

Lezyne Lite Drive 700XL

£56.99

As with most Lezyne products the 700XL is stylishly designed. As well as in black or silver, its CNC-machined aluminium case comes in anodised turquoise, purple or red.

It has a single top-mounted button and charging is via a micro USB port in the rear that's hidden behind a rubber bung.

The 700XL mounts via a rubber strap that can swivel so that an aerobar position is possible, and other mounting accessories are available including a helmet mount. We found the strap worked fine for a regular set-up on a handlebar top: it held the light in balance with no nosediving.

Cycling between the eight modes is simple on the fly even with full-finger gloves thanks to the positive button feel. An LED inside the button changes colour to indicate battery status (four different statuses).

The eight modes on offer cover pretty much any type of lighting conditions or terrain. The highest power, Overdrive, is a constant and blinding 700-lumen beam from the twin LEDs that very effectively illuminates a dark lane, but only for an hour-and-a-half. The lowest, Femto, is a low-powered beam that will give a claimed 76-hour burn. There's also a commuter-friendly day flash, a flash and a pulse. Even though they're super-bright, we would prefer the flashes to be close enough together to really command attention in heavy traffic — a faster, more urgent flash would give a little more confidence.

The casing has small cutaways at the sides of the lenses to ensure lateral visibility while it's slightly hooded at the top and bottom so that the beam isn't too dispersed vertically.

9

www.upgradebikes.co.uk



Conclusion

We really liked the small torch-like shape of the Exposure Switch and its build quality impressed us greatly. At just 77g it's the lightest on test by a big chunk, something that should not be overlooked: cyclists' obsession with weight doesn't stop when the sun goes down. Inevitably, with everything shrunk down to a smaller scale and lower weight, operation can be a little fiddlier and the band that keeps water out of the charging port is a case in point.

The NiteRider's diminutive size was also a bonus and with an output of 450 lumens, it packed a decent punch. The charge time was very quick compared with the others on test, which is definitely something useful if you've forgotten to plug in your lights. We found the beam pattern was possibly not as focused as on some lights, but whether you like a spot or a flood of light depends on personal choice. It is very competitively priced since most retailers bundle it with a rear light.

The Cateye Volt is built to last and has the highest lumen count of the lights in this test. We also liked the double-click function that takes you back to the light's highest output if you need more light quickly. The high-frequency flashing mode gave us plenty of confidence when commuting in traffic. Some people may prefer the Cateye's sturdy knurled-knob fixing, to the rubber watch strap style that many small lights use, since it can be tightened more precisely.

The Guee's ambient light sensor, which modulates the power output depending on natural light, is a great feature and is well executed here. We found its 181g weight to be on the heavy side though, and compared to some better-looking designs such as the Lezyne, it is not particularly aesthetically pleasing.

We liked the look of the Lezyne from the start — it's sleek and attractive and comes in a variety of anodised colours to match your bike. Thankfully there's plenty of function to go with the form and we found it very intuitive to operate; there is a mode to go with every type of night riding — even a race mode that is either full or dipped — and the price is very good. It's hard to believe that it's the cheapest in this test since everything about it suggests quality. It lost a mark because it switched itself on in a bag, but the other side of the coin is that a button that sits flush with the casing is not so easy to operate with gloved fingers. Therefore we award the Lezyne Lite Drive 700XL 'best on test'.

LIGHT	DIMENSIONS	WEIGHT	LUMENS	MODES	RUN TIME	CHARGE TIME	PRICE
Exposure	94x30mm	77g	375	3	2-24hr	4hr	£79.96
NiteRider	95x38mm	148g	450	5	1hr 30min-14hr	1:45-3:30hr	£64.99
Cateye	116x43mm	135g	800	5	2-80hr	5-11hr	£89.99
Guee	83x47mm	181g	700	5	2hr 45min-13hr 30min	7hr	£59.99
Lezyne	95x40mm	140g	700	8	1hr 30min-76hr	6hr	£56.99