

Noiseless river 'bubble' taxi sails through Paris test

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Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo took a spin on the Seine for a test ride of the electric Sea Bubble water taxi

An odd-looking electric boat taxi whose inventor believes it could be an eco-friendly transport solution for cities worldwide was put to the test in Paris for the first time Friday.

The brainchild of French yachtsman Alain Thebault, the aerodynamic

Sea Bubble made no noise and no waves as it took a star turn on the River Seine with Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo aboard.

"It was a perfect flight," Thebault, 54, said after putting the prototype through its paces between the Eiffel Tower and the Musee d'Orsay.

The white craft skimmed about half a metre (20 inches) over the Seine, executing turns while pausing occasionally to yield to passing ducks.

"It's quiet, comfortable and fun," said Hidalgo, who has backed the project from the start and hopes it will provide an eco-friendly alternative for getting around the French capital within four years.

The boat is similar to a hydrofoil, with fibreglass foils that deploy to hoist it into the air, powered by [electric batteries](#), and capable of reaching the maximum allowed speed of 18 kilometres (11 miles) per hour.

"It works like the wings of an airplane in the air. After it reaches a certain speed the Bubble lifts off," Thebault said.

A Sea Bubble means "zero noise, zero waves and zero (carbon) emissions," he added.

Thebault said he has received "an avalanche of requests" from cities including Miami and Seattle, Tokyo, Bangkok and no fewer than 15 cities in India.

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