

Volt London Review: The Most Secure E-Bike

A comfortable and practical urban electric bike with refreshingly simple security features



Reviews

By [Jonathan Shannon](#) published January 27, 2023



(Image: © Jonathan Shannon / Future)

OUR VERDICT ★★★★★

This is a good-value bike which gets the basics right. It handled my London cycle commute with aplomb, and the integrated locks and use of a key fob to unlock the electronics are refreshingly straightforward and effective methods of security in the age of GPS chips and apps.

✚ FOR

- Comfortable to ride
- Extra security features
- Natural feel of assistance
- Big and removable battery

✚ AGAINST

- One frame size
- Comparatively heavy

You can trust Coach ✓ We give honest reviews and recommendations based on in-depth knowledge and real-world experience. [Find out more about how we review and recommend products.](#)

I have spent more time than I care to mention fiddling with apps while reviewing e-bikes, so it was a welcome change to find out how to turn on the Volt London review model when I visited the brand's south London showroom. Press the button on the battery. Hold the key fob in the general vicinity of the handlebar-mounted display. Done.

That encapsulated my experience of the bike too. It got me everywhere I needed to be in London with a minimum of fuss. It's up there with the [best electric bikes](#) I've tried.

Volt is a well-established British brand which primarily manufactures folding and hybrid bikes as a means of getting around, rather than the enjoyment of a sport, although it's also released an electric mountain bike. Its range can be split into those that use its proprietary electronics and those that use Shimano's. The Volt London belongs in the former camp.

VOLT LONDON: PRICE AND AVAILABILITY

The Volt London costs £2,199 and is available from the Volt website and a [network of bike shops](#) across the UK. The website offers 0% finance over 12 months, and paid-for [finance](#) over longer payment terms. Volt is also part of [Cycle Scheme](#), which allows UK taxpayers who are paid through PAYE to purchase a bike and save 26%-40%, depending on your tax band (our [Cycle To Work guide](#) explains more).

The London e-bike sits in the middle of Volt's range of hybrid and step-through bikes. The Kensington step-through is the cheapest at £1,729, and the range tops out at £2,499 for the Regent step-through or Connect hybrid.

The Volt London compares favourably with the competition on price. The single-speed Cowboy cost £2,590, the similar [Ribble Urban AL e](#) costs £2,499, and the Van Moof costs £2,998. The [Raleigh Arra](#) however, seriously undercuts it at £1,399.

HOW I TESTED THIS BIKE



One of the Volt London's most impressive security features is its chameleon-like ability to blend into its surroundings, making it almost invisible to thieves. (Joke.) (Image credit: Jonathan Shannon / Future)

I rode this bike for a two-week period and covered more than 90km (56 miles) around south London

THE MOTOR





(Image credit: Jonathan Shannon / Future)

Volt uses a rear-wheel-mounted Spintech/Bafang Motor, paired with a Bafang torque sensor in the pedals. Received wisdom suggests that this rear-hub motor style of e-bike doesn't offer quite as natural a feel as a mid-hub motor, which Volt uses in its more expensive models.

That wasn't my experience here, however. I never felt the bike jerk forwards unexpectedly, either when getting ready to set off or when setting off slowly in heavy traffic, as I have on other bikes.

The Volt rep who talked me through the bike said most people ride in low or normal settings, which I silently guffawed at, because I only ride in the highest setting. He was right, though – the high setting was a touch too punchy for crowded inner-city roads, and it's best reserved for steep inclines.

As well as increasing the level of assistance on the handlebar-mounted display when heading up a hill, you can also use the boost button while pedalling to add some more oomph, or to help you pull away from a stop going swiftly. If you're walking the bike you can also use it to get some help pushing the bike along, but in this state the motor cuts out at 3mph as per UK law. One thing I liked about the boost feature is that the button is more like a gear shifter and it pushes in a few centimetres, making it easy to operate even with gloved hands.





(Image credit: Jonathan Shannon / Future)

THE BATTERY

The London Volt packs a 36V lithium-ion battery (504WH) into the bike's downtube and the range is quoted as 60 miles (96.5km) with an 11-stone (154lb/70kg) rider on a low setting in good conditions (side note: Volt goes into admirable detail at the bottom of the [Volt London page](#)).

