Volt London 2025 review

by mark sutton

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IN E-BIKES, HYBRID, COMMUTER AND FOLDING BIKES

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VERDICT: The Volt London stacks up very well against well-priced competition

RATING: 4.8

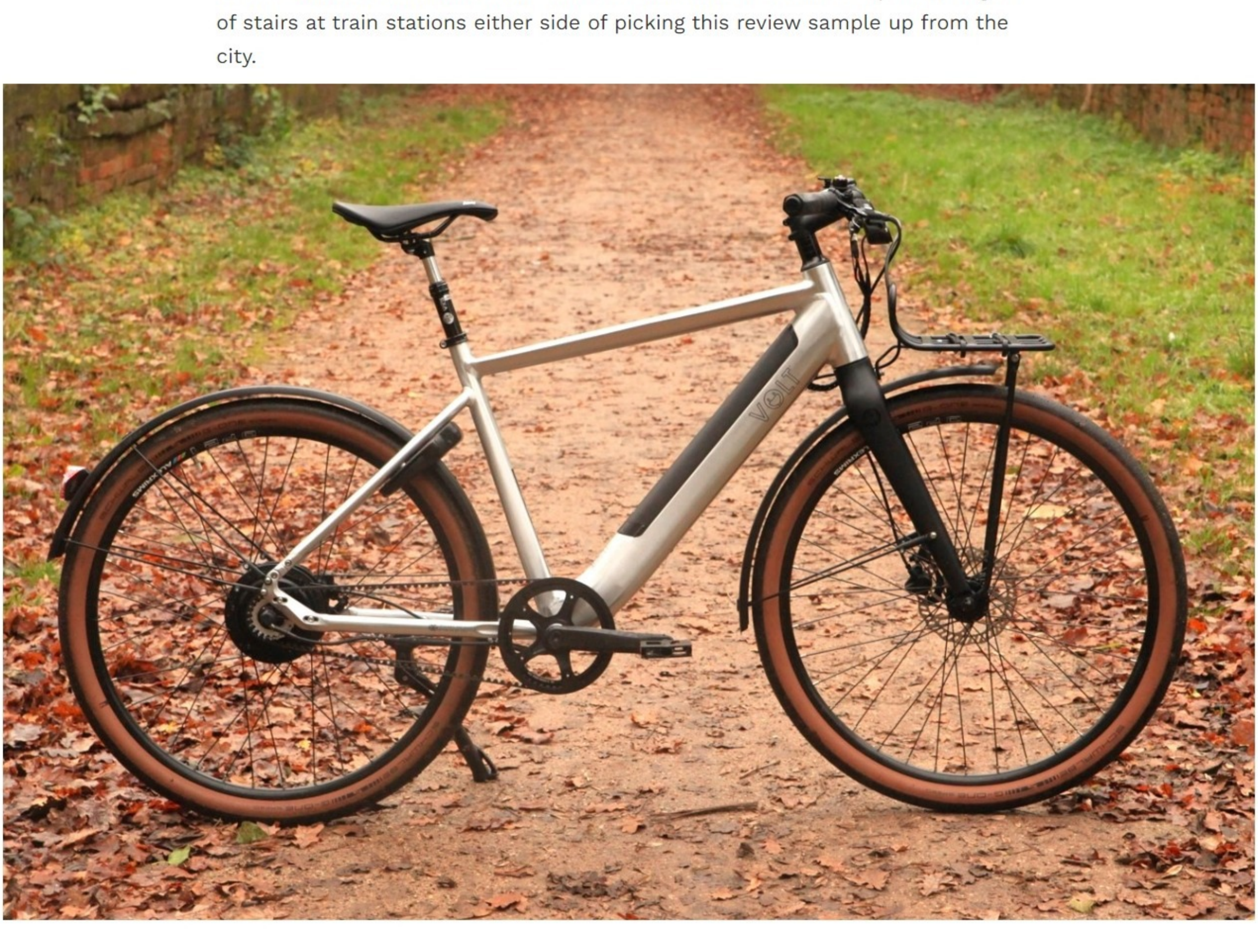
PRICE: £2,299

Coming back to back on last week's review of the VanMoof S5, the Volt London suits the same brief, but comes in from £2,099, or around £900 cheaper. Are the differences in quality and performance unmissable, or has Volt earned a spot alongside our other favourite urban bikes challenging at the around £2,000 mark?

