

JUST

UR  
BA  
NE

# INDULGE

AUTOMOBILES | GADGETS | GAMING | CINEMA | MUSIC



## INSIDE

*The silent prowler  
from Volvo, a sturdy  
new Benelli for the  
adventure enthusiasts,  
the origin of chocolate  
and more...*



# SILENT KILLER

The Volvo XC 90 isn't brash and loud, but rather a silent statement of luxury and power and discreet killer instincts. Especially, the Twin Engine petrol-electric hybrid we sampled not too long ago

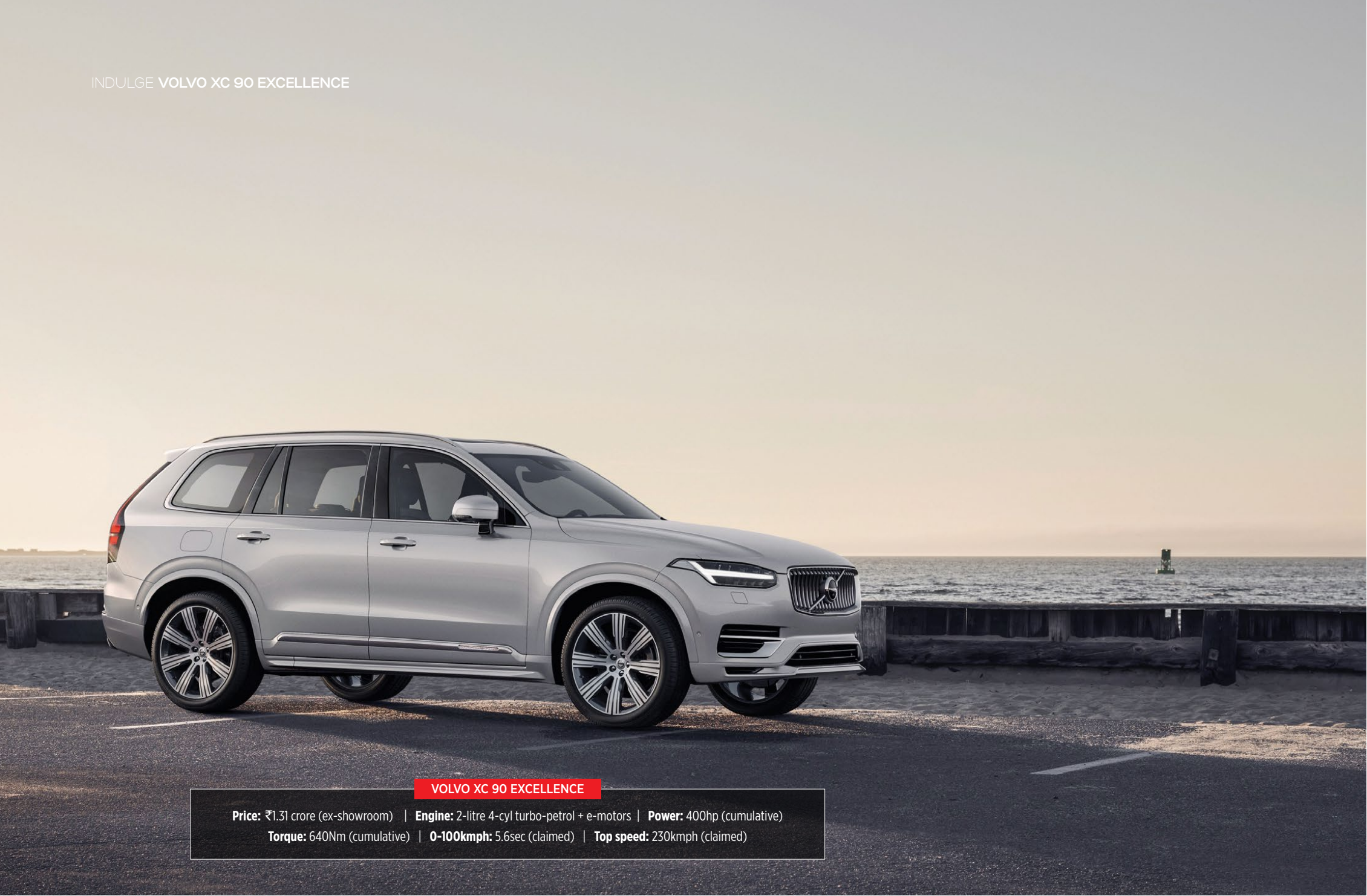
WORDS ANINDA SARDAR

**C**RUISING DOWN THE highway with the Bowers & Wilkins system playing *Bohème* by Ravel, sipping chilled soda from the handcrafted Swedish Orrefors crystal glasses, there was no way to not feel like a member of the royal family. For this was luxury at a different level. Not the brash luxury of an overly stretched limousine with blacked out windows filled with scantily clad members of the opposite sex but the subtle and silent yet powerful luxury that always exudes from an aristocrat. The Swedes, after all, have never been about being loud and neither is

the Volvo XC 90 in its petrol-electric hybrid Excellence avatar.

But Volvo wasn't always known for luxury worthy of royalty. As a matter of fact, Volvo's key selling point was its outstanding levels of safety. It was always ahead of the game. Unfortunately, safety, necessary as it is, is neither exciting nor luxurious. So, for decades the brand and its products remained away from the notice of those in search of genuine luxury. Of late, however, say starting about five years ago, the brand and its products have undergone a drastic transformation. From the tad boring car that dad might have got for mum, which





**VOLVO XC 90 EXCELLENCE**

**Price:** ₹1.31 crore (ex-showroom) | **Engine:** 2-litre 4-cyl turbo-petrol + e-motors | **Power:** 400hp (cumulative)  
**Torque:** 640Nm (cumulative) | **0-100kmph:** 5.6sec (claimed) | **Top speed:** 230kmph (claimed)



was an accepted state of affairs at the time, it became a brand with products that lacked nothing by way of desirability. With an exciting and stately design language that was ostensibly Swedish and stood out in a crowd, a bunch of features that saw the luxury quotient shoot up radically and good driving characteristics, Volvo was suddenly a vehicle that was on everybody's radar. Strangely enough, the XC 90 Excellence I'm in is silent enough to slip past most radars. Thanks to the silky smooth

