Volt Burlington e-bike review, 2027 model

by mark sutton

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IN HYBRID, COMMUTER AND FOLDING BIKES
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RATING: 4.5

PRICE: £1,749

To compete with cheap imports from South-east Asia, Volt has slashed prices across its e-bike range by around £400 per bike. This makes the Volt Burlington, its Dutch-style offering on review here, a highly competitive £1,749. For that, you get a solid urban commuter that's fit for the streets, but capable of taking on some rougher stuff too.

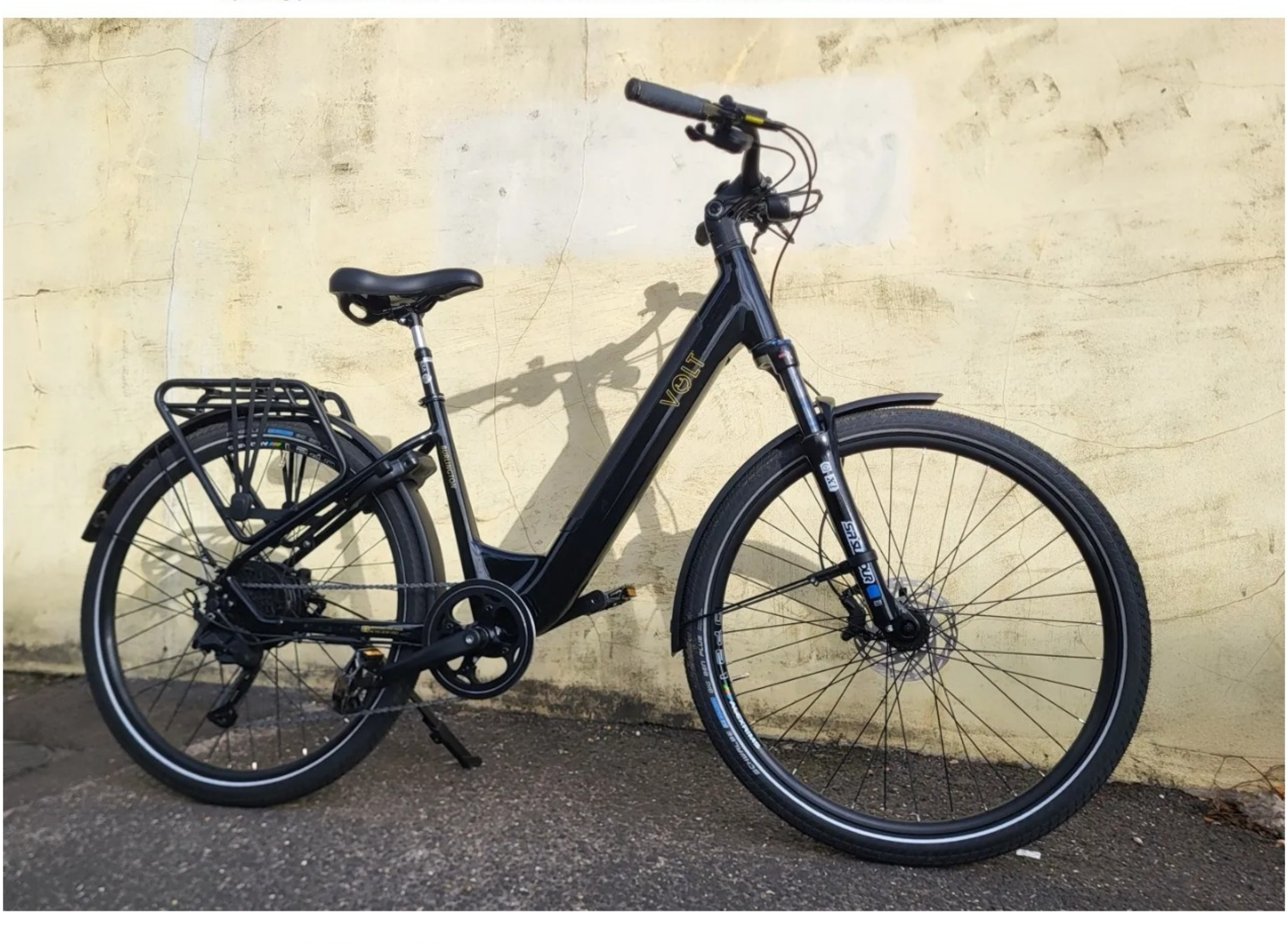
Volt electric bikes are built in the UK in the company's Milton Keynes factory, a dedicated 20,000-square-foot building. One bonus of buying British is the availability of purchase and after-sales support in one of Volt's dedicated stores or its 64 partners nationwide. Store staff will talk potential buyers through bike specs and any added extras that might be available. Online reviews feature some effusive praise for both the quality of Volt's products and the service and aftercare customers receive.

