



BY KIT PALMER

My trials career is quite illustrious. Many years ago, I retired from trials competition while at the top of my game. The last time I competed in a local observed trials event, I won, but it was also my very first trials competition ever, so I left trials with a perfect record. Okay, I didn't really retire, but it was the last time I officially competed in trials, though that was never my intention. It just happened that way. For whatever reason, I just never pursued it. Dang, maybe I missed my calling.

However, I've always been a fan of trials, especially as a kid when I heard that many of my motocross heroes (like Roger DeCoster) used trials to sharpen their motocross skills or started out riding trials before going on to become motocross stars. Wanting to be a motocross star myself, I bought a used Montesa Cota 247

This is Electric Motions top-of-the-line trials bike, the ePure Race. It performs as good as it looks.

We go "battery" on Electric Motion's complete line of electric trials bikes



There are 50.4 volts of fun is packed into the ePure and eScape's motors.

to go along with my Suzuki RM125 and went to town on it. You needed a crowbar to pry me off it. Unfortunately, it never brought me motocross stardom. It did, though, give me hours of great fun and huge respect for really good trials riders. However, I do believe that Montesa made me a better motocross rider, just not *that* much better.

Trials has many times come and gone throughout my motorcycle-riding life, usually with long gaps in between. My latest trials venture came recently with the folks at Electric Motion (EM), a French motorcycle company founded in 2010 that focuses on, you guessed it, electric (off-road) motorcycles. Its first production motorcycle emerged at the end of 2012. A year later came its first competition trials bike, the EMSport. In 2020, the company reached its highest

pinnacle yet, taking second place in the TrialE World Championship with factory rider Gael Chatagno aboard its latest competition model, the ePure Race, which brings me to now. The folks at Electric Motion invited me to the El Trial de Espana to take a quick spin on their latest line of electric trials motorcycles. There are four: ePure, ePure Race, eScape and eScape R.

The two ePure models are just that—pure trials bikes with emphasis on competition. If you want to compete in local trials events, one of these ePure bikes will be your choice. If you are looking for something for trials riding while also exploring the nearby hills, one of the two eScape models will be more up your alley.

Starting with the two ePure bikes, they are essentially the same motorcycle.





Electric Motion's Christophe Bruand does his thing on the ePure Race electric-power trials bike. Trust us—you don't want to see a picture of the author attempting this. (Well, maybe you do, sicko).

The two main differences are the Race model being fitted with a hydraulic diaphragm clutch and upgraded suspension components. Performance numbers are the same, with both bikes producing 600 Nm of torque and capable of reaching a top speed of 43.5 mph, according to Electric Motion, not me. Claimed range is also the same at 26.5 miles, but we're going to presume that number will vary wildly. Weight is slightly different, with the Race version coming in four pounds heavier than the standard ePure model at 165 pounds.

The eEscape models aren't much different than the ePure bikes. In fact, they are pretty much the same bikes but with "normal" dirt bike egos, meaning they have a real seat and a place for your knees to grab on to.

The differences between the eEscape and eEscape R are the same differences between the two ePure bikes—the R has higher-end suspension and a clutch/lever. The eEscape's performance numbers are like the ePure's. Both eEscape models produce 600 Nm of torque but have a little more range at 38 miles (or thereabout) and more top speed at 45.6 mph. Again, this is according to Electric Motion. The eEscapes are also significantly heavier, about 20 pounds heavier than the ePures.

Prices start at \$9,299 for the ePure, \$10,899 for the ePure Race, and \$10,299 for the eEscape and \$11,499 for the eEscape R.



PRESS THE BUTTON

My first go was on the ePure. Not only did I have to remember how to ride trials again, but I also had to refamiliarize myself with riding an electric dirt bike again, quickly. It's been a while. (Remember Alta?) There's always a little bit of excitement when starting a combustion engine with the noise and just the fact that it started. With the Electric Motion bikes, it's a little bit of a letdown—you press the start button on the side of the bike and nothing happens, except for a little green LED light that illuminates on the left handlebar.

I'll be upfront—I'm not going to try to snowball anyone here and pretend I know what I'm talking about when it comes to real trials riding, but I can tell

(Above) The eEscape model combines a mix of trials and trails and does a great job at both.

