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Volvo V60 Cross Country Road Test

Published: March 23, 2016

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Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/volvo-v60-cross-country-road-test/>



Driven by Keith Ward...

VOLVO first used Cross Country as a variant to depict enhanced all-road – if short of true off-road – capability and a rugged image in the late 1990's on the old V70 estate. Think business exec in his weekend jeans and a checked shirt.

These days the CC badge adorns versions of the S60 saloon and V40 hatchback and, most recently, the V60 “sports wagon” as the estate is now called, tried here.

So ground clearance is increased by 65 mm (2.56 in), a sportier feel comes from “torque vectoring technology” and corner traction control and there’s the extra-cost option of four-wheel-drive to – well – cross country.



Cosmetics include under-bumper skid plates front and rear, side scuff plates, bumper extenders, gloss black window trim and door mirrors, unique front grille and unique alloy wheels, integrated tailpipes to reflect a sporty performance (0-62 in a sprightly 7.8 seconds from our car) and, inside, leather sports seats.

Engine choice is from respected Volvo diesels – the 150 hp 2.0 litre D3 or 190 hp D4 in 4 cylinder form or, when coupled with 4WD, the five cylinder 2.4 litre D4. And there are four trim levels in a price range starting at just over £30,000.

Our 190 hp D4 Lux Nav with two wheel drive is listed from just under £35,000, but a host of options hoisted it to more than £42,000. Volvo, espousing a premium brand image, have learned from the likes of Audi, BMW and Mercedes.

These options included notably £1,500 for Geartronic (a smooth eight-speed automatic). Also a timely and good-value £375 Winter Pack (heat to the front seats, windscreen and washer nozzles and headlight cleaning system etc). A seasonal note: Ground clearance is 201 mm (7.91 in); wading capability 300 mm (11.81 in).

There was also a £1,900 Driver Support Pack (radar operated braking, pedestrian and cyclist detection, active cruise control and an alert to traffic crossing behind you etc, some of which you might have expected as standard from safety-conscious Volvo, as they now are on less expensive and less prestigious makes).



The dark tinted windows (£350) which included the tailgate glass, have you peering into the rear view mirror to make out what may be following you. The navigation system promises well and gave, without alternatives, a traffic-light weekend route, new to me, from Yorkshire to the Cotswolds. But the screen kept mysteriously blacking out and had to be reactivated. Dismissed at the end of a journey, the system would revert, unasked, to previous set destinations. And it lacked the obvious safety advantage, as well as convenience, of a reversing camera.

VERDICT

The V60 is a sort of Volvo estate but not as we once knew it. Sports wagon they now call it, lithe and high-styled, bearing no resemblance to those of yesteryear, but retaining some practical qualities.



So the boot of the V60 at up to 1241 litres (43.83 cu.ft) may be modest by standards past and present, but is beautifully formed and furnished to match the rest of a comfortable interior. The whole floor lifts to reveal storage trays below. A transverse barrier hinges up to restrain luggage from sliding. The rear sill is flush with the deck for slide-in loading.

The rear seats fold down in three 40/20/40 segments, the headrests automatically nodding forward, to form a flat floor 1,749 mm or nudging five feet nine inches long. Keep one outer seat in place and you still have 700 mm (27.56 in) width for cargo, according to our tape. The front passenger seat can fold down. Families will value the integrated booster seats for children, when crossing town or country...

Volvo are currently riding high in the UK after celebrating their best annual car sales here in 21 years.



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WHEELS-ALIVE TECH. SPEC. IN BRIEF:

Model: Volvo V60 Cross Country D4 Geartronic Lux Nav.

Engine: 1,969 cc; 4 cyl; D4 turbo diesel.

Transmission: 8 speed auto; 2WD

Power: 190 hp @ 4,250 rpm

Max torque: 400 Nm @ 2,900-4,200 rpm.



Performance:

0-62 mph: 7.8 secs.

Top speed: 130 mph.

Fuel consumption: Official combined 61.4 mpg; on test 43.1 mpg; tank capacity 67.5 litres (14.85 gallons).

Emissions and taxation: 120 g/km; Band C; VED Nil then £30 p.a.

Dimensions: Length 4,638 mm (15.22 ft); width 1,899mm (6.23 ft); ht 1,545 (5.07 ft); kerb wt 1,606 kg (3,540 lb); max towing wt. 1,800 kg (3,968 lb)

Boot: Length 978 to 1,749 mm (3.21 to 5.74 ft); min width 1,090 mm (3.58 ft); vol. 430 to 1,241 litres (15.19 to 43.83 cu.ft)

Price: £34,995; as tested, incl. options £42,120.

Rivals (estates): Audi A4 Avant, BMW 3-series Touring, Skoda Octavia, Merc C-Class, Kia c'eed Sportswagon, VW Passat