

# Straddling the gap between flagship sedan and luxe SUV

Volvo's V90 CC attempts to woo buyers with its mix of premiumness and practicality

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Over many decades Volvo's good name was built on the backs of its station wagons; sold to safety-conscious buyers around the world many of whom were over 40 years old. These were boxy, hearse-like 'estates,' which obviously weren't appealing to younger buyers, even in the 90s. The millennials will certainly have shunned the genre.

However, Volvo's transformation under its new management has completely changed its image from stodgy to chic over the last few years. Its station wagons of today are interesting to look at and drive. They are designed like modern shooting brakes, and are meant to ride the rising wave of demand from married metrosexuals looking to combine the convenience of a conventional sedan, and the practicality and go-anywhere capability of a sports utility vehicle.

Good thing then Volvo decided to bring the V90 Cross Country to India. Considering the near disdain that Indian buyers have for boxy estates, the V90 CC would have found nearly no takers had it drawn inspiration from Volvo's previous generation station wagons. Instead, the latest addition to Volvo India's portfolio has a flatteringly SUV-like profile with the familiar features of a current day Volvo sedan.

## Design

At first glance, the V90 CC has the proportions of an estate. It's near straight



shoulder line, the big overhang at the rear and the long wheelbase make it unmistakably station-wagon. Yet, Volvo designers and engineers have managed to draw the onlooker's eye to exterior elements that give it a SUV flavour. Chunky body side mouldings, dual-tone front and rear bumpers with prominent aluminium underbody protectors and those massive 20-inch wheels combine to give the V90 CC its SUV-style design.

The front of the vehicle has all the trademarks of a current day Volvo, the shark-nose edge for the bonnet, the signature concave grille and the Thor-hammer LED headlamps. It is from the rear-three-quarter view that the V90 CC's melding of both sedan and SUV body styles comes through most. The large, stalked door mirrors, the 210mm ground clearance and the prominent wheel arches really deliver key pointers highlighting the dual character of the design. Accentuating the flavour at the rear of the car, are features like the trademark Volvo vertical tail-lamps and dual-exhausts peeping out from under the rear fender.

## Cabin

The V90 CC is based on the same plat-

form as the XC90 and the S90. So, the new model is not meant to just visually straddle the gap between the flagship sedan and the flagship SUV, but it is also hierarchically a middle-bencher. One of the ways by which Volvo has ensured that the V90 CC can be identified with its peers is by quite literally lifting most of the cabin elements from the other two vehicles.

The sense of déjà vu that hits me when I step into the V90 CC was to be expected. The steering wheel, the massive, tablet-sized touchscreen in the middle of the centre stack, the aircon vents and the fab Bowers and Wilkins music system have all been carried into the V90 CC too. The comforting smell of warm perforated leather reminds me of the other feature that makes it here; and like in the S90 sedan, features a massage function too. The sophisticated crystal start knob on the centre console, and the drive mode selector scroll wheel have also made it into the V90 CC's cabin. My test mule came with a black double stitched leather dashboard and textured aluminium trim. But, I was told that the fantastic open-pore wood trim in the S90 will be offered as an option in the V90 CC too.

There is enough space for five passengers and a considerable amount of lug-



## Technical Specifications

### Volvo V90 Cross Country D5 Inscription

<b>Diesel Engine</b>	
Capacity	1,969 cc
Max Output	235 hp
Max Torque	480 Nm
<b>Transmission</b>	
Automatic Gearbox	8-speed AWD
Top Speed	Limited to 230kmph
Ground Clearance	210mm
Tyres	245/45 R20

gage room, thanks to the estate body style. The perforated, ventilated nappa leather seats are extremely comfortable and also offer adjustments for improved lumbar and side support.

## Performance

The V90 Cross Country is being offered only with a diesel engine. Given the demographic of buyers in this segment, the choice of drivetrain seems right. The engine itself is the two-litre diesel mill that we are already familiar with.

Called the D5 in the V90 CC, the powertrain includes the same 8-speed automatic as is featured in the XC90; and is actually offered in the same state of tune too. The 1,969cc engine produces a peak output of 235hp and a peak torque of 480Nm. The refined engine offers a big chunk of its pulling power from 1,500rpm. Turbolas is negligible, and acceleration is very linear and consistent all the way to the redline at about 4,800rpm.



Cabin class Volvo has ensured that the V90 CC can be identified with its peers giving it a similar cabin | S. MURALIDHAR

Engine noise is almost completely eliminated in the cabin. There are four drive modes on offer - Eco, Comfort, Dynamic and Individual - with the most engaging being the dynamic mode. Quicker throttle response, stiffer suspension and delayed gear shifts are the changes in this mode. Steering mounted paddles are also on offer for manual gear selection. The V90 CC is offered with air suspension for the rear wheels and is programmed for an active chassis system (the XC90 is offered with air suspension on all wheels).

## Bottomline

The V90 Cross Country is also offered with a range of safety features. The ac-

ive, bending LED headlamps also offer active high beams. There is also the whole range of safety features tied around radar-related assistance including adaptive cruise control, distance alert and lane-keeping aid. The V90 CC is quite loaded with some of the top-end features from Volvo's other models. The panoramic sunroof, the multi-info heads-up display and the radar-based safety systems are key features.

The new model is not only positioned in between the big sedan and the big SUV; it is also priced to fit into that slot. Volvo has modest targets for its models and the V90 CC won't find it tough to achieve those numbers even though station-wagons are not yet in vogue here.