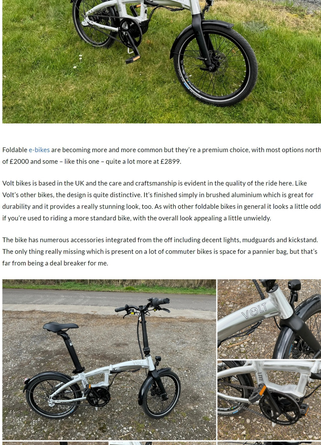

FEATURES

I rode a folding e-bike and it changed my mind about folding bikes

The Volt Lite is a cracking foldable ebike - and it made me think differently about ebikes in general

Dan Grabham Follow @dangrabham
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Foldable e-bikes are becoming more and more common but they're a premium choice, with most options north of £2000 and some – like this one – quite a lot more at £2899.

Volt bikes is based in the UK and the care and craftsmanship is evident in the quality of the ride here. Like Volt's other bikes, the design is quite distinctive. It's finished simply in brushed aluminium which is great for durability and it provides a really stunning look, too. As with other foldable bikes in general it looks a little odd if you're used to riding a more standard bike, with the overall look appealing a little unwieldy.

The bike has numerous accessories integrated from the off including decent lights, mudguards and kickstand. The only thing really missing which is present on a lot of commuter bikes is space for a pannier bag, but that's far from being a deal breaker for me.

So what's it like to ride? As with many ebikes, acceleration is very quick with up to 75Nm of torque from the Bafang M820 motor. This unt is so lightweight and very manouverable in an urban situation. Riding up hills is simple and it can cope with most inclines unless they're very steep. In that case I found I needed to pedal hard to get the motor to provide the oomph required to climb as I had almost come to a stop.

It is clearly powerful in most situations though. Coincidentally, if you'd like to test ride it and you're in the UK, you can visit Volt's HQ in London Bridge and give it a go.

This is a commuter bike of course, and while it the ride was very comfortable and it was fine with the inevitable bumps in the road and small potholes, you won't want to be riding it into bigger potholes. The 20in Schwalbe Big Apple tyres do a great job though.

There's no getting away from the fact that the Volt is an expensive choice. But the build quality is great and, although it's highly priced you do feel that you're getting something very substantial for your money. Everything is of high quality, from the carbon belt to the three-speed Shimano gears and excellent disc brakes.

The lockable Panasonic 360Wh battery is in the seatpost, which is fine, but it's not ideal for removability, so unless you can charge in situ it is a bit of a disadvantage. You're certainly not going to want to be removing it all the time to charge. Range will. of course, depend on how you ride, but is cited at 50 miles.

There's a small colour LCD to show speed and power mode and while this could be bigger, it does the job adequately. There's a small thumb control to adjust the power level.

Stuff Says... ★★★★★

A superb ebike in its own right, this is the best foldable ebike we've yet tested. It doesn't fold down that small though and it's very expensive so may be beyond many budgets.

- Buy the Volt Lite folding ebike

Even though it folds, it's not exactly compact and you're talking about a significantly bigger footprint than a Brompton. As you can see from my picture, it took up quite a bit of space in the boot when it is folded (the two halves lock together as you'd expect).

This is inevitable to a certain extent, but it's still bulky whether you need to take it into the office or put it into a small car. You're certainly not going to want to take it on the bus and it would be an effort to find a space for it on the train that's not a pre-booked cycle one.

It's an achievement that it doesn't weigh too much for the size at a shade under 19kg with the battery, though you will need to be comfortable with lifting that kind of weight of course if you plan on taking it anywhere on foot once it's folded. And if you live in a building where you'd have to take it up and down stairs; we wouldn't recommend it.

That's quite something when it doesn't seem that there have been any compromises in terms of the general spec of the bike. It compares to 15.6kg for the lightest Brompton Electric P Line – but that bike is significantly more expensive than the Volt.

There is some peace of mind from Volt if anything should go wrong, thanks to a two year warranty.

The Volt Lite really did change my mind about foldable bikes in general, but the key thing is that this is a super quality ebike that you won't regret buying.

It is rather on the expensive side though and doesn't found down too compact – so you may find it defeats the reason you wanted a foldable in the first place.

Dan Grabham
Editor-in-Chief

About

Dan is Editor-in-chief of Stuff, working across the magazine and the Stuff.tv website. Our Editor-in-Chief is a regular at tech shows such as CES in Las Vegas, IFA in Berlin and Mobile World Congress in Barcelona as well as at other launches and events. He has been a CES Innovation Awards judge. Dan is completely platform agnostic and very at home using and writing about Windows, macOS, Android and iOS/iPadOS plus lots and lots of gadgets including audio and smart home gear, laptops and smartphones. He's also been interviewed and quoted in a wide variety of places including The Sun, BBC World Service, BBC News Online, BBC Radio 5Live, BBC Radio 4, Sky News Radio and BBC Local Radio.

Areas of expertise

Computing, mobile, audio, smart home

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