2-litre four-cylinder turbocharged direct injection petrol engine working seamlessly in conjunction with a 65kW motor, the refinement and sophistication levels in the XC 90's drive experience is extraordinary. The claimed 45km that you can do in pure electric mode is blissful, but even when the petrol engine takes over, there's barely more than a hum. There's a generous rush of torque available right from the get go. What you get as a result is a brisk 5.6 seconds to 100kmph, which means leaving



**THE CLAIMED 45KM THAT YOU CAN DO IN PURE ELECTRIC MODE IS BLISSFUL BUT EVEN WHEN THE PETROL ENGINE TAKES OVER THERE'S BARELY MORE THAN A HUM**





**THE ONLY THING YOU  
CAN'T GET THE VOLVO XC  
90 EXCELLENCE WITH IS  
A LIVERIED CHAUFFEUR.  
WHICH IS A SHAME**

the pack behind from the toll plaza on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway is just a matter of mashing the right foot into the plush carpet. And while you can reach an electronically limited 230kmph top speed, you rarely do. Around bends at speed you realise that you've been in other cars that could handle the forces of a turn at speed better but you're not really left wanting in the Volvo.

To be honest, however, you won't be buying this ship for enthusiastic hustling. You want this for all the other things it has to offer. Beginning with that sense of rich

luxury the vehicle seems to promise even before you've stepped inside. Those Thor's hammer headlamps, the stout muscular lines and that imposing grille all add up to create a striking silhouette that draws more attention than you would at first assume. Inside, and you can head straight to the second row because that's the row for the aristocrat, you'll be pampered to no end with ventilated plush leather seats featuring cooling or heating (not that you'll need the latter in India) and massage function. Ah! The joy of luxury motoring. Add in those

crystal glasses from which you can sip your favourite bubbly that can be cooled in the cabinet between the rear seats and you're talking first class luxury really. Not to forget the collapsible tray tables that fold away into the central armrest or the rear infotainment system or the panoramic sunroof. In fact, come to think of it, the only thing you can't get the Volvo XC 90 Excellence with is a liveried chauffeur. Which is a shame, because if you're going to be driven around in a ₹1.31 crore (ex-showroom) luxury liner, you'll sure as hell want one. 