightweight lithium polymer batteries are also being considered. From a trail/enduro point of view it was good to hear Alex talk about producing a road-legal machine which could hit the streets as soon as 2007 if there's enough demand.

### Costing the Earth

At present a Quantya should cost you somewhere in the region of £3300, though the price very much depends upon whether you buy the bike from its native Switzerland or from inside the EU, and where you pay VAT. This represents a hefty saving of almost a grand over the Ohlins-equipped Blade that we tested, though it's a similar price to that claimed by ElectricMoto's imminent Blade XT3.

At present there's no UK importer, though Quantya have confirmed they will offer a bulk discount for anyone interested in setting up an 'arrive and ride' facility on these shores. A range of accessories, including clothing and upgrades such as billet triple clamps is planned, though at present the optional extras are limited to extra battery packs, a quick-charger, and various replacement cycle- and chassis-parts. But we can foresee a huge new aftermarket in trick parts,

if electric bikes really take a hold.

### First Among Equals

When we exhibited the Blade T6 on our stand at the Dirt Bike Show this year, we were frankly overwhelmed by the amount of interest shown in the bike. And we've no reason to believe that now there is a competitor in the marketplace there'll be any less curiosity shown in this fledgling side of the sport. At the genesis of anything new, lots of enthusiasts and inveterate bike tinkerers like to be in at the beginning where they can use their own engineering skills, knowledge and abilities to improve their bikes.

And that's where we are right now. The products are beginning to arrive and the interest is undoubtedly there. I just wonder how long it'll be before someone takes up Quantya's offer to launch the UK's first 'arrive and ride' facility. Not long I reckon...

**Huge thanks to Alex and Max for inviting us to Switzerland to ride their bikes. For more information click onto [quantya.com](http://quantya.com)**

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