

My Volt—more than a year later

by Greeley Wells

I *still* say, when asked if I like my Volt, “No I don’t like my Volt, *I love it!*”

It is truly a one-of-a-kind vehicle on the road. A game changer, actually. It has good range for an electric car, but has no range limit—just keep filling the gas tank like any car and go forever! How can that be? Because it’s not the normal internal combustion engine car that we’ve used for more than a century; it’s not the all-electric car we’ve had for many years as well; nor is it a standard hybrid with two motors, gas and electric, that run the wheels. Those are the three cars you know about.

The fourth is the Volt. Its second small gas engine runs a generator that charges only the battery so the wheels are *always* running on electricity and you have unlimited range. Yes, drive forever! I’ve been to Los Angeles straight through from here, and to Seattle and Montana this last summer. Goes like a banshee and always has power at any speed with a press of the accelerator: direct drive, no gears. My lifetime average, including those long drives with no charging: 61 miles per gallon. I’m averaging one fill-up of the tank per month (just nine gallons!) when I’m around home. I average 30 to 40 miles per charge and infinity miles with gas. So the beauty is that it’s paying for itself in money saved at the pump. Whaddaya-think a dem apples?

One of the most amazing parts of owning a Volt is that it has taught me to drive completely differently. I think of terrain, coasting, and keeping my foot off the accelerator as much as possible (coasting regenerates the batteries) because these all save energy and gas. Instead of where I’m going, instead of speed, I think of the fun of efficiency. It’s like a continual “personal best” of navigation. The road looks different, my attitude is different, and the way the car moves is different. This fancy regenerative system—which puts energy back into the battery bank—makes driving more



and more fun as I learn new things.

Come on, anything I *don't* like? Well, yes, I find the visibility poor compared to what I’m used to. Even though I’m grateful for the strength of the car in case of a rollover, the windshield corners are thick, hurting the front-right and front-left views. I’ve learned to lean forward and look to the side to see through the blind spots, but it would be nice not to have to do that. The view through the back window is tiny—thank goodness for the camera when backing up! But I wish that I had more visibility there, too. The large part of the rear window is almost flat and therefore always dirty. And it doesn’t help that there’s no wiper designed for it. I get most of the view the way the mirror was designed, but have added convex circular mirrors on each side-view mirror to help me see better, something I do with any car.

I have no other complaints after almost a year and a half. It’s quite a car and I still do *love it!*

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Note: Another article about the author’s Volt when he first purchased it appeared on the Applegater website in spring 2012.