

Swedish Delight

We drive the smallest of the Volvo SUVs before its launch in India next month and come away very impressed. We discover that Volvo has not compromised in any way and this is a very loaded SUV

PICTURES Nishant Jhamb



Volvo XC40,

The smallest of the trio of Volvo SUVs was unveiled in Milan last year and we were very impressed by what Volvo had done with the first of them. Developed on its new compact modular architecture, the new line of XC vehicles impressed both in terms of style and design as well as engineering. Finally we have news from Volvo that the XC40 will be launched in India as a CBU next month and we were one of the first to drive it in India.

This of course is Volvo's answer to the BMW X1, the Audi Q3 and the Mercedes-Benz GLA and, from the first look at the figures, it

THE NEW LINE OF XC VEHICLES IMPRESSED BOTH IN TERMS OF STYLE AND DESIGN AS WELL AS ENGINEERING



XC40 IS A YOUNG AND REFRESHING DESIGN YET IT ADHERES TO TYPICAL VOLVO STYLING TRAITS

impresses. Not only does it have the largest wheelbase of the lot, it is the widest and has the highest ground clearance as well along with the largest boot space. Hence, it seems that Volvo engineers have learnt from the shortcomings of the competition and given the XC40 a proper SUV shape, young and refreshing yet adhering to the typical Volvo styling traits like the front grille and logo, the Thor's Hammer DRLs and the tail lamp assembly, all of which hark to this being a Volvo. On the other hand, while the XC60 looks much like a baby XC90, the XC40 has no such sibling connections and is a stand alone modern car meant to appeal to the younger customers. In fact, the design seems to appeal to all universally.

The car is being launched in India in the R-design trim with the D4 diesel engine mated to an 8-speed automatic gearbox and an all wheel drive system from Borg-Warner where 90 per cent of the torque can be diverted to either of the axles. The D4 engine taken from the range of E-drive engines offers both efficiency as well performance and superb driveability with 0-100kmph time of less than 8 seconds and a top speed of over 200kmph.

The cabin of the XC40 is special just like all the other new gen Volvos. In fact, a lot of things seem to be borrowed from the larger siblings, the XC90 the XC60, including the Sensus with its 9-inch touchscreen and infotainment system which again has been placed vertically and has most of the features from the bigger cars, hiding behind it a Harman Kardon 13-speaker system with Air Woofer technology. In fact, the Air



1. The 2.0-litre Volvo diesel engine makes its way into the XC40 as well but in its D4 trim - producing max power of 190bhp and peak torque of 400NM. 2. Wireless charging in keeping with the times 3. Harman Kardon music system with 13 speakers



Volvo XC40 D4 R-Design

Engine
1,969cc 4-cyl turbo-diesel
Power
190bhp@4000rpm
Max torque
400Nm@1750-2500rpm
Gearbox
8-speed auto, AWD

Wheelbase(mm)
2,702
LxWxH (mm)
4,425x1,863x1,652

0-100kmph
7.9 seconds
Top speed
210kmph

Price: Rs 35 lakh (estimated)
On sale July '18

Woofer has been placed under the dashboard and the speakers are no longer at the bottom of the doors so as to liberate storage space and give the car larger door pockets. There are lots of storage spaces making the XC40 very practical and some additional features include wireless charging as well as a big panoramic sunroof.

The proof of the pudding is in its eating and we spent an entire day driving the car in Hyderabad, visiting various landmarks and then going for a spin around Hyderabad on the superb ORR - a 160km loop around the city. First and foremost, despite the high seating and the SUV feel it imparts, there is no body roll that one would expect from such a vehicle. This could be due to the R-Sport tuned suspension but at the same time ride quality is good and on Hyderabad roads where there is construction happening every few hundred metres, the 18-inch wheels helped negate

1. The cabin of the XC40 has a similar overall theme as the larger Volvo SUVs with the 9in vertical touchscreen for the Sensus infotainment system dominating the dashboard. 2. Fully digital instrument panel runs a list of active systems - very impressive. 3. The vertical vent theme is carried to the rear vents as well



COMPETITION CHECK



Mercedes GLA 220d 4MATIC
ENGINE 2.1-litre POWER 168bhp TORQUE 350Nm PRICE ₹ 38 lakh



BMW X1 xDrive 20d MSport
ENGINE 2.0-litre POWER 188bhp TORQUE 400Nm PRICE ₹ 44.5 lakh



Likes

Design - both interior & exterior, practicality, equipment, safety and assistance systems



Dislikes

Powertrain options - only diesel, only AWD



586l boot space is best in class, offers flexibility and under tray storage. Hatch is electrically operated

VERDICT

Not only is the XC40 stunning in the way it looks, it also carries forward the special feel that is imparted by all the new gen Volvo cars on the inside. It is good to drive, has all the Volvo assistance and safety features one could ask for and is a very practical car to be in - ideal for its life in a city. But make no mistake, it has all the SUV credential that can make it perform off the tarmac if there is ever any need. Finally we have a true entry-level SUV that belongs to the premium category.

the bad roads. The performance while not electrifying, is superb and would put any of the competition to shame and the car handles well, for its height, has good directional stability and inspires confidence at high speeds. While pottering around the city, it is just the right size, highly manoeuvrable and with good visibility, is easy to drive in the city. What, however, sets the XC40 completely apart from the competition is that it's loaded with most of the safety and assistance systems found on the larger premium cars. Whether it is the 360-degree surround view camera system, that also helps with park assist, the car is equipped with front radar and camera system that gives it all the city safety systems as well as pilot assist, and collision avoidance. That means that the car can in effect steer itself! That's a giant leap forward for SUVs of the premium entry-level class.



Yogendra Pratap

Editor
yogendra.pratap@intoday.com
@YogendraPratap

