

VOLVO XC60 D5 GEARTRONIC SE LUX NAV

Tim Barnes-Clay
tells us why this
Scandinavian auto is
an all-round winner

Introduced to the UK market in 2008, the XC60 was the wide-eyed newcomer that heralded Volvo's strategy to make its vehicles more tempting to a wider age group.

The plan worked because the XC60's fashionable styling and condensed size has seen sales soar year-on-year.

Seven years on, the car has had a nip and a tuck here and there, but it is largely unchanged.

I decided to test drive a 2015 XC60 D5 Geartronic SE Lux Nav to remind myself why we British have taken this car to our hearts.

The exterior design is well-groomed with no superfluous beautification, particularly in SE guise. The body is brawny and handsome, giving off an unmistakable communiqué that you will be protected by all that muscle.

As with the external features, the Volvo XC60 has a cabin that fuses style and sophistication

exquisitely. The materials seem hewn out of granite, and the leather seats cosset and indulge you. It is obvious that the pleasant, hide scented cabin will stand the test of time, in terms of both wear and overall design.

The rear seats are very comfy, and great if you have a fairly large family. Head and leg room is plentiful and the boot space is liberal at 495 litres. That expands to 1,455 litres with the seat backs down. Impressive, or what?





In the driver's seat, you definitely feel at the upper end of the Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) crossover market. You are encased by brushed aluminium-edged trim pieces, a soft-touch dashboard, and switches that have slick actions when you use them. Every part oozes quality; indeed the Swedish auto maker has clearly given great attention to detail in the design and production of the car.

The seven-inch infotainment screen unites super-clear, up-to-date graphics with instinctual menus and an unpretentious, yet marvellous idea: a digital car user-guide. The driver's instrument panel features digital gauges and information screens, too, which are well

presented and extremely readable.

Behind the wheel, the Volvo XC60's 2.4 litre 5-cylinder turbo-diesel engine, on test here, develops 310 lb.ft. of torque, helping to pull the beast to 130 mph. Zero to 62 mph takes just 8.1 seconds and the official combined UK mpg figure is 54.3, with Co2 emissions of 137 g/km.

Fundamentally, these numbers equate to a fast and fairly frugal drive. All that torque gives lots of low down shove, making for easy overtaking, and, at high speed, the XC60 is hushed, relaxed, and polished. You feel in safe hands at all times because of the solidity of the car, and because of Volvo's renowned integrated safety kit.

Motorway miles are hoovered up effortlessly,

so if you are a regular commuter you will welcome the XC60's ability to do this without stress or strain. And, under the bonnet, the five-cylinder lump makes a nice guttural sound, always reminding you, even at slow speeds, just how much power is on hand.

The six-speed automatic 'Geartronic' transmission is smooth and rises and falls through the cogs beautifully. This makes driving on any route a pleasure – even on twisty country roads. In fact, you can even throw the XC60 into bends and it will cope. It always feels well planted, and runs fabulously well over patchy road surfaces – even the ones strewn with potholes.

When it comes to off-roading, the Volvo is actually very accomplished as well. It is no hard-core mud-plugger like a Range Rover, but it does a good job of dirt tracks or grassy fields – and even the odd steep rugged trail. The XC60 will also cope with water, and to prove it the car has a wading depth of 350 mm. The Volvo also looks after you well because it automatically directs power to all wheels when slippage is sensed, and there is gadgetry to bring the XC60 back in line should things go awry.

On the whole, the impressive Scandinavian machine does it all really. It is great for a family, it looks good for business and it is just the ticket for anyone needing a dependable, premium vehicle for all seasons.



**VOLVO XC60 D5 GEARTRONIC
SE LUX NAV FAST FACTS**

Max speed: 130 mph
0-62 mph: 8.1 secs
Combined mpg: 54.3
Engine: 2400cc 5 cylinders
20 valve turbo diesel
Max. power (bhp): 216
Max. torque (lb.ft): 309
CO2: 137 g/km
Priced from £38,690 on the road.