

60x3

Volvo initiates a major lineup changeover with three cousins familiar, semi-familiar and transformed | By Joe Sage

Volvo Cars is benefitting from a recent investment of \$11 billion, with which they are developing an entirely new lineup of luxury vehicles. We flew recently to Sausalito, just north of San Francisco, to meet three of the latest models.

These three fall under a new 60 Series collective handle, and each brings something in particular to the game. Included were the S60 Inscription, a new lengthened and upgraded version of

the S60 sedan; a V60 Cross Country wagon; and an all-new variant, the S60 Cross Country sedan.

The 60 Series is expected to comprise fully 75 percent of Volvo sales next year. There are some interesting variables among the three, against the competition, and within each model's options.

There would be a lot to experience, and with the roads of Marin and Sonoma Counties at our fingertips—up Highway One along the coast, then over the hills and through the woods to the Wine Country, plus a complete autocross session at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds in Santa Rosa (by our own hand and also right-seating with the pros)—we were sure to experience it all very well.

Volvo S60 Cross Country

Volvo studied consumer data—not focus groups, but actual data from purchasers—and concluded that a significant number of buyers were moving from luxury sedans to small crossovers for their ride height, both to gain a more commanding driv-



2016 VOLVO S60 CROSS COUNTRY T5 AWD

ENGINE	2.5L 20-valve inline-5 turbo
TRANS/DRIVE	6-spd auto w quick shift / AWD
POWER/TORQUE	250 hp / 266 lb-ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	7.9 in
TURNING CIRCLE	37.4 ft
TOWING CAPACITY	3500 lb
WEIGHT	3913 lb
MPG	20/28/23 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$43,500
OPTIONS INCLUDED: Harman Kardon premium audio, rear camera, full range of electronic driving aids, heated fr/r seats/windshield/wheel, speed sensitive steering, wood inlays, 19" matte black inlay wheels.	
TOTAL AS TESTED	\$48,390

Volvo S60 Cross Country



ing position and view of the road, and to have more utility for basic weekend forays to parks, active sports sites, snow country and the like. But these same people bemoaned the loss of a lockable trunk, desirable during the majority of their time in urban and suburban areas.

The basic S60 sedan body fulfills these goals, but the S60 Cross Country is built to a new height with 7.9-inch ground clearance, is recognizable by the rugged matte black wheel arches of other Cross Country models, and is augmented by such features as hill descent control. It's an attention-getting mix, though not an entirely unprecedented idea. The BMW X6 fills a similar niche, although at about 50 percent higher cost and with a more distinctly SUV look and feel. Then there was the AMC Eagle in the 1980s, most often sold as a wagon but available as a sedan and even a coupe (and popular with police departments at the time, for all the same reasons of utility and security).

The S60 Cross Country comes in one flavor: T5 AWD, with Volvo's beautiful 2.5-liter five-cylinder turbocharged engine—a favorite of ours in everything from the petite C30 to the C70 convertible in recent years, and a close match to the engine that put Audi quattro on the map—and all-wheel drive.

With its light weight, tight turning circle (with-in two feet of a MINI) and familiar sedan cabin and amenities, the S60 Cross Country drives like any other medium-performance sedan. You will not feel even crossover-distance from an SUV or truck experience. Yet when a rugged dirt road stands between you and your favorite fishing or hiking spot, it will not stand between you and your mission. Its zero-to-60 time of 6.7 seconds matches top performance cars from just a few years ago. The S60 Cross Country boasts a 3500-pound tow capacity, but then so does the standard S60 sedan. It does round out this package most appropriately, however.

The base price is \$43,500 and includes stability control, torque vectoring traction control, 160-watt 8-speaker audio and a healthy set of features in the Sensus 7-inch infotainment system. We were surprised to find common inclusions such as adaptive cruise, lane departure, blind spot, cross traffic and collision warnings only on the options list. On the plus side, though, this means those who just turn those off do not have to buy them (although Volvo's full stop collision system is one of the best). If you do option up, the package costs are low: \$1550 for one (which also includes Harman Kardon premium audio, worth more than the package total) and \$925 for another. Heated seats and related features add another \$1550, and these are a must for just about anyone.

Put it all together, and you have a fully outfitted luxury-trimmed car that's more distinctive than



Volvo V60 Cross Country

average and considerably more useful, delivering both elegance and ruggedness.

Volvo V60 Cross Country

The Volvo V60 wagon entered our market in 2014 and the V60 Cross Country a year and a half later as a 2015.5 model (the S60 sedan also received a 2015.5 update). Notice that the V60 Cross Country is not the XC60. It starts with the V60 wagon and meets the concept of the long-running XC70 half-way (the XC70 being more of a departure from the original XC90 SUV, but at more of a car height and in more of a carlike body). From a buyer consideration standpoint, the new relativity makes a lot more sense in a lot more cases.

If everything about the S60 Cross Country just sounded appealing, but you prefer a wagon form—or, in fact, more of a sexy European shooting brake design—here's your beast. Performance and handling are basically identical, but you have 43.8 cubic feet of cargo space, compared to 12 in the sedan version. Legroom remains the same front and rear. Fuel mileage is also the same, although while the exact same weight as the sedan (surprisingly enough), the V-model is not as quick, hitting 60 mph in 7.0 seconds.

