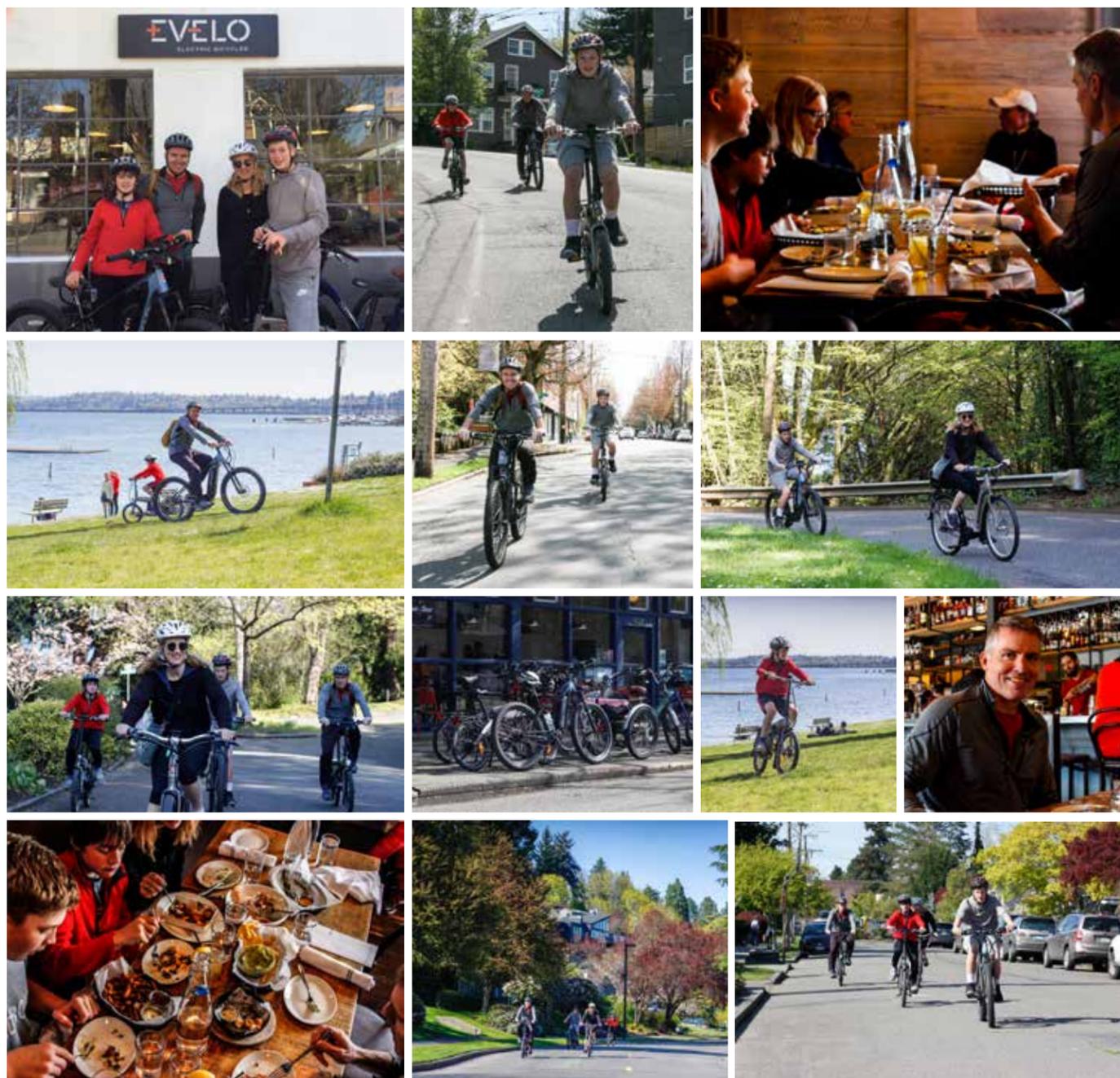




Residents Take On Seattle's Hilly Terrain With **Evelo Electric Bicycles**

around town | By Abbie Richert



On April 22, four local residents – Anne Willoughby Nelson and her son Miles, and Blayne Plummer and his son Merrik – spent the sunny afternoon effortlessly cruising through Madrona, Leschi and Madison Park all thanks to Evelo Electric Bicycles.

Evelo was founded in 2011 by Yevgeniy and Boris Mordkovich with the mission to “open doors for the non-cyclist, the person who normally would not consider riding a bike because of hills, distance, age, fitness levels or even the simple inconvenience of arriving to work sweaty.”

Starting at Evelo’s storefront in Madrona, the group took off down 34th street for a practice run and, after quickly getting their bearings, headed off toward Leschi. The group powered through Madrona’s winding roads, trying varying levels of the pedal assist and testing out the throttle feature, which engages the bike’s motor to propel the rider for a distance without pedaling -- a useful component when taking on the area’s towering hills. Both Miles and Merrik agreed that the throttle was the best feature on the bike. “It was really fun, you don’t really have to pedal,” Miles said. Merrik added “You can just hit the throttle and go a lot faster. I liked that a lot, it was really fun.”

In Leschi, the group took a few laps around the grassy waterfront park, then made their way to Meet the Moon for a quick pitstop where they indulged in a few of the restaurant’s tastiest offerings. After stomachs were full, they hopped back on the bikes eager to take on the uphill route to Madison Park. “It was the most exhilarating and energizing feeling when the electric boost kicked in,” Anne said. “It was so smooth and seamless – effortless for me as a rider, yet so thrilling to feel that energy and kick as we continued uphill at a great pace. I think I had a huge smile on my face the entire time – it was just so, so fun!”

In Madison Park, the crew made a stop Scoop Du Jour and enjoyed the sweet treat on the sunny sidewalk next to the bikes. Now having experienced downhill, flat ground and uphill, the consensus was in: “This is a blast,” they all agreed.

Blayne said he “never knew electric bikes could be so fun.” Adding, “You don’t have to work with these bikes. So if your goal isn’t to get a workout but more to get out and explore, then these bikes are a great way to do that.”

Anne also noted the ease in adapting to the bikes. “The bike was surprisingly easy to ride. I had thought there might be a bit of a learning curve to

get used to the electric bikes, but it didn’t take more than a few blocks, and we all felt comfortable and completely at ease.

With blood sugars high, the group headed back out to return to Evelo -- everyone excited to put the bikes to the test as the steepest hill yet stood between them and their end destination, which they of course conquered with ease. “The ability to tune the bike to give you more or less assistance, depending on how hard you wanted to work at it, was a real benefit,” Anne said.

Upon returning to Evelo, Alex Stegemann, Evelo’s Director of Sales noted that their main market is 60-80-year-olds. “We really give them the ability to get back on a bike,” he said. “The younger folks are really using it for commuting, especially here in Seattle; I don’t care who you are, getting downtown and back on a regular bike is brutal with these hills.”

Both Anne and Blayne agreed that these bikes would be the perfect way to get to work for riders of all ages. “You can easily bike to work using the pedal assist so you don’t show up sweaty, then turn it off and get a workout coming back home,” Blayne said. Anne added, “It’s a great way to beat the traffic and have fun to boot!” Anne also said she could see how the bikes would be great for her parents. “They could keep up with the grandkids with ease. It inspired me to think about taking a family biking vacation.”

Overall, the group agreed that the electric bikes make the city feel accessible, and would encourage them to get out for often and explore areas they otherwise wouldn’t go to. Thanks to Evelo, what would otherwise be an average Sunday afternoon turned to one full of excitement and possibility.