

First Drive | Volvo XC60 DS AWD

The Calm During the Storm

The second-generation Volvo XC60 has arrived and it is several steps ahead of its predecessor — the very crossover that boasted of a number of world-firsts back in 2009. How much better is its new avatar? We find out in our first drive in India

Story: Jim Gorde
Photography: Saurabh Botre



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TO BREAK NEW GROUND BY ONESELF without a reputation in the land to fall back on and only with qualities and capabilities speaks volumes about strength. The first Volvo XC60 arrived in India in 2008 and that was when Volvo became a more popular name on the lips of potential premium car-buyers. Until that moment, it was a name synonymous with luxury boxes rather than super-safe cars, as is the case globally, and the old S80 and XC90 didn't fare as well as the Swedes had hoped. Seemingly under wrongs were righted with the arrival of the new XC90 and the Scalable Product Architecture (SPA). The Thor's Hammer LED lights, smooth lines, generous proportions, and an interior like no other were reasons

enough for it to become the bestseller in India they hoped it would be. Fast forward a few years and the smaller XC60 has had an SPA date and come back refreshed better than ever.

The signature LED headlamps, the simple yet bold lines, and the sharp tail-lamp clusters look modern and extremely contemporary. This is a fine replacement for the car that first showed the world that automobiles could indeed stop themselves, guided merely by a radar and a camera. A lot more engineering and electronics have gone into the 60 since then and the new car is so much more than merely new skin on a new body. Everything is new: from the platform and the seats, to the engine and the 12.3-inch centre touch-display.

(Above) Ride quality is excellent; sound dampening is vastly improved

(Above Right) Thor's Hammer LED lights stand out



Inherently, it does look akin to the XC90, as well it should. They share the SPA platform as well as the engine, transmission, bits of the interior, and more. It's quite like a scaled-down XC90 — and that's a good thing. What it means is fantastic, compact looks — even for a large, wide, 4.7-metre-long car that's simply big overall. It means more safety, more space, optimised boot volume, and an extensive list worth of cutting-edge standard equipment. The big difference is in the track widths. While the new XC60 is wider front and rear, the significant difference is that its predecessor ran a wider front track, whereas the new XC60 runs a wider rear track — and that's 71 mm more than the older car. The wheelbase, too, is longer by 91 mm (refer to the table on page 30 for more details). Black diamond-cut 19-inch alloy wheels with 235/55 Michelin rubber are standard as well.

Swedish luxury abounds in the XC60's cabin — it's a fantastic place to be, one that oozes an aura of classic calm with a bit of excitement. Its state-of-the-art layout and element management make it necessary to stop and appreciate the sheer attention to detail that has gone into so many outstanding elements. The burn Driftwood trim on the dash, the doors, and the sliding storage cover, as well as the aluminium trim accents accentuating areas of the cabin look at home with their contrast yet complete the flow in harmony.

Perforated Nappa leather adorns the seats, available in a choice of three shades: Maroon Brown, Amber and Blond. After all, only the finest upholstery makes it to one of the most important models to arrive in India. The seats are

heated and ventilated and offer a massage function. The 12.3-inch touch display with its tile selection makes the interface more phone-like and easy to use. The noted premium sound system from Bowers & Wilkins with 13 speakers is also standard, as is its ability to replicate the Götterburg concert hall. Then there's plethora of new safety equipment that, on earlier models, needed to be deactivated for reasons related to radio frequency bands.

The XC60 packs everything from the global market — pilot assist, adaptive cruise control, blind-spot information, cross- and oncoming-traffic alerts, road sign information, lane-keeping aid, collision mitigation, run-off-road protection, and park assist pilot, among others — making it the most cutting-edge offering in its class, with more advanced and capable active and passive safety features than its competition; in a similar vein as its impressive predecessor did back in 2009.

The safety kit isn't the only highlight; the new XC60 is more powerful. Making it go is the motor that still burns the most popular fuel bet — a 2.0-litre i-ART injection twin-turbo diesel four-cylinder Drive-E engine making 135 PS and 480 Nm. Power is handled by an eight-speed torque-converter automatic that sends it to all four wheels, with the focus on the front. Depending on need, all the power is funnelled to the front axle, with the rear engaged through a new-gen Haldex coupling, getting up to 50 per cent of the drive when needed.