The Burlington is a brand-new model in Volt's sub-£2,000 stable – which, by the way, contains ten different electric steeds, from the traditional-looking Kengsington, to the Metro folding e-bike. The Burlington packs a lot in for the money, and is a thoroughly enjoyable e-bike to ride. There's nine gears, and all of the accessories you'd expect: a built-in pannier rack with luggage strap, substantial mudguards, front and rear lights. On top of that, there's some added extras like a Dutch-style Abus wheel lock and a key fob that digitally 'unlocks' the e-bike via the handlebar-mounted control panel – more on this later.

A notable feature of the Burlington, and a UK-first according to the brand, is its dual motor capability: the ability to switch between 'cadence' and 'torque' settings. The former gives you full power when you pedal, regardless of how hard you're pushing, and the latter a responsive output, based on pedal pressure and speed.

Volt Burlington review: The headline details

Our Volt Burlington review was conducted on the streets of London by veteran cycling journalist and author of *Potholes and Pavements* Laura Laker.



£1,749 | View offer

Pros
Improved value
Comfortable ride
Torque and Cadence settings (choose how the motor assist feels)
Security anti-theft fob unlock
Local backup and service

Cons
Frame only comes in one size
Rack a little fiddly with some pannier bags

Specifications
Stated range: Up to 60 miles (95km)
Stated weight: 21.5kg without battery, 24.1kg with battery
Frame material: 6061 aluminium
Motor: 250W spintech with Bafang Motor
Battery: Panasonic Lithium Ion 36v removable battery
Drivetrain: Shimano CUES, 9-speed
Suspension: SR Suntour NCX Tapered
Brakes: Tektro hydraulic/Logan
Tyres: Schwalbe puncture resistant
Saddle: Velo Sport Comfort saddle
Included accessories: Integrated front and rear lights, Abus integrated security lock, EXA dropper seat post, luggage strap, digital key fob.

Who is this e-bike for?

This is a thoughtfully put-together Dutch-style e-bike, with a fairly upright riding position for my height (167cm) and some helpful extras you might need for everyday use. I tested its abilities as part of my A to B trip-making in London for a couple of weeks in Autumn.

The Burlington is a nine-speed versatile bike in Volt's range of ebikes, with front suspension and dropper post to account for rougher terrain, and a pannier rack for luggage. Volt's innovation with the bike's power output - the ability to switch between 'cadence' and 'torque' modes - is a nice touch. The former setting recalls early ebikes or, dare I say it, Lime bikes, which didn't respond to pedal pressure, and so were either on or off as soon as the cranks turned - and while it's less commonly seen now, it's still useful in some circumstances. It means if you need the bike to do more of the work, cadence will whizz you along without too much exertion. Turn the power level down and it will hit a lower maximum speed. Torque, meanwhile, responds to the pedal pressure you put out, and your pedalling speed (I'm trying not to say cadence, to avoid confusion).

Helpfully, given the bike's nippy acceleration in its higher settings, one squeeze of the Tektro Safety 'Power Cut' hydraulic brakes, halts power to the motor. This means you don't risk a runaway bike, should the acceleration catch you unawares.

The bike attracted a few admiring glances from friends. The understated black model I tried looks sleek and business-like, rather than flashy, with its gloss paintwork and gold lettering pleasing against the matte rack, cranks and bars. The other colour on offer is off-white, a colour I tend to avoid personally as it can be unforgiving of scuffs.

The Burlington's slim battery case, housing the Panasonic Lithium Ion battery, belies a surprising amount of charge. Its 60-mile range allowed me to dot across London over multiple days, without worrying about running out of juice. The battery compartment is opened with a key, which you turn to pop the battery neatly out. You can charge the bike in situ, or off the bike, using the same port, on the battery casing itself. This is kept dry beneath a neat little rubber flap.

I found the walk assist easy to use, with a simple thumb lever. It could be a bit more powerful but it does the job going up a bike gulley on one set of steps in a park near me. The thumb lever can also activate a blast of power while moving, should you need to get away from a set of lights quickly, say. When deployed, it will get you up to the max speed of the setting you are in.

The Shimano CUES derailleur is paired with a Bafang front cassette, to fit the bike's torque sensor, a housing that leaves the chain open at the top. One Dutch-style addition the Burlington is lacking, I thought, is a chain guard; I found my wider trousers tended to catch occasionally in the chain when pedalling, and had to be rolled up.

The chunky pannier rack was a bit wide for my panniers - my Ortliebs took a little bit of persuading to grip around the thick metal. A Decathlon pannier bag I also use has an adjustable fitting, which can be expanded via a screw, but the bag tended to jump off the bike a bit when I did this. The Burlington's rack has a second, slimmer rail beneath the main one, though there wasn't enough clearance above it to attach any of my bags to. On other e-bikes I've tested, this lower rail protrudes slightly, useful for bags with slimmer mounts. It's a small detail but worth noting. There's also a three-tailed luggage strap to help secure items to the bike - a detail I'm a fan of, for extra bags of shopping or even camping gear.