Unlike the one-trim S60 Cross Country, there are two V60 Cross Country models. Both have the T5 five-cylinder turbo and AWD, but a Platinum trim adds \$3650 to the sticker and delivers such things as Harman Kardon premium sound, accent lighting and full convenience and technology packages, included. Perhaps this is why the first option package on our test V60 CC ran \$3650,

2016 VOLVO V60 CROSS COUNTRY T5 AWD

ENGINE	2.5L 20-valve inline-5 turbo
TRANS/DRIVE	6-spd auto w quick shift / AWD
POWER/TORQUE	250 hp / 266 lb-ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	7.9 in
TURNING CIRCLE	37.4 ft
TOWING CAPACITY	3300 lb
WEIGHT	3913 lb
MPG	20/28/23 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$41,000
OPTIONS INCLUDED: Premium audio, electronics, heated features as on S60 CC tested, plus accent lighting, keyless, dual child bolster seats.	
TOTAL AS TESTED (BASE MODEL)	\$49,775



KEEP RIGHT >>

What Do You See From Your Lens?

Share it with us on our APP!
"Discover the Region Magazines"

Your Photo Could Be Seen Here!

DISCOVER
the region publications
OFFLINE & DIGITAL

when it is in fact very similar to the \$1550 package on our S60 CC, although the V60 group does include another item or two. If you're shopping between the S60 CC and the V60 CC, this may prove a bit baffling. If you're shopping just one of them, it won't. In either case, you have the overall welcome choice between a relatively simplified premium car or one that is fully tricked out but still holding its price in the \$40s.

Volvo S60 Inscription

When the Volvo S60 launched a decade and a half ago, it boasted very competitive rear legroom. Flash forward, and competition has become pretty stiff—not only among larger German and Japanese premium models with "L" (long) versions, but increasingly in midsize and compact competitors. Some people prefer the shorter wheelbase, for everything from garage space to parking to tight maneuvers. Some don't even particularly need more room in the back. Hence the appeal of an optional wheelbase, rather than just stretch and bloat applied to the existing model. Add an emphasis on luxury, and this is the fundamental basis of the S60 Inscription.

Rear legroom is increased by three inches, and occupants enjoy contoured seats (while they reflect upon walnut wood inlays, upgraded accent lighting, an interior air quality system and window shades—power rear and manual rear sides).

There are both front-wheel- and all-wheel-drive versions of the S60 Inscription. The front-driver has electronic power steering, and the AWD model has speed-sensitive steering. Only the FWD has an auto start-stop feature. The AWD model hits 29 MPG highway, compared with 37 for the front-driver. We'd normally gravitate toward all-wheel-drive, but that's a huge fuel mileage difference, and electronic driving aids might make up the difference in most cases.

There are two trim levels—Premium and Platinum—which combine with the drivetrain options to present four models ranging over just a \$4500 price spread. All have the same model-specific wheels and a tasteful bit of chrome. We drove a base model (Premium FWD) in California, which gave us the full experience, even Harman Kardon premium sound and other Platinum-included features, which had been added as options.

Global Scandinavians

The Volvo S60 Inscription represents a significant first in the US. People have wondered for a decade or more when the first Chinese cars might hit our shores. Well, surprise. This beautiful Scandinavian is our nation's first Chinese car. While other US Volvos are manufactured in Sweden and Belgium, this one comes from one of their three



Volvo S60 Inscription

2016 VOLVO S60 INSCRIPTION FWD

ENGINE	2.0L 4-cyl turbo
TRANS/DRIVE	8-spd auto w quick shift / FWD
POWER/TORQUE	240 hp / 258 lb-ft
TURNING CIRCLE	40.7 ft
TOWING CAPACITY	3500 lb
WEIGHT	3433 lb
MPG	25/37/29 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$38,700
OPTIONS INCLUDED: As on S60 CC, V60 CC tested.	
TOTAL AS TESTED (PREMIUM)	\$45,925
Base price Platinum FWD	\$41,700
Base price Premium AWD	\$40,200
Base price Platinum AWD	\$43,200

Chinese plants, in Chengdu, not surprising considering Volvo Cars has been owned by China's Geely since Ford spun off the brand in 2010. But this is Volvo's first Chinese build exported to the US.

A modern, largely robotized automotive factory is a mostly closed ecosystem and turnkey "product" in its own right (premium German brands have been building behind the former Iron Curtain for years now). Volvo points out that they "can design, build and run a plant (anywhere) without a local partner." They challenged us to spot any differences in our S60 Inscription. We did not. The engineering and factory are one thousand percent Swedish and are producing one thousand percent Swedish cars, regardless of the factory location.

Volvo is not only expanding production to China. They broke ground for their first US factory this fall, which will begin production in 2018. Located in Berkeley County, South Carolina (near the port of Charleston), the half-billion-dollar facility will have capacity to produce 100,000 vehicles per year. It's slated to become the global production source for the next S60 Sedan, currently under development at the home office in Gothenburg, Sweden, plus another model to be announced later.

The South Carolina factory will provide 2000 immediate jobs, 4000 over the longer term and an estimated 8000 additional jobs due to its impact on the surrounding economy, good for almost \$5 billion a year in total economic impact.

Volvo roots its brand in Scandinavian engineering, style and heritage. They have been enjoying double-digit growth in the US recently, and as the new XC90 SUV takes home one award after another—and these intriguing new 60 Series models arrive—their future here looks bright. ■

