

10.

FIGHT TO WATCH

Bike-share battle

Zürich, Switzerland

For years Zürich lagged behind other cities in installing a bike-share system. Instead the city had Züri Rollt – a tiny free bike-rental scheme set up to offer jobs to asylum seekers – and its trusty trams (*see page 71*). But that has all changed.

US firm LimeBike launched its lightweight, bright-green bicycles in December, becoming the fourth bike-share venture. Its competitors, all fairly new to the city, are oBike from Singapore (with yellow-and-grey models) and two homegrown brands: Smide (black and white) and Carvelo2go (various colours).

But the battle is just beginning. City hall's scheme, Züri Velo (*pictured*), is launching imminently and Danish firm Donkey Republic (orange, perhaps) is here to join the party. Who will win? According to Professor Kay Axhausen from ETH Zürich, it's difficult to say. "The economics of the schemes aren't transparent; with seed funding and ongoing subsidies, multiple schemes can survive for a while." It's up to Zürich residents themselves to vote with their (pedalling) feet. — CS

Why we like it: The battle has a very Swiss brand of libertarianism instead of a state monopoly.

