Volvo V60 Cross Country estate – Road Test

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VOLVO ADDS A CROSS COUNTRY MODEL TO THEIR V60 ESTATE CAR RANGE…

…tried and tested by David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

Although it's Volvo's range of SUVS, the XC90, XC60 and the new XC40 that hog the limelight of the Scandinavian brand's significant popularity and sales growth in the premium car market, it shouldn't be forgotten that Volvo has excelled for over 60 years in producing estate cars.

With the large V90 estate firmly established, more recently the mid-sized V60 range has

strengthened their range of load carriers. Now the V60, like the V90, has an additional Cross Country version added to the line-up.

Very recently the V60 Cross Country estate was introduced in a single D4 turbodiesel 2.0 litre, 190 hp form with AWD (all wheel drive) with an eight speed automatic gearbox and with that all important raised height suspension, and priced at £38,270. A T5 250 hp petrol version will soon be added to the line-up. Prices for other 2. -litre petrol and diesel 2WD and 4WD V60 estates start from £32,410 and rise through 30 derivatives to £41,270.

Volvo sees the V60 range of estates competing against its fellow premium brand models such as the Audi A4 Avant, BMW 3 Series Touring and the Mercedes-Benz C-Class Estate. But the V60 Cross Country model has less obvious competitors, there are not many of these on/off road rugged estates. Most obvious are the Audi A4 Allroad, the roomier and far less expensive Skoda Octavia Scout, the very niche Subaru Outback and the underrated Vauxhall Insignia Country Tourer. However for customers who are not worried about having rugged styling and raised ride-height functions for their estate cars there are many more medium sized models from numerous brands that do offer 4WD traction. And of course many customers just prefer to drive a fashionable SUV these days rather than a hatchback or estate.

All the V60 models use the Volvo Scalable Product Architecture which underpins the S90 saloon, V90 estate and XC60 and XC90 SUVs, and the same platform will be used for the S60 sports saloon arriving shortly.



Back to the model in hand; the new £38,270 V60 Cross Country. Even with its raised ride height of 60 mm (2.36 in), this mid-sized estate looks long and sleek with its long wheelbase of 2,872 mm (9.42 ft), it has great kerb appeal. It really is a scaled down version of the V90 Cross Country model. The overall length is 4,784 mm (15.70 ft), the width 1,916 mm (6.29 ft) and height 1,499 mm (4.92 ft). Being an estate car the all-important boot space with all five seats in use is 529 litres (18.68 cu.ft) and with the rear seat backs folded down this goes up to 1,441 litres (50.89 cu.ft).



Most likely the V60 Cross Country during its life will end up as a tow vehicle, be it a caravan, horse trailer or boat so the braked towing weight of 2,000 kg (4,409 lb) will be most welcome. Other practical advantages include the higher ground clearance, additional protective wheelarch extensions, side sill and lower front and rear bumper protectors, and not forgetting the off-road abilities with its 4WD system.

The 4WD system has the usual Drive Mode settings found in other V60 models. These are Comfort, Eco, Dynamic and Individual. The Cross Country has an additional Off Road Mode which operates at speeds below 25 mph, the engine, auto gearbox, accelerator and 4WD system responses are calibrated to maximise performance/grip on a variety of surfaces. It also activates Hill Descent Control, the power assisted steering is lighter, the engine stop/start system is deactivated and the driver's information display shows a compass and speed limitation.

Talking of speed and performance, the 2.0 litre, four cylinder, D4 turbodiesel engine produces a healthy 190 hp and a good 400 Nm (295 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm. Drive through the smooth changing eight speed auto gearbox is to the 4WD system which distributes power variably as needed to each of the four wheels on or off-road.

Top speed is currently 130 mph and zero to 62 mph takes 8.2 seconds. Remember Volvo recently said they will limit the top speed of all their cars to 112mph from model year 2021, together with in-car cameras and intoxication intervention on their road to autonomous driving and potentially better road safety.



The new WLTP Combined Cycle fuel economy figures range from 42.8 to 47.9 mpg depending on what options are added, with CO2 emissions ranging from 135 g/km to the 143 g/km figure for my options-loaded test car. My week of motoring covering most types of roads from slow speed commuting to open road cruising returned 40 mpg.

