

From 2019 onwards, every Volvo car will have an electric or hybrid motor. The V90 Cross Country could be your last chance to experience the marvellous diesel engines that Volvo has excelled in developing over the decades. It will be launched next week in India

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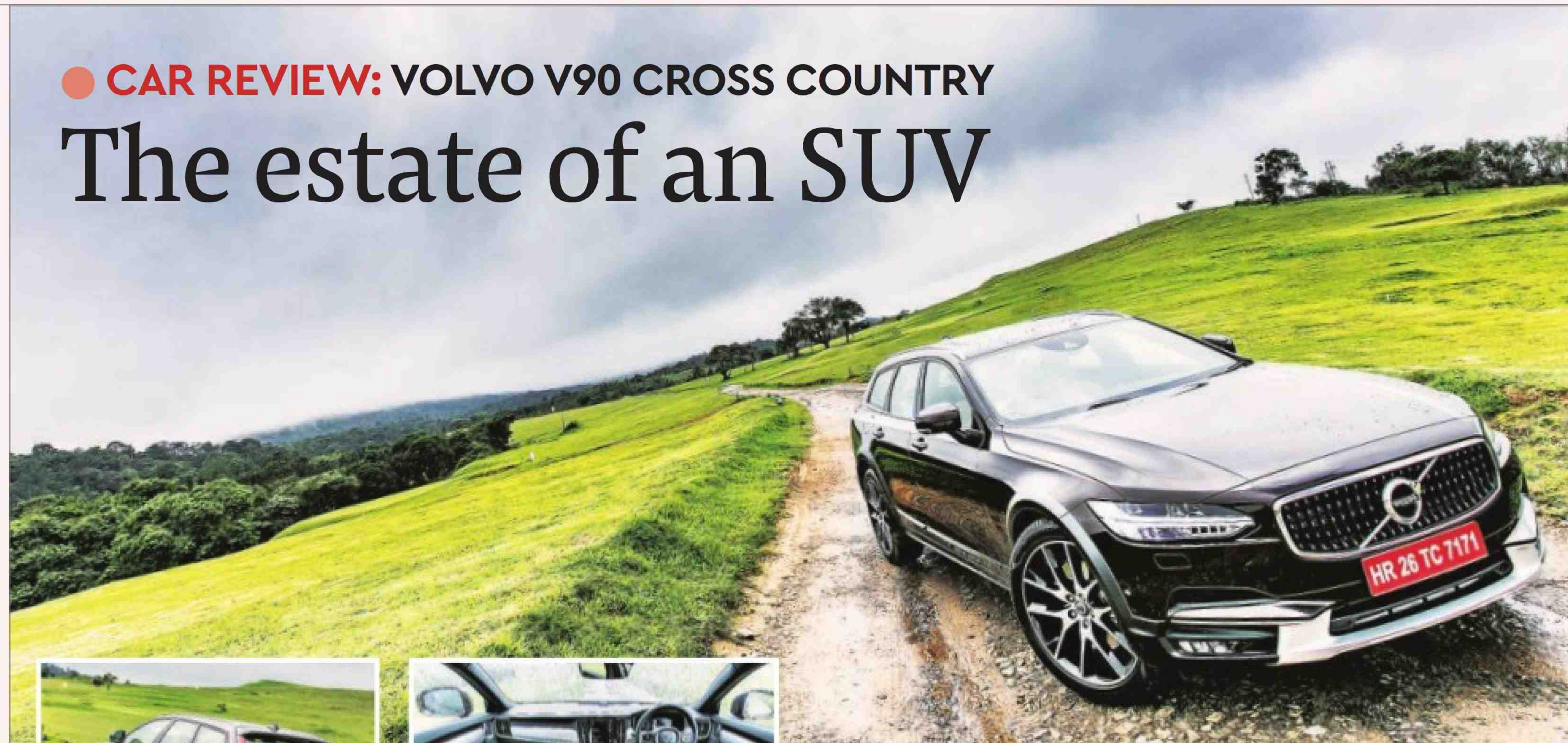
ESTATE CARS HAVEN'T worked in the Indian market, be it in any segment. More so for luxury car players, who have stayed away from this segment – the only luxury estate car in India is the Audi RS6 Avant. However, the V90 Cross Country, which will be launched on July 12, is not an estate car, but an SUV in an estate body type. We drive this marvellous machine across the hills of Coorg in Karnataka.

What's a cross country?

The S90 is Volvo's flagship sedan. On the same platform, the company first developed an estate car called the V90. Later, it took the V90, raised its ground clearance, gave it a different chassis set-up and new tyres, and thus was born the V90 Cross Country.

Is it quite like an SUV?

No. Its seating is similar to that of the S90 sedan and hence the rear-seat comfort is like



● CAR REVIEW: VOLVO V90 CROSS COUNTRY The estate of an SUV

that of a luxury sedan. Also, entry and exit into the V90 Cross Country is easier compared to both sedans and SUVs.

Moreover, it appears to be an ideal vehicle for India because a lot of owners sit at the rear, but need good ground clearance so as not to hit the underbelly, and also need good boot space. This car provides it all. And because it is

equipped with an all-wheel drive (AWD) mechanism, it handles just like an SUV.

So, is it better than an SUV?

It depends on how you look at the vehicle. For example, its ground clearance of 210mm is higher than that of most other luxury SUVs that it is expected to compete with (the Audi

Q5, for instance, has a ground clearance of 200mm). Similarly, its wheelbase of 2941mm is longer than that of most such SUVs – longer wheelbase means more usable space inside the cabin.

However, the V90 Cross Country doesn't have the imposing looks and the road presence generally associated with SUVs.

Is it better than a sedan?

It has more boot space than a comparable size sedan, but again, it doesn't have those flowing curves and aerodynamic appearance associated with comparable sedans.

Which engine will it come with?

It's the 1969cc diesel engine that also powers the S90, but the V90 Cross Country comes in the D5 Inscription trim, which produces more power (235bhp, compared to 190bhp of the S90). It also produces more torque—480Nm, compared to 400Nm of the S90.

How does it drive?

It has a wonderful gearbox – the eight-speed Geartronic automatic transmission – that extracts maximum power and efficiency from the engine. The V90 Cross Coun-

try is a heavy car, yet it's quick. It goes from 0-100kph in just 7.2 seconds and has a top speed of about 240kph. Driving through the twisty uphill roads around Coorg, the car never felt low on power – its handling, too, is immaculate. Expect a fuel-efficiency of about 15kpl in real-traffic conditions.

What all features will it get?

Parking assist, lane assist, Blind Spot Information System, City Safety, hill-start assist, hill-descent control, knee airbag driver-side, side-impact protection, whiplash injury protection system ... the list is long.

Is there any feature that stands out?

There are many, let's talk about a semi-autonomous driving feature – adaptive cruise control. While driving on the highway, we switched on cruise control (it maintains the car's pre-set speed, which we had set at 90kph). However, whenever the vehicle in front of us slowed down, the V90 Cross Country also slowed down, and when that vehicle picked up speed, our car automatically increased the speed until it reached the pre-set speed of 90kph.

Adaptive cruise control uses forward-looking radar to detect the speed and distance of the vehicle ahead of it, and drives the car accordingly. It's a beautiful semi-autonomous driving system, and the V90 Cross Country has it.

Will it be the costliest Volvo car?

No. Volvo's flagship vehicle in India is the XC90 Excellence plug-in hybrid SUV, which is priced above Rs 1.25 crore, ex-showroom, Delhi (inclusive of two fast-charging units and installation). Given how the company has competitively priced its other vehicles, the V90 Cross Country could be launched in the range of Rs 60 lakh.