Now let's begin with a few more points of reference, because there are so many targeting this buying sweet spot. There's the Lemmo One at £2,049, the Estarli e28.9 at £1,850, Whyte RHeO 3 at £2,299 and Tenways CG0600 at £1,799, to name just a few that are directly competing for your attention. I've test-ridden and reviewed all of these electric bikes and I have to say, comparable with only a few years ago, the advance in quality in this particular space is very noticeable.

Nowadays, more often than not, you are getting a fully equipped commuter bike with a pair of mudguards, wired-in lighting, quite often some kind of pannier or front rack, a kickstand and occasionally some other extras like the suspension seatpost seen on the Volt London here.

At the same time, the battery sizes have been creeping up and the weights going in the other direction. Despite all the kit and the decent-sized battery equipped on the Volt London I didn't have to strain too much to haul this up a few flights of stairs at train stations either side of picking this review sample up from the city.



£2,099 chain / £2,299 belt | View offer

Pros
- Good weight for fully equipped bike
- 504Wh battery is competitive
- Hand-built in UK (local backup)
- Good handler in all conditions, capable of some gravel type riding
- Generous accessory range for the price
- No corners cut on accessory partners with SKS and Fabric add ons
- The frame finish is delightful (in my opinion)
- Some good security options and insurance partnerships on offer

Cons
- One size only
- Slippy grip tape pedals as standard (when wet)
- I'd love a second gear (I'm told it's in consideration)
- Would prefer if bike would turn on via display, rather than battery on first

Features
- Two-year warranty
- Abus integrated security lock
- Torque sensor
- Belt drive
- Optional GPS tracker
- Suspension seatpost
- Digital key opening of display and electrics
- Free UK delivery

Spec
- **Motor** Spintech/Bafang rear hub Motor
- **Battery** 504Wh internal
- **Range** Up to 60 miles (95km)
- **Weight** 19.5kg (21.kg with battery)
- **Wheels** 27.5
- **Brakes** Tektro Hydraulic disc
- **Saddle** Fabric Scoop
- **Frame material** Aluminium 6061 T6
- **Gearing** Gates CDX belt drive

Volt London Review: First impressions

As I've written very recently in this lengthy piece on what I perceive to be ultra-relevant electric bikes for the UK consumer, in the past year extra credit has been given where I deem there to be a concerted attempt to offer real value at an accessible price point.

I don't want the market flooded with cheap low-quality goods, that's causing more problems than it's solving, but I am thrilled to see manufacturers taking note of the economic backdrop and competing at accessible price points with quality products. My Volt London review will talk about this a lot, because my very first impression is that this is a lot of e-bike for the money.

So let's quickly go over the above-and-beyond spec list that I think makes the Volt London stand out right out of the box. There are front and rear mudguards from SKS, a professional manufacturer in this space and these integrate lighting at the rear, while the front end has a relatively good light on the handlebar. There are simple but incredibly useful extras like the kickstand and the excellent two-strapped front rack. Lesser-seen extras include a rear wheel lock that can also accommodate a chain upgrade to give you both a static lock and a mobile chain loop. There is also a basic suspension seatpost that is a nice extra to have.

The finishing kit isn't cheap stuff, either. There's touch points from Fabric with a classic saddle specced alongside grips that I can't complain about (though some palm support would make them better). Likewise, the tyres come from Schwalbe and are particularly impressive as a means to take shortcuts, even in the wet, without losing traction or grip. Considering this is a cheaper bike than the aforementioned VanMoof, this was a clear disparity in value and spec where the Volt won out.

The digital elements aren't bad either. Though you have to turn the battery on before the display lights up, once it does it prompts you to use a key card to unlock the e-bikes' digital features, which is yet another layer of bonus security beyond the wheel lock. You can also upgrade the bike at Volt's checkout to build in a GPS tracker, plus I'm told there's a £30 lock upgrade that comes Laka-approved and thus qualifies you for a better insurance rate. All in all, this is already seeming a very well-thought-out and competitive package for this entry-price point.

Volt London review: how does it ride?

It's probably worth starting with the point that this bike is only sold in a 19" frame size, but on the plus side if that's a concern you can pop down to Volt's London cafe and showroom for a test ride, just to see if you're comfortable on that. Possibly there are workarounds, but they'd be limited, most likely, to changing the stem for a length that suits your reach preferences. At 5 foot 10", I found the reach just a tiny bit long, but not so much it was at all uncomfortable. I would take on a shorter stem as an eventual upgrade.