(Below) The ePure Race and eEscape R come with clutches, just like a “normal” motorcycle.

you what it's like to ride these bikes at a novice level and perhaps give you a little bit of insight as to what they have to offer. For one, a great deal of fun. I'm also not going to get into the combustion engine versus electric debate here, but for me, there is no debating these bikes are a blast to ride.





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The author aboard the eEscape model, which is “pure” fun on the tight trails.

All four of the EM bikes have three power modes. They don't have official names for them, but there is green (low power mode), blue (medium power mode) and red light (high/full power mode) that glow on a left-handlebar control switch that indicates which mode you are in. Some people call these modes “125cc” (green), “250cc” (blue) and “300cc” (red) modes, referring to combustion bikes. I was perfectly content in the green mode because there is plenty (and I mean plenty) of power here. It's all controllable power, but it can get a little tricky when cracking the throttle “off idle” because it could get away from you if you're not paying attention, but you get used to it quickly. Same with blue



The ePure Race (pictured) gets the upgraded suspension package over the standard ePure model.

mode but with significantly more power. It can get a little scary too at first, but, again, you get used to it. Red mode is downright frightening, way too aggressive for my rusty trials skills. I never did get used to it.

All four models have traction control (TC), which can be turned on or off via a switch on the handlebar—flicked on while on the fly, it limits torque and power to improve traction on slick, wet surfaces, something not found on this day. I never tried TC since it was dry and sunny, and traction was abundant on the large boulders I was riding on, so TC was far off my radar. Sounds like a good thing, though.

The ePure has no clutch, so there is, of course, no clutch lever on the handlebar. In its place, however, is what looks like a clutch lever, but it controls the Progressive Regenerative Brake (PRB) system, which does two things: act as a rear brake and charges the battery when engaged. I like to think of it more as an engine brake than a regular brake. If you intend to use it as a traditional brake, where you can lock up the rear wheel, you'll be seriously disappointed. As you pull in the lever, it gradually slows the rear wheel more and more but never completely stops it. What it's really doing is charging the battery while slowing you down a bit simultaneously. It's a pretty cool system that works well for both helping you keep



You can entertain yourself for hours in your back yard with the ePure trials bike and your neighbors wouldn't even know.

the battery charged and controlling downhill speeds by eliminating freewheeling. Again, think of it as controllable engine braking, and you'll be happy.

Did I miss not having a clutch on the ePure? Surprisingly, no. Not at all. The transition off idle is so smooth and predictable that you really don't need it; plus, you never have to worry about stalling the motor, which is impossible to do on these bikes. And since I'm no trials expert, I never attempted an obstacle so challenging that I needed to pre-
rev the engine before launching. I'll leave that to the pros.

On to the ePure Race.

For me, the most significant difference between ePure Race and the ePure was, yes, the clutch. On the ePure Race, the left handlebar lever is indeed a clutch lever, and you use it like you do on a "normal" motor-

cycle—or not. You can also ignore it and just ride the ePure Race like you do the clutch-less ePure. No problem. I did play with the Race's clutch lever but found I couldn't modulate the power any better, or smoother, than without the lever, so I elected not to use it most of the time. I can, however, see how higher-skilled trials riders could really use the clutch lever to their advantage, but, for me, not yet.

After riding the ePure, I missed not having the PRB lever, but it is offered as an option for the Race and the eScape R.

The ePure Race and eScape R also have something called Tick Over (TKO). When turned on, the motor goes into "idle" mode, turning a constant, sustained "RPM" without turning the throttle. This is designed to give you better control of the power at low revs. I never tried it, but it

SPECIFICATIONS



EPURE (\$9299)/ EPURE RACE (\$10,899)

BATTERY TYPE

Lithium-Ion, 50.4 Volts

BATTERY CAPACITY

1875 Wh

LIFE CYCLE

1000 cycles

CHARGE TIME

3hrs, 20 min. w/15A standard charger

RANGE (CLAIMED)

26.5 miles

NOMINAL POWER

6 Kw

PEAK POWER

11 Kw

MAPS

3 Standard / 3 Standard, 3 Race, 2 w/TKO

LEFT HAND LEVER

Progressive Regenerative Brake / Hydraulic Diaphragm Clutch

FRAME

15CDV6 steel

SWINGARM

Aluminum

FRONT SUSPENSION

TECH Steel

REAR SUSPENSION

R16V, single shock

FRONT-WHEEL TRAVEL

6.9 in.

REAR-WHEEL TRAVEL

6.7 in.

