

Volt Connect e-bike review: Mid-drive motor makes for a marvellous hybrid machine

Gareth Butterfield takes the British-built Volt Connect hybrid e-bike up hill and down dale

VOLT CONNECT HYBRID E-BIKE ★★★★★



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The British summer might be unpredictable, but it's a great time to get out there and enjoy the open air on two wheels. And e-bikes have opened up the joy of cycling to more people than ever before.

I've been testing an array of e-bikes over the years, in all shapes and sizes, but I hadn't come across a company called Volt until now.

And it's a lovely business, designing, building and distributing bikes from Milton Keynes with a range of electric bikes that covers everything from the folding compact bikes to a specialist mountain bike.

I was invited to spend a few weeks on the firm's hybrid bike, the Connect. It's a bit of a jack-of-all-trades, and it's certainly a premium product.



Priced at **£2,699** the **Connect's** stand-out feature is its crank-mounted Bafang motor. Crank drive is a really nice thing to have on an e-bike, because it delivers the power very smoothly, which gives makes for a much more natural riding feel.

The propulsion is carefully measured, depending on your riding style, and based on the amount of torque you're putting into the pedals, the gradient you're riding on and the speed you're travelling.

Obviously, e-bikes make pedalling that little bit more effortless, but a crank-mounted motor ensures you're always getting the optimum amount of assistance, based on the settings you're using.



And those settings are controlled by a compact handlebar-mounted display, with a few discreet buttons that will take you through the power settings, at the same time as giving you statistical readouts and displaying battery life.

There's also a button to control the fitted lights, and a walk mode, which helps you push the bike.

Although, it's really not that heavy. [The Volt Connect](#) has an integrated 36V battery, which is tucked away neatly in a recess in the down tube. With this installed, the Connect weighs around 23kg, which is pretty good for a hybrid bike.

The 250w motor being centrally-mounted also gives it a nice balance, which makes for a very solid and smooth feel while out riding. It really doesn't feel like an e-bike at times, and the high-quality Schwalbe tyres offer plenty of grip on most surfaces with a low rolling resistance.



There's some other tasty premium features, too. The rear set of nine gears is selected with a Shimano Deore derailleur, there's a Zoom suspension seatpost, and a Suntour front suspension fork. These add to the smooth ride, and don't take away from the solid feel of the Connect. It feels exceptionally well built.

Tektro hydraulic brakes are another premium touch, and I love the fact the Connect comes with an integrated security lock.

I live in a market town, on the edge of the Peak District, and I didn't have to ride far to get the measure of the Connect. It can handle rough trails very well, and it's right at home in the urban sprawl. The lack of a front set of gears doesn't matter all that much, because there's plenty of power from that crank-mounted motor, and it's a delight to pootle around town in, and keeping up with traffic is a doddle.

Volt says the battery range is good for up to 80 miles and, while I didn't brave that distance in a single stint, if you're not too trigger-happy with the power modes, and your route doesn't include too many hills, I can see that being quite possible.



The company that delivered my test bike, The Bike Shop Derby, told me the Connect is a joy to sell, because they're reliable and attractive. And I completely agree.

Back when I first got interested in cycling, British-built bikes were the go-to for solid quality and dependability, and it's great to see this home-grown reputation rekindled in Volt's range.

Yes, there are cheaper hybrid e-bikes out there with similar specs, but I've ridden them and it's fair to say they're not a patch on the Volt Connect.

It's an elegant, easy-to-use, relatively lightweight and effortless dream to ride, and the fact it's built in Blighty feels like the icing on the cake.

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