Also worth noting on the comfort, the Fabric Scoop saddle is a bit of a classic and very comfortable and with the pairing of a suspension seatpost I had no complaints about the ride feel, with the reasonably high volume Schwalbe tyres aiding the reduction of road noise and even making light gravel riding pleasant.

I found the swept-back handlebar to offer a good compromise of comfort and control and it wasn't too nervy picking down a downhill gravel section at some speed given that the backsweep is not particularly sharp.

Hitting the road with these tyres equipped gave me more freedom than some urban bikes in where I wanted to take the review and with that I hit some local Sustrans routes to get some mileage on the Volt London. It made quick work of those miles, with the motor not really needing to get overly involved on account of the efficiency of the tyres on varied surfaces.

The longer I rode the more I became content that the 504Wh battery wasn't going to burn through its energy before time. Volt says the Panasonic battery is good for up to 60 miles and I've no reason to disbelieve this estimate. When my assistance level was increased for the hills there was some reflection of that on the display, but I found that once I had hit the summit and reduced the assistance level that the battery bar regained.

One area where I think the Volt London might suffer undue drain is in the fact that this is a singlespeed bike at present, meaning there's no option to reduce the strain on the battery, however, during my visit to HQ I was let in on the secret that Volt is also testing the two-speed Bafang Automatic gearhub that is a personal favourite. That upgrade could be very welcomed, if the spec option comes to pass down the line.