Among the thoughtful extras is the addition of an Abus rear wheel lock. Common on the Continent, it's a nice touch for locking up outside the shops - if you dare - or as an added piece of security locking the rear wheel and motor to the frame. For an extra £30 you can buy a chain that bolts into the unit, operated via the same key. Most customers, I'm told, opt for the latter, which comes in a bag you can attach to the pannier. A friend laughed at this bag, when I had it mounted on the bike, but I did find it useful for pottering - even if it did make attaching a pannier trickier.

It's a shame the bike only comes in one size. While an understandable choice for cost purposes, it might not work well for those on the upper or lower end of the population height bell curve. Volt gets around this in part with a very adjustable handlebar.

The frame, motor, battery and electronics are covered by a two year warranty, which can be extended to three years for £199.

Volt Burlington Review: How does it ride?

This is a versatile commuter bike with an accessible step-through frame and thoughtful extras. It's suitable for commuters and short journeys, but with its stated 60-mile range, the bike can take on more than that. There's no good reason why not.

The Burlington weighs 24kg with the battery, making it rather a beast to manoeuvre when you're not riding it, but the weight disappears once the motor is on, of course. Overall it's a comfortable and reassuring ride.

The SpinTech drive system performed well, providing smooth power output across the various assistance levels. The 250W brushless Bafang motor, with Volt's Intelligent Controller, responded well to the demands of London's streets, and showed no signs of struggling against some substantial autumn winds.

The option of two power modes is a nice touch; though having ridden an elderly e-bike with only the 'cadence' option for years, having a bit more responsiveness in torque mode was my preference. On cadence, the bike's speed is dictated by the assistance setting you put it in, rather than the power you put through the pedals. On one tired ride across town, I popped it on cadence and was grateful for the extra boost. However, even at a middling level of assistance I found it a bit too nippy at times, and it felt like the assistance ran on after I'd stopped pedalling.

At moments like those, the brakes' ability to cut off power felt reassuring. Similarly, I found the power burst, which can be activated by pressing the thumb lever while cycling, a nice touch. It gives you a decent boost should you suddenly need to go faster for a few metres.

The bike feels nicely responsive to the road without jolting the rider. Handling was easy and the bike felt reassuringly stable, with equally reassuring Tektro hydraulic brakes. The SR Suntour NCX Tapered forks and EXA dropper seat post help absorb any shocks from rougher surfaces, without their presence being noticeable. I found the upright riding position comfortable, as was the saddle, with its cutout, which I personally prefer. Having the ability to turn the integrated lights on and off via the display panel was handy, and was noted by customers' online reviews.

The digital experience

Laura Laker

I found the added security of a key fob which unlocks the electric assist a reassuring extra, riding and locking the bike up around London. It's a handy extra step that offers some security peace of mind, if it takes a bit of getting used to.

This system has clear benefits. Volt staff say thieves don't always realise when taking off with one of their customer's bikes, only to later find out the e-assist won't come on without the fob. Sometimes a hapless buyer they flog it to, second-hand, finds out the hard way. I'm told Volt regularly has people coming in looking for 'replacement' fobs for a bike they bought second-hand, only to learn they are inadvertently handling stolen goods. Sometimes it is the thieves themselves. Unfortunate as this is for the unwitting, it has helped Volt reunite bikes with some of their legal owners. And it's another argument for caution when buying from online marketplaces.

You turn the bike on and off via a button on the battery casing, on the down tube. It takes around two seconds' holding the button to switch it on, and around five seconds to turn it off. If you hold it for too long when starting up, it will just turn itself off again, so it might take a couple of attempts to get the timing right. Then it's about remembering not to put your keys away before you've digitally unlocked the bike, via the key fob.

The display unit gives power assist and battery level information, and the option to toggle between miles travelled, top speed and maximum speed, as well as switching between Cadence and Torque, via a Mode button on the side of the display unit, marked 'M'. Up and down buttons adjust the assistance level, and turn the integrated lights on and off.

Overall, the Volt Burlington is a very good e-bike and, in concluding this review, it's one that I'd recommend as a decent sub-£2000 option.

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Mark has been writing within the bike industry for two decades, both on the business to business side and consumer-facing too. Mark is the Founding Editor of CyclingElectric and he estimates having tested over 400 electric bikes over thousands of miles, spanning each and every bike sub category. He has written about electric bikes for decades, covering their technological progression and rise to popularity. Mark's work has been cited in Government papers on the subject of electric bike regulation and he is actively engaged in shaping the UK e-bike industry across its various segments.

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