



CAR REVIEW: NEW VOLVO XC90

# SUAVE, SPACIOUS AND SAFE FOR SEVEN

For the money, the XC90 is the closest you can get to luxury on wheels, personalised living space and possibly a land yacht



Vikram Chaudhary

Safety wears a sexy skin," so went the recent branding campaign for the new Volvo XC90 and S60. In fact, for decades, the Swedish automaker was so committed to safety that all it offered to the customer was extremely safe but boxy designs. By the turn of the century, however, design started getting an equal focus.

The result was sleeker and definitely better-looking Volvo cars. The cherry on top was the V40 Cross Country—looked at from any angle, this crossover car's design is a work of art. Not far behind in flamboyance was the XC90—if you do recollect, this big SUV was featured in the blockbuster *3 Idiots*.

However, big SUVs need to look macho too. How about getting inspired by Thor's hammer!

The all-new XC90, bookings for which have started, is Volvo Car India's 'powerful' attempt at taking on the Audi Q7, Mercedes-Benz GL-Class and the Range Rover series.

And it looks the part.

The XC90's humongous proportions and Thor's hammer-inspired daytime running lights exude power. Upright grille, strong shoulders—both classic Volvo style cues—and a long body give it a massive road presence. Most other manufacturers use horizontal lines at the rear to make the car look powerful; the XC90 gets vertical lines, giving the SUV a 'tall' status.



Most controls have been moved to the centre display; rear seating area is very spacious; headlights have been inspired by Thor's hammer; controls are done in a diamond-knurled finish

## URBAN LUXURY

### SPECIFICATIONS

Engine	1969-cc
Fuel	Diesel
Max output	225 bhp
Max torque	470 Nm
Ground clearance	238 mm
Gearbox	8-Speed Auto
Top speed	230 kmph
Price	₹64.9 lakh (Momentum)
Price	₹77.9 lakh (Inscription)

ALTERNATIVES: Audi Q7, Mercedes-Benz GL-Class, Range Rover series

### COMFORT

Once inside the cabin, pause for a moment—or many moments—to appreciate the fine material used, like soft leather and grainy wood. Because the window area is large and there is a panoramic glass roof, the feeling of space is amazing, no matter which of the three rows you sit in. Thanks to the four-zone climate control, passengers in the outer two rear seats can set temperature to their individual taste. Goes without saying that the front two passengers can do the same.

With details like controls done in diamond-knurled finish and ventilated front seats inspired by the human form with massage functions and four-way electric lumbar support, we are sure you will take time 'turning on' the ignition.

### TECHNOLOGY

Yes, in the new XC90, you 'turn on' the ignition, by moving the button clockwise; you don't press it. In fact, there aren't

many buttons to press in the new XC90. Volvo says it has consciously decided to eliminate as many physical switches and buttons as possible. So, most controls—for climate, entertainment, driving modes, anything—have been moved to the nine-inch centre display with touchscreen, one which looks and behaves like an iPad.

Don't want to touch?

Go ahead and talk.

The voice-control system in the XC90 is one of the best we have experienced in modern luxury cars. It's not foolproof—I successfully fooled it by modulating my voice—but it understands most Indian accents. You just have to speak in English in a natural, human way. However, voice control works well only for functions you'll use most frequently, like changing radio channels.

There is more to communication. For example, the information you need urgently—like speed or GPS navigation arrows—is displayed on the wind-

screen. Less urgent info—like fuel level—appears on driver display. Everything else—climate-control or entertainment channels—flashes on the centre console.

Love music?

The XC90 is fitted with Bowers & Wilkins—the high-end audio specialists—music system, which, the company says, reproduces acoustics from the Gothenburg Concert Hall in Sweden.

### DRIVE

Under the hood of the XC90 silently sits the 1969-cc diesel engine that has a maximum output of 225 horsepower and a maximum torque of 470 Nm. It is mated to an 8-speed AWD automatic transmission and has a claimed top speed of 230 kmph. On the highway, the massive torque ensures the big SUV is as agile as any of the powerful luxury sedans. And off the road, a ground clearance of 238 mm means it behaves slightly short of a rally-bred SUV.

### SAFETY

No description about Volvo can be complete with talking about the safety features its cars come equipped with. In fact, Volvo's vision by 2020 is that if you drive or sit in a Volvo car, you won't die or even get seriously injured. The XC90 gets features such as Electronic Stability Control, ABS, Driver Alert Control, Speed Limiter, Airbags, Run-off Road Protection, Whiplash Injury Protection, and more.

### VERDICT

The XC90 is available in two trim levels—Momentum (₹64.9 lakh) and Inscription (₹77.9 lakh). It, clearly, is more value-for-money—and inexpensive too—than its competitors, especially the Range Rover series. For the money, the XC90 is currently the closest that you can get to urban luxury, personalised living space and possibly a land yacht.

(Prices are ex-showroom, Delhi)