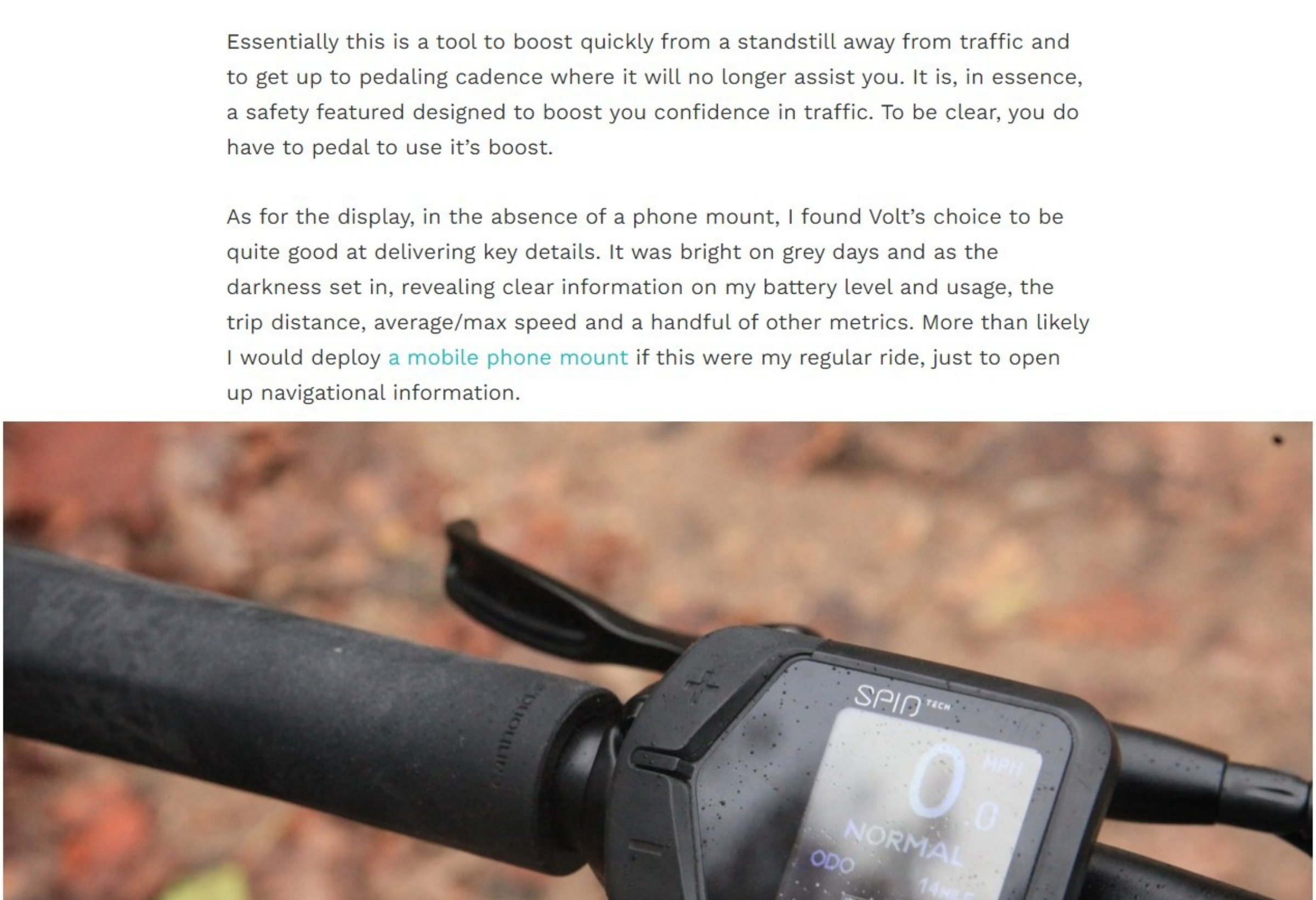
The motor and more

That said, I also think this bike is fine as it is. After some very deliberate hill climbing in various modes I was content that for shallower grades the Bafang rear hub delivers competently in normal mode and where required you have both a high and a power mode to fall back on.

You also have a fallback that's not available everywhere but has been found more recently on urban bikes, inclusive of the VanMoof S5 tested last week. I'm talking about a throttle, a legal one. Yes, I know there's a lot of chatter about throttles, but the functionality of the unit found just beneath the display on the Volt London works in such a way that you have to pedal to access the free speed. It will only assist you up to the legal limit of 15.5mph and you'll have to pedal the entire time, but whether the pedal work is actually engaging is up for debate.

Essentially this is a tool to boost quickly from a standstill away from traffic and to get up to pedaling cadence where it will no longer assist you. It is, in essence, a safety featured designed to boost you confidence in traffic. To be clear, you do have to pedal to use it's boost.

As for the display, in the absence of a phone mount, I found Volt's choice to be quite good at delivering key details. It was bright on grey days and as the darkness set in, revealing clear information on my battery level and usage, the trip distance, average/max speed and a handful of other metrics. More than likely I would deploy a mobile phone mount if this were my regular ride, just to open up navigational information.



Volt London review: More reasons to be cheerful

Picking this review e-bike up from Volt's London HQ, the location where you're invited to book test rides, should you want to try before you buy, I was able to learn a bit more about some of the extra services now packaged up with sales, or indeed subscriptions. The business has its own bike subscription programme, which will cost around £100 per month, but will deliver you a bike, various theft protection and insurances, servicing and more in one non-committal package. Great for city dwellers who don't have the space to store a bike, or who are weary of the costs associated with hire bike schemes.