I am an 11-stone rider who lives up a meaty hill, has to start and stop a lot for traffic lights (which demands more from the battery) and reside among the embarrassment of potholes on south London roads. I also ride with as much assistance as practicable (normal in this instance, but with liberal use of the boost button) and I rode the battery down in 67km (41 miles), which also included periods of riding with the lights pulling charge from the battery. I rate that as a very strong performance.

The battery can also be removed easily using a key. This is especially welcome in the current climate because using your place of work's electricity to charge your bike's battery is much more discreet when it's not still attached to your bike.

THE RIDE

The Volt London is no lightweight at 22.1kg, but I was able to manhandle it onto its rear wheel to more easily manoeuvre it past the bikes locked up in my house's narrow side alley.

The motor is powerful enough that you can get the bike moving quickly and with minimal effort. I didn't miss gears at all, and even hill starts were easy in the highest assistance level or when using the boost button.

The chunky Schwalbe G-One Puncture Resistant tyres look sturdy, eat up potholes and can slam up kerbs, although these are categorised as gravel tyres by Schwalbe. While that's useful if you want to ride on grass to round a pedestrian when riding on a (shared use) path in a park, the tread will actually make the tyre worse at gripping the surface in wet conditions. Still, the tyres are wide enough that that shouldn't be a problem, although I didn't ride in the rain during my testing.

The seat is wide and comfy, and has an integrated spring in the seatpost so you bounce a little when you hit potholes.

The Volt London is a single-speed bike, but the high level of assistance on offer means I never struggled to get the wheels turning. Unlike with the single-speed Humming folding e-bike, I was able to push past 15.5mph when the motor cuts out and cruise at 16 or 17mph at a reasonable cadence.

There were two minor issues I discovered that are worth mentioning. The first is that the London is only available in one size. I am 6ft (182cm) tall and found the 19in frame a little cramped. If you're unsure if that size will work for you, Volt works with independent bike shops across the UK to offer [1000+ bike repair centres](#). This network also means it's not hard to find somewhere to service your bike.

My other issue was with the included front rack. I am not a fan of these in the first place and find it can affect the steering if you strap something heavy on there. It can also turn the front wheel when the kickstand is down, threatening to topple the bike over.

All in all, though, the Volt London did what I wanted it to – take the effort out of pedalling and be comfortable for the entirety of my 45-minute commute.

ACCESSORIES



(Image credit: Jonathan Shannon / Future)

The London Volt comes with two accessories that are not always included but which I consider essential: integrated lights and mudguards. If you rode this bike outside of well lit urban areas I'd consider upgrading the lights, since the beam doesn't stretch that far in the pitch black (in my experience, one short unlit stretch of Clapham Common), but they're powerful enough to keep you visible to drivers on lit urban roads..

A kickstand is also included and there's an integrated Arbus rear wheel lock. The only thing missing, which also feels like it should come included, is the chain lock that works with the integrated lock. The chain is recognised as gold standard by insurer Laka (which offers 30-days of free insurance for Volt customers) and is worth the investment, although it is very heavy.

IS THE LONDON VOLT WORTH IT?



(Image credit: Jonathan Shannon / Future)

Yes. It's great value and more stylish than a bike this practical has any right to be. It reminded me of the Raleigh Array, another relatively heavy, wide-tyred hybrid with a big battery and powerful motor although the Volt hides its battery in the downtube. While the Volt London costs substantially more, the straightforward security features are a big draw.

I did find the Cowboy 4 ST a better bike to ride, and it's only 14% more expensive. However, it doesn't have the network of bike shops to fall back on for servicing, which is worth considering.



Jonathan Shannon
Editor

Jonathan Shannon has been the editor of the Coach website since 2016, developing a wide-ranging experience of health and fitness. Jonathan took up running while editing Coach and has run a sub 40min 10K and 1hr 28min half marathon. His next ambition is to complete a marathon. He's an

advocate of [cycling to work](#) and is Coach's [e-bike](#) reviewer, and not just because he lives up a bit of a hill. He also reviews [fitness trackers](#) and other workout gear.