

# Wheels Martin Love

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## Take the legwork out of commuting with this powered ride

### Volt Pulse ebike

**Price** £1,599, [voltbikes.co.uk](http://voltbikes.co.uk)  
**Gears** Shimano Alivio  
**Motor** 250W SpinTech  
**Battery** 400 or 646Wh  
**Range** 60 or 90+ miles  
**Weight** 19.5kg

Almost 20 years ago, Hannes Neupert, known to his many disciples as the Electric Evangelist, wrote *Das Powerbike*. In it the German cycling advocate stated that the future of urban transport belonged to electric bikes. He then went on to say that:

“Electrification will kill the mechanical bicycle,” and that pedal bikes would become “fossilised cult objects”, like typewriters and record players. It was enough to make a grown cyclist weep.

His predictions haven't come true (yet), but last month sales of ebikes in Holland, for instance, outstripped sales of regular bikes for the first time. Here in the UK, sales of ebikes are also rising at a giddy speed, and one of the many firms making hay while the sun shines is Volt.

Based in a light-filled, open-plan office in a historic courtyard near London Bridge, Volt was founded in 2010 by two brothers – James and Lyle Metcalfe. They'd been travelling in China and noticed that everyone was riding early versions of ebikes. Aware that these didn't really exist back in the UK, they spent a year travelling the

country and researching their product, before going into business themselves. It was a brave decision. At that time riding an ebike was seen at best as cheating and at worst as a sort of bonkers social eccentricity.

The brand began life in the family's garage in Buckinghamshire. After testing bulky and inefficient machines that often had batteries that barely got them round the block, the Metcalfes took up the challenge of reinventing and improving the urban ebike. Rather than simply bolting unwieldy motors and heavy power packs to existing bikes, they started from scratch, designing their frames from the ground up. They believed that just because a bike was electric it didn't mean it couldn't look elegant and be a pleasure to ride. Today, Volt is at the forefront of the ebike business and, as far bigger firms add ebike models to their line-up, it is Volt's pioneering bikes they are often emulating.

For those who live in flats or use caravans, trailer homes or boats, the Volt folding Metro LS is a favourite. But for those travelling a little further, it's the flagship Pulse that is the bestseller. There is a sweetspot commute of between eight and 12 miles – too far for traditional pedal-pushers but within range of an ebike. Sales are now about 50/50 between men and women and the average age is coming down. It was people in their 50s, but now many are now in their 20s.

The Pulse features the SpinTech system that uses multiple sensors to connect you to your ride. You can choose between four power outputs via an LCD display unit and the “continuous spin” motor is embedded in the rear hub.

I've ridden many ebikes and the majority disappoint: the power is hesitant and underwhelming. But the Pulse is a joy – smooth, agile and fun. I liked it so much I was tempted to buy one... But I'm not quite ready to turn my beloved road bike into a “fossilised cult object” just yet. ■

## Car of the week



### MG TD

**Hire** £122 per hour, including insurance, [bookaclassic.co.uk](http://bookaclassic.co.uk)

Last month, when Charles and Camilla visited Cuba, the couple were seen soaking up the sunshine in a beautifully restored 66-year-old MG TD, a rare sight on an island where many still prefer to drive rusting Cadillacs, Chevrolets and Dodges. Cuba is well known for its love of retro cars and the Prince has had a life-long love affair with racy roadsters, so it was no wonder he gave the chauffeur the day off and drove the MG himself. He told onlookers who gathered to watch the couple arrive that the car ‘has an incredibly powerful accelerator. It is close to the brake so you have to be careful you don't press the wrong one.’

If reading that makes you wish you could spend the day worrying about pressing the wrong pedal on a vintage sportscar, you should think about visiting BookAclassic. The site is the brainchild of Danish entrepreneur and passionate car enthusiast Claus Stig Christensen. It has been described as the Airbnb for cars. Listing more than 4,000 iconic vehicles – from Jaguar E-Types to Rolls-Royce Silver Shadows and AC Cobras – in 36 countries, it offers owners a chance to make money from their rare cars and you the chance to experience driving a vehicle with soul, class and charisma. With prices starting from about £150 per day, including insurance, the hardest decision is choosing which model you are going to hire.

### Cool kit

*A seriously good, fully breathable, moisture-wicking bike top made of recycled polyester*

**Rhythm Elite Jersey**  
 E34, [alpkit.com](http://alpkit.com)