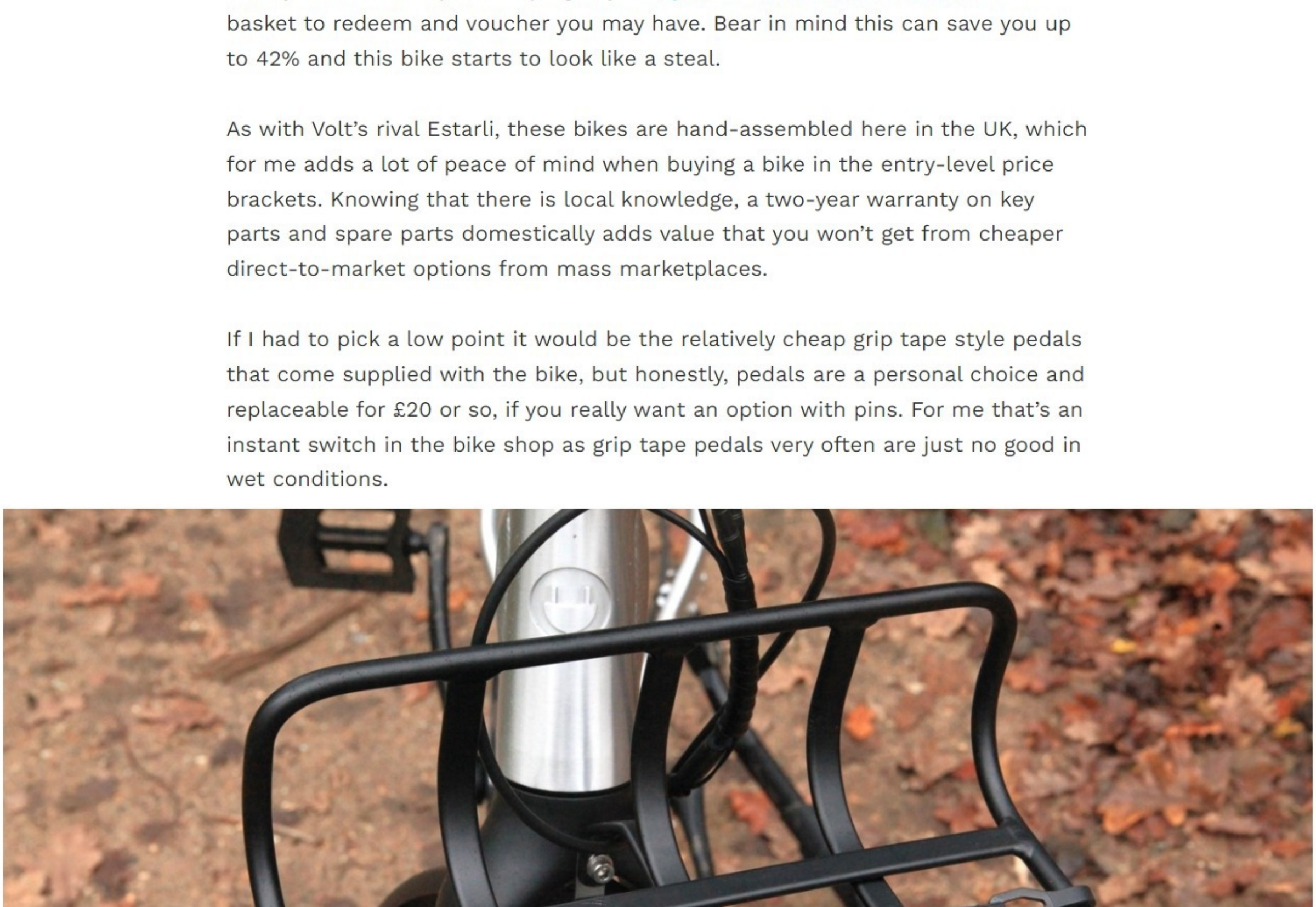
Add to that, Volt has also partnered with insurance firm Laka and as a result there's extra protection available above and beyond the various security options. At the basket stage you will be prompted to add a chain lock at £30, as well as extras like a Loop or QuadLock phone mount, or a PowUnity GPS tracker (£199). A pannier rack with a 25kg capacity for the rear of the bike only adds £30, which is well worth the investment if you plan to use this bike for utility as I did.

There is too a prompt for you to choose between a chain drive or the belt drive Volt London on review here. That comes with a £200 price difference and to my taste is a worthwhile investment, simply on account of the lowered lifetime maintenance bill and silence.

Finally, there's the option to plug in your cycle to work scheme voucher at the basket to redeem and voucher you may have. Bear in mind this can save you up to 42% and this bike starts to look like a steal.

As with Volt's rival Estarli, these bikes are hand-assembled here in the UK, which for me adds a lot of peace of mind when buying a bike in the entry-level price brackets. Knowing that there is local knowledge, a two-year warranty on key parts and spare parts domestically adds value that you won't get from cheaper direct-to-market options from mass marketplaces.

If I had to pick a low point it would be the relatively cheap grip tape style pedals that come supplied with the bike, but honestly, pedals are a personal choice and replaceable for £20 or so, if you really want an option with pins. For me that's an instant switch in the bike shop as grip tape pedals very often are just no good in wet conditions.

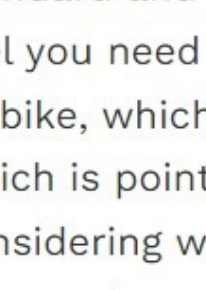


Conclusions and a review of the competition

The main things I love about the Volt London can be wrapped up in three points. The first is the utility capability and the fact you're getting a front rack as standard and a quite cheap upgrade to include a rear pannier rack, should you feel you need it. That's going to give you enough bandwidth to do weekly shops by bike, which is really quite an incredibly freeing thing for this low price point, which is point two. I'm quite blown away by the value on offer here, especially considering we see the likes of SKS and Fabric on the spec sheet with aftermarket parts.

Finally, it's the overall package that Volt has built around this bike and the fact that everything you could need is available via one checkout, all the way through to an insurance partnership that is synched to the choice of lock upgrade. With Volt's investment in its UK infrastructure, the company looks to have gone above and beyond on the customer service and backup front, which is absolutely vital for the e-bike product, in my opinion.

All things considered, I can't help but feel that the Volt London deserves a belated place amongst my best electric bikes of 2024.



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Mark has been writing within the bike industry for heading on two decades, both on the business to business side and consumer-facing too. He rides anything and everything on two wheels and will do a wheelie if you ask him to.

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