

The all new Volvo S60

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The new Volvo S60 is like no Volvo seen before.

They could be right. This new model range does have a wealth of new features, some new to Volvo aficionados, some completely new to Volvos. But let us take a look at this new machine.

To look at you see an elegant, sports coupé with four doors, a finely sculptured outline, called by the designers the 'racetrack design', because the car's body lines incorporate a figure of eight race track. Striking light clusters using light emitting diodes (LED) have also been installed, back and front, to further the distinctive appearance, whether you encounter it coming towards you or find it passing.

Inside the race track theme is continued. The cabin is airy and spacious. The seats enfold you lovingly and blissfully. The rear seats are so designed to give three passengers all the comfort and support they could ask for. Head room is unusually ample for a coupé and space for knees is enough for six-footers plus.

The upholstery is as you might imagine, the most luxurious leather. There are three choices of colour, black, beige or the new and historically-connected

beechwood brown - a tan leather once used on the P1800 ES and 164. There is electronic climate control (ECC) that automatically controls both heating and ventilation. A new Infotainment System integrates information from all the electronic gizmos such as

navigation, mobile phone and audio unit, onto a five- or seven-inch screen. Functions for all this can be operated from the steering wheel or controls under the screen. Passengers may also use remote controls for certain of the functions.

This all new S60 will be offered initially in a choice of versions using a choice from three diesel engines and one petrol, all of which show pretty competitive fuel

consumption figures. Both five-cylinder diesels, manual or automatic, will accelerate from 0-62mph in 7.8 seconds with a top speed of 146mph. The newly developed 2.0-litre D3 however, in either manual or automatic transmission, offers 0-62mph in 9.2 with a top speed of 137mph. The T6 petrol engine will take you from 0-62mph in an astonishingly satisfying 6.5 seconds and has a top speed of 155mph (where legal!). This is



achieved because the second generation Geartronic transmission delivers the engine's power straight to the wheels. More versions are in the pipeline including a 1.6-litre diesel that should give 65.7mpg and CO2 emissions under 115g/km. And that's not the end of it, even more highly developed engines are on their way.

By now you will have gathered that the S60 is a highly developed piece of technical engineering. Every aspect of the car has been re-developed. The chassis is new and will be standard on every new version of the model. Features like the new Corner Traction Control will add sharpness to the whole driving experience. The Advanced Stability Control assesses potential skidding in time to let the anti-skid feature come into play. The braking system has features such as the Ready Alert Brakes and the Fading Brake Support, working together to give the shortest possible stopping distances under all sorts of road conditions. There is even the option of the self-adjusting FOUR-C active chassis that will continuously monitor the car's movement.

The really big news however is the Pedestrian Detection technology. Its Full Auto Brake System detects objects or pedestrians either in front of the car, those about to step out in front or slow moving vehicles in front, and calculates the distance of the object or person. It does this with the help of a dual-mode radar and high resolution camera installed into the car's bodywork. The driver will hear an audible warning and see a flashing light while the brakes are pre-charged, so if the driver doesn't respond, the brakes are applied automatically. The system will work at speeds of up to 21 mph, bringing the car to a halt. At higher speeds the overall speed is lowered to reduce the effect of any possible impact. The City Safety, Driver Alert Control and Blind Spot Information Systems are also installed to help prevent rear end impacts at low speeds, such as in parking or general manoeuvring.

If you like the sound of the all new Volvo S60 it will be released for sale around July of this year. Prices will range from just over £23,000 for the D3 ES up to just under £37,000 for the top-of-the-range, T6 AWD SE Lux Geartronic Premium. Orders can be taken now for August delivery!

Simon Taylor



Pick of the Crop

May is probably the month when the farmer gets the maximum use out of one of his most important implements, the crop sprayer.

Words: Alan Stennett

It is the time of the year when growing crops are very susceptible to attacks by pests and diseases, which have to be controlled if we are to produce enough food to help feed the growing population of Britain and the world. The experience of organic farmers, who use fewer chemicals to help produce their crops, suggests that overall yield would fall by about a third if everybody gave up using herbicides, fungicides or insecticides, the three main categories of plant protection products.

Herbicides control the weeds that compete with the crop for nutrients in the soil and for the sunlight that plants need to grow. Fungicides stop diseases invading the fields, allowing the crop to grow better and also preventing production of some toxins that might otherwise be a danger to anyone eating food produced from it. Insecticides restrict the effects of pests that can damage the crop directly or carry diseases to it which have the same effects.

Over the past half century or so these products have become increasingly more effective at doing their job, and also at reducing the effects on things that are not their target. A classic example of an old product with problems is the insecticide DDT, which was banned when it was realised that it was affecting birds that ate the insects contaminated with it. It is also a good example of how difficult it is to make these decisions. The ban saved the birds, but it also condemned many children to death from malaria, which is spread by insects that had been well controlled by the product.

Nowadays any new product will have been through more than 200 trials to see if they are effective controls in the field and to check for any adverse effect on human health or the environment before being allowed onto the market. It is estimated that only about one in seventy thousand possible candidates survive the whole process.

There will always be concerns about some of these products, which the sight of a farmer or farm worker in a full protective suit will do little to dispel, but you have to remember that they are handling a concentrated product, which will be diluted hundreds of times before being sprayed onto a crop.

Without these materials, we would either be a lot hungrier, or we would have to use a lot more land to grow our food. We don't like to be hungry, and we haven't got a lot more land available, so we will have to continue to rely on this chemical armoury to keep our plates as full as they are, but it will always be done with strict controls on the products, and great care by the farmers as they head out with that most useful piece of kit.