FRONT WHEEL

Morad 1.6x21 in.

REAR WHEEL

Morad 2.15x18 in.

FRONT TIRE

Michelin X11 Trials, 2.75x21 in.

REAR TIRE

Michelin X11 Trials, 4.00x18 in.

FRONT BRAKE

Braktec, 1 182mm disc

REAR BRAKE

Braktec, 1 150mm disc

WEIGHT

161 lbs. / 165.5 lbs.

WHEELBASE

52.2 in.

GROUND CLEARANCE

12.6 in.

SEAT HEIGHT

26.4 in.

does seem to make good sense.

As far as the Race's premium suspension, I could only feel the difference in the bike's Tech Aluminum fork. It soaked up the hard slam-downs noticeably better than the standard model, which my wrists and shoulders greatly appreciated. I'm not good enough of a trials rider to really test the rear shock, but I'm sure I'd appreciate it as my skills improved over time and I started tackling larger obstacles.

I had the most fun on the

eScape models, mainly because the seat gave my knees something to grasp. Basically, the eScapes felt more like a regular motorcycle, so naturally, I felt more at home and comfortable on them. I could still tackle the same trials sections that I had dared on the ePure bikes, but I could also seek out tight and twisty single-track trails and ride them like a regular motorcycle—only quicker. The eScapes are incredibly agile and responsive on the trail, and you can fly down

the twisties on them. The bikes are also just plain fast! And their suspensions, which offer a little more than six inches of wheel travel, do a good job keeping up over the smaller bumps. Avoid the whoops, however.

All of the bikes are well-balanced; so good, in fact, they almost seem to balance themselves. The bikes feel like they have an ultra-low center of gravity. Speaking of low, I scraped the skid plate on boulders several times, so maybe ground



ESCAPE (\$10,299)/ ESCAPE R (\$11,499)

BATTERY TYPE

Lithium-Ion, 50.4 Volts

BATTERY CAPACITY

1875 Wh

LIFE CYCLE

1000 cycles

CHARGE TIME

3hrs, 20 min. w/15A standard charger

RANGE (CLAIMED)

26.5 miles

NOMINAL POWER

6 Kw

PEAK POWER

11 Kw

MAPS

3 Standard / 3 Standard, 3 Race, 2 w/TKO

LEFT HAND LEVER

Progressive Regenerative Brake / Hydraulic Diaphragm Clutch

FRAME

15CDV6 steel

SWINGARM

Aluminum

FRONT SUSPENSION

TECH Steel

REAR SUSPENSION

R16V, single shock

FRONT-WHEEL TRAVEL

6.9 in.

REAR-WHEEL TRAVEL

6.7 in.

FRONT WHEEL

Morad 1.6x21 in.

REAR WHEEL

Morad 2.15x18 in.

FRONT TIRE

Michelin X11 Trials, 2.75x21 in.

REAR TIRE

Michelin X11 Trials, 4.00x18 in.

FRONT BRAKE

Braktec, 1 182mm disc

REAR BRAKE

Braktec, 1 150mm disc

WEIGHT

183 lbs. / 187.5 lbs.

WHEELBASE

52.2 in.

GROUND CLEARANCE

12.6 in.

SEAT HEIGHT

32.3 in.

clearance could be better?

As far as battery life, all I can say is that the single longest time I spent on one bike was about 20-25 minutes, and I never saw the digital charge indicator, which is nestled in the handlebar pad and in plain sight, go below 80%.

The Electric Motion bikes are sold with 15A chargers. According to Electric Motion, a fully depleted battery will take three hours and 20 minutes to charge. You can upgrade to a 25A Quick

Charger, which they say will get you back on the trail in just over two hours.

My time on the Electric Motion came and went entirely too fast. Squeezing in four motorcycles in a few hours left me wanting to ride them even more, it's like someone taking away your pizza before you're halfway done eating it. Plus, I would have liked to have learned more about what they have to offer, but I did learn that these bikes are ridiculously fun to ride, whether you're a

trials star or not. My pick of the litter was the eEscape R; I think the extra \$1200 would be worth it for the higher-quality suspension (especially the fork). As my trials skills improved, I'm sure I would be glad that I opted for the clutch, as well. Plus, the eEscapes offer a great mix of trials and trail fun.

After riding the Electric Motion trials bikes, I'm getting the itch to come out of retirement. After all, if Ryan Dungey can do it, so can I. **CN**