The new First Year VED diesel rate road tax for my test car costs £530 and then the new £145 Standard rate but if the owner steps over the £40k price barrier by adding options to their Cross Country, which my test car had, then there is the additional £310 annual supplement to be added to that £145 cost for five years. Company car drivers will pay 37% Benefit-in-Kind tax due to the 4% added tax to diesel powered cars. The message from me is clear, stay away from adding extra cost options as that incurs the dreaded £310 VED supplement for five years and pushes up BiK tax by 2% plus adding to the cost of buying or leasing a vehicle. The £530 First Year diesel rate road tax remains the same whatever Cross Country spec is chosen.

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Specification wise all V60 models have as standard a 9.0-inch centre console touchscreen, Volvo On-Call which allows the user via smartphone, smartwatch or tablet to control various car functions remotely and also acts as an emergency and tracking service, Sensus Navigation, voice activation control system, Sensus Connect, City Safety and Steering Support which includes pedestrian, cyclist and large animal detection, Oncoming Lane Mitigation, Run Off-Road Protection, LED headlights, two-zone climate control, power operated tailgate, rear parking sensors, Cruise Control with speed limiter which also operates the Decent Control for the Cross Country version and a 12.3-inch TFT driver information display in the instrument binnacle.

My test car had a lot of extra cost options, with the £525 Winter Pack being useful with its heated front seats, headlight washers, heated wash/wipe and heated windscreen. It also had the £1,625 Intellisafe Pro road safety enhancement pack which just builds on the already high safety and driving support features. Other extra cost options included a Harmon

Kardon premium sound system at £825, Smartphone integration with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto – which should be standard fit but costs £300, rear park assist camera at £375, heated rear seats at £200, heated steering wheel adds another £200, larger 19-inch alloy wheels at £625, a spare wheel at £150 – which should also be standard fit, and a retractable towbar and electrics at £1,075. That wasn't all the extra cost options fitted and it just shows how adding options can seriously put up the purchase price or lease costs. My test car ended up costing £46,820, a far cry from the sensible standard price of £38,270.

The V60 Cross Country model, like all new-generation Volvos, still suffers from having too many most used functions controlled via the touchscreen, although once learnt the Voice Command system can help.

The ride can at times be firm, mostly due to the large alloy wheels, and it suffers from road noise intrusions on some road surfaces. The handling is well balanced, grip exceptional –especially during cornering and on wet road surfaces, the off-road driving function is better than most in its class, with the extra ground clearance being a sensible design feature.



VERDICT

The Cross Country model certainly isn't going to be the most popular model in the V60 range, with Volvo estimating it will be the choice of 10% of UK V60 customers. The D4 turbodiesel engine will be the choice of 50% of UK buyers for all V60 models. The Cross Country version will be the model of choice for those who need a tow vehicle, need to travel off-road for their jobs at times (such as vets and surveyors) or have a need for a load carrying quality estate to meet their family or leisure activity needs.

It's a realistic alternative competitor for the numerous and commonplace SUVs available, a lot of which don't have much in the way of off-road capabilities, which the V60 Cross Country has. Just take care not to add options you don't realistically need and some of which

should be fitted as standard.

For: A refined vehicle, desirable kerb appeal, good performance on or off-road, beautifully made, comfortable and roomy seating, versatile load area, a realistic alternative for those bored with too common SUVs.

Against: Expensive to buy/lease with increased VED costs if options push up the price to £40k and above, some options should be standard fit, firm/noisy ride at times due to large wheels, too many functions need to be controlled via the touchscreen, ungenerous warranty.



Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Volvo V60 D4 AWD Cross Country.

Price: £38,270 (£46,820 as tested with options).

Engine/transmission: EU 6.2d compliant 2.0 litre, four cylinder turbodiesel, 190 hp, 400 Nm (of torque from 1,750 rpm, eight speed automatic with AWD traction.

Performance: 130 mph, 0–62 mph 8.2 seconds.

Fuel consumption: WLTP Combined Cycle 42.8 to 47.9 mpg depending on options fitted, (40 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 143 g/km for the test car, VED First Year diesel rate road tax £530 then £145 Standard rate but if options are fitted and the cost of the vehicle reaches £40k+ add another £310 annually to the Standard rate cost for five years, BiK company car tax 37%.

Insurance Group: 31E tbc.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,784 mm (15.70 ft), W 1,916 mm (6.29 ft), H 1,499 mm (4.92 ft), wheelbase 2,872 mm (9.13 ft), boot/load space 529 to 1,441 litres (18.68 to 50.89 cu.ft), braked towing weight 2,000 kg (4,409 lb), five doors/five seats.