Refinement is also up a few notches and the new XC60 offers a pleasantly cushy ride. The standard air suspension and active chassis allow for dynamic ride quality improvements and adjustments on the go. In Eco and Comfort modes, the XC60 makes it evident that the target was a softer ride and it's



(Above) Integrated roof rails and panoramic sunroof are standard



(Left) It's the little details that matter; no more fumbling with the seat pocket

(Below) Interior offers top-notch finish and design elements



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impresses with its comfort. The sound-deadening, a bone on the older cars that made a bad bump sound a lot worse than it felt, has been vastly improved upon. At speed, it's more whoosh and less whirr. There is slight body-roll perceptible, but it's nothing to discuss, really. In Dynamic mode, the dampers work hard, stiffening up for better handling dynamics, yet the ride remains soft, with the car sinking down to a lower ride height for reduced drag. There's also an Off Road mode. Find the rough stuff, and it raises the XC60 up to its maximum ride height of 223 mm. The smart four-wheel driveline distributes the torque effortlessly no matter what the surface or conditions. With the plethora of driver aids, there is absolutely no feeling of a loss of control.

On the open highway with lane markings is where it truly shines, though. The scenario of five occupants with a loaded boot hitting the road for a trip away from the ordinary takes shape very well. The adaptive cruise control, aided by the radar sensor, camera and laser setup under the bonnet/safe umbrella, makes cruising a breeze. Set the speed and the XC60 follows the road, keeping to its lane, following a vehicle ahead or maintaining a set speed, all this while accelerating, braking and steering by itself, leaving you pretty much at leisure to chat with others in the car or even relax a bit after the strain of getting out of the city and enjoy the initial bit of open highway. The heads-up display shows current speed and prioritises navigation notifications; for instance, any turns coming up.

The XC60 behaves very well at speed. Its claimed top is 210 km/h, so a 210-km/h cruise speed is nothing more than a relaxing jaunt for the twin-turbo motor. The added sound-deadening also reduces outside noise, including unruly traffic and any tyre noise, making it rather deceptive on the move. Should you need to shed speed, the brakes are rather large and are very progressive in delivering their stopping power. All in all, the new XC60 is a commendable evolution, built on a revolutionary new platform that promises more and delivers on all counts. It's smooth, refined, comfortable and, by a huge margin, safe. At Rs 55.50 lakh (ex-showroom), it's priced well, too. With all it offers, it helps maintain the sales no matter what's on the outside and that, in essence, is its greatest virtue. **3/5**



(Left) Stylish 19-inch alloy wheels are wrapped in 235/55 rubber, balancing ride and handling

(Below) Just the top-spec 'Inscription' trim is on offer



Specification	Volvo XC60 D5	Volvo XC60 D5 AWD	Difference
Length	4640	4628	+12 mm
Wheelbase	2871	2871	+0 mm
Height	1713	1658	+55 mm
Wheel offset	55	55	+0 mm
Front Track	1632	1632	+0 mm
Rear Track	1596	1596	+0 mm
Ground Clearance	200	223	-23 mm
Max Power	220 PS @ 4,200 rpm	225 PS @ 4,200 rpm	+5 PS
Max Torque	430 Nm @ 2,500 rpm	430 Nm @ 2,500 rpm	+0 Nm
Transmission	Eight-speed auto, AWD	Eight-speed auto, AWD	-
Approach Angle	21.0°	23.0°	-2.0°
Departure Angle	26.0°	25.0°	+1.0°
Approach/Departure	23.0°	23.0°	+0.0°
Wading Depth	350 mm	450 mm	+100 mm
Max Towing Capacity	2,300 kg	2,300 kg	+0 kg
Top speed (claimed)	210 km/h	220 km/h	+10 km/h
0-100 (claimed)	8.2 s	8.1 s	+0.1 s
Boot volume (three)	495-1451	525-1412	+30 (max), -39 (min)

