



Featuring frames



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Adidas has high hopes for its Evil Eye Halfrim Pro. **Chris Bennett** braves a freezing December day in Cannock Chase to find out why Mountain biking doesn't get tougher than this

have been configured to fit with popular cycle helmet strap designs and gripping material is used all along the sides and not just at the tips. It also has an adjustable nose bridge made from a soft non-slip material that can be fitted at different heights. This allows a safe, comfortable fit.

For those who feel the need to swap lenses, the half rim has a novel lens lock system at the temple. With the frame closed the hinge is pulled back and the lens can be popped out and changed. It is locked back in place and held there when the side is open. This is quick and easy, it also means the lens isn't handled so much and isn't put under any stress. The lenses come in the Active, Bright and Contrast

Evil Eye-cycles

Few frames can be recognised by their name alone but Adidas is hoping that the launch of its Evil Eye Halfrim Pro will cement that frame's name in the pantheon of iconic eyewear.

How and why some products become accepted as brands in their own right and part of the language is part science and part alchemy. But the birth of brands within brands such as Austin's Mini or Apple's iPod does not happen often.

Adidas feels the time has come for the Evil Eye which has sold more than a million pieces around the world in various guises since 2000. The launch of the Evil Eye Halfrim is: 'huge for Adidas,' says Ben Ashlin – brand manager Adidas Eyewear UK and Ireland. 'It's more than just a product it's a mini brand within the range.'

Just like the Mini there is a core of recognisability but throughout the range there are variations and twists that spread its appeal. 'That's because they have the same DNA, they are all linked.' Hype? Perhaps, but the details of the product spelled out by Ashlin are all about technology and performance. It may be stylish but it's not a fashion item, he says. First of all it is built

around a 10 base form and has quality optics to back that up. 'This offers the ultimate in sports because it gives all-round vision. This is something very few manufacturers do,' he adds.

Although the product has its roots in mountain biking (MTB), in the last 10 years Evil Eye has been on podiums all around the world throughout various sports and boasts brand ambassadors such as Hans 'no way' Rey, the man who was freestyling on MTBs before the sport was invented. If Adidas wanted tough conditions to test the frame out in it couldn't have chosen a better day. The pre-launch event was held in Cannock Chase on a bitterly cold and snowy day just before Christmas and Adidas invited practitioners to try the product out on the venue's muddy trails.

Adjustable features

The Evil Eye continues to use design features that make it practical for sport. It has quick release, screwless hinges that allow the sides to pop off during an impact. Along with the base 10 design it has a Tri.Fit tilt mechanism that allows the angle of the lens to be altered relative to the sides, it has more ventilation holes and a detachable sweat bar along the brow. The sides

- 1 The author in action at Cannock Chase
- 2 LST Active and Bright lenses are designed for a variety of light conditions
- 3 Quick release, screwless hinges allow the sides to pop off during an impact



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version of the current LST lenses supplied by Adidas. The frames come in five colours and two sizes and can be prescription glazed or fitted with inserts. Product is available from this month.

Vision training

Adding an extra dimension to the day was Chris Ford, director of CycleActive. CycleActive provides MTB coaching for riders up to elite status and Ford is a big advocate of training MTB riders to use their vision when riding. It also counts Adidas among its partner companies. 'Teaching people how to use their vision effectively is an important part of that training,' says Ford. As a precursor to the group trying out the product he explained some of the theory behind his take on sports vision.

His training involves getting riders to look ahead at their route rather than the natural inclination to look down at the front wheel and the obstacles it is encountering. Using a series of images Ford showed how a rider's head follows the line of sight. The head is followed by the shoulders, hips and finally feet in a smooth succession. 'If the vision part of that process fails the rider will fall.

'Advanced riders have no interest in the front wheel, they are looking further ahead.' Trusting your peripheral vision as a MTB rider is so important. Whether you are weaving through the woods or descending a sharp incline your line of vision must remain in the middle distance. The rider has to have the confidence to look forward and their peripheral vision has to back that up.

'If we can help people to develop their vision in this way they can be better cyclists.' That requires the right eyewear product, he adds. It has to be closely fitted to the face, it has to be adjustable, it has to be built around a base 10 and give excellent peripheral vision and have the right optics in the lenses.

Lens design

'LST [Adidas' Light Stabilizing Technology] lenses were a major advancement in technology,' he says, as lenses have to be able to cope with changing light conditions. 'I've seen people struggling with photochromics because they can't keep up with the speed we ride through light and dark.' He says LST Active and Bright lenses allow for a variety of light conditions that are encountered in sports such as MTB trail riding.

'That is why we are so excited about the launch of the Evil Eye Halfrim.' The product has a number of enhancements that move it on. The first is the half rim. This makes it lighter and also provides clearer vision below the eye line. This widens its appeal into sports such as cricket, golf and endurance events.

The sports eyewear market is crowded and the Evil Eye has many competitors, but on a snowy, muddy day in Staffordshire the Evil Eye Halfrim performed well both physically and against the light conditions, condensation and flying mud.

Whether it attains iconic status remains to be seen but it is clearly a contender in the exciting sports eyewear sector. ●

● **As an optical professional and a keen cyclist Colin Moulson, sports vision optometrist, Optical Express, is better placed than most to comment on the Evil Eye Halfrim Pro. Optician asked him for his verdict**

'The 10 base design gives unparalleled fit and optical correction. Combine this with the range of lens options in the Adidas range (all impact resistant and of high optical quality) and we have a real winner. I have been a fan of interchange systems for some time, as I don't feel one lens can do everything. The Adidas design and range of lens options means that there now is something for every eventuality.

'Using the Rx insert gives options for those who wear contact lenses but also allows the main lens to be changed without having to invest in several sets of Rx lenses. This will improve the flexibility of use but also make for an appealing option financially for our patients. We will definitely be stocking this product and think it will be a big success in 2011.

'As a cyclist I was very impressed with the fit and weight of the product. The supra design significantly improves usable field of view, especially inferiorly, and I am so glad the shorter side doesn't interfere with helmet straps. This has bugged me with other sunglasses in the past. I used a pair with the optical insert for prescription correction. The best praise I can give is that I was completely unaware of it throughout the whole ride. Even when I looked for the lens edge, its rimless design made it almost impossible to see. The new lens change system is a real bonus. Lenses can be changed on the move, even when wearing gloves.'



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