Volvo V60 Recharge PHEV – Road Test

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The Volvo V60 Recharge PHEV R-Design plug-in hybrid electric estate…

…put through its paces by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

Style and safety go hand in hand with Volvo, but today you can add success to that shopping list as so many Brits in 2021 bought into the brand's ownership experience.

In a UK new car market which saw just 1% expansion, the Volvo line up increased 4% to 48,260 cars giving them a record 2.93% share of the British total.

Most of that came from the new Volvo Recharge PHEVs plug-in hybrids and pure electric models which doubled in demand and accounted for 37% of registrations. In addition sales by Volvo's used cars Selekt programme went up 12%.

Volvo boosted its Recharge powertrain last autumn and immediately picked up awards, sales and demand from the towing fraternity placing orders for this year's getaway holidays.

Our Volvo V60 Recharge PHEV (plug-in hybrid) is a mid-sized modern sporting semi-estate strong on style and sophistication with advanced infotainment and a suite of safety features. It was fitted with a Harman Kardon Lounge pack of refined sound equipment, advanced headlighting, heated screen, wheel and rear seating and powered passenger seat and folding headrests, which added over £2,500 to the standard price giving it a total of £50,950.



Underneath it had a petrol and electric powertrain which gave it an all-wheel-drive capability for wintry roads, low emissions all-year round and very reasonable acceleration allied with long-legged cruising which means it has good range on a tankful of petrol.

The four-cylinder engine is just 2.0-litres and that’s fine if the car’s not heavily loaded but it needs the additional electric motor to push it along with any gusto if the demand is there.


VOLVO

It’s a sweet revving and fairly quiet unit unless you really push it and the carefully integrated electric motor ensured a constant flow of power underfoot to assist.

Seamless gearchanges come through the eight-speed automatic gearbox and it’s also very smooth when down-changing or if you elect to go into the more sporting modes. You can select eco, normal or sporting responses which affect gearchanges, engine rev. limits and steering responses along with suspension settings.

We liked the feel and feedback through the steering, its tight turning circle, lack of vibration and the fact it came with a heated grip. Underfoot, the brakes undramatically but effectively slowed and stopped the V60 while the electric parking brake held it on a steep slope we use each week.

Secondary controls were placed on the wheel or around the column for the most frequently used features but a few under the infotainment screen on the console were in easy reach and less frequently selected buttons were placed to the outside of the fascia.



The large infotainment screen was simple to use, very clear and quick-changing while that infront of the driver carried the essential instruments and they were all big, marked in detail and very well lit at night.

Heating and ventilation was very straightforward with good sized, well marked buttons on the fascia, big vents, a wide adjustment range and excellent output through the big cabin.

Oddments space was very good with door bins, console trays and bins together with seatback pockets. The fifth door or tailgate opened and closed automatically and from knee height to ease loading of the floor or small side-pods. A quickly retracting roller cover kept everything out of sight and the boot’s basic capacity could be simply expanded as the back seats folded down in sections.



Rear and front doors opened wide and access was good and once inside there was plenty of room for four/five adults. The seats were not particularly deeply padded but their shape and supporting cushions did a really comfortable job and the adjustment range infront was very good.

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Visibility was clear almost all round with low waistline and deep windows, truly bright intelligent headlights which dipped for oncoming vehicles and “looked” around a bend, big wipers both ends and slim roof pillars.

Noise levels were low with road rumbles and a busy engine note being the most noticeable on coarse surfaces and going briskly. Other mechanical noises and wind generated sounds were virtually absent.

The powertrain gave a very respectable performance from standstill, through the gears to the legal maximum and enabled high-speed cruising without any complaint.

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We found the electric charge lasted well over 30 miles so that’s within most commuting range and overall it sipped petrol at a modest rate over a mixture of lanes to motorways.

The V60 Recharge comes with two cables, for domestic or retail charging, and its quick and simple to set up but, like so many of this type, the cables do not easily wind up to store.

VERDICT

The V60 Recharge delivers competency that we have come to expect from Volvo, within a user-friendly package.

For: Excellent powertrain, comfortable seats and ride, roomy for passengers and cargo, good handling, sophisticated styling, low BiK company car tax rate.

Against: Expensive options and Standard VED taxation costs, average warranty.



FAST FACTS

Volvo V60 Recharge PHEV

Price: £50,950

Mechanical: 340 hp 4 cyl 2.0 petrol-electric, 8-auto AWD

Max Speed: 112 mph

0 – 62mph: 5.4 sec

Combined MPG: 37.5

Insurance Group: 34E

C02 emissions: 42 g/km

Tax costs: BiK company car tax rate 12%, VED £0 First Year then 5-years annual Standard rate of £480

Warranty: 3 years/ 60,000 miles

Size: L 4.77 m (15.65 ft), W 1.85 m (6.07 ft), H 1.44 m (4.72 ft)

Bootspace: 529 to 1441 litres (18.68 to 50.89 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 2005 kg (4,420 lb)