

Full Circle

Ian Lamming examines the circle of automotive life in Volvo's new V90

EVER tried fitting a bicycle in the back of your car? They are enormous, gangly and difficult to accommodate.

A lot of luggage is a bit like that but the humble bike is one of the trickiest. The struggle is not helped this time by the sit up and beg style of the latest addition to the cycling family nor the Miss Grulch wicker basket on the front.

Timing is everything and the Pendleton seven speed has to stay in the shop until the test car can accommodate its proportions.

That day arrives with the Volvo V90. Here is an estate car that is truly massive and can swallow a variety of bodies and cargo.

Rear seats folded nicely flat the gargantuan load bay easily takes the retro-styled bicycle. If you happen to be a farmer I'm sure it would manage a bale or two.

For the country dwellers V90 also comes in the Cross Country style.

Seats back in place, rear seat passengers get first class flight amounts of legroom and similar levels of luxury.

V90 is positively plush and a very nice place to reside should you fancy being chauffeured for the day.

But a day will be about the maximum as the Volvo is a peerless drive and any self-respecting driver will prefer being at the wheel.

V90 is as long and wide as its saloon sibling the S90 but it feels so much sharper, with firmer, controlled ride and positive steering.

The D4 diesel engine is powerful and very economical. Mated to a slick automatic gearbox the V90 flies along in an impressive fashion munching the miles but still returning 52mpg.

Like the S90, V90 has moved automotive technology into the next century with a dash dominated by what looks like an iPad.

Touch sensitive, it sweeps and pinches in a digital device manner accessing myriad functions, some necessary to driving, others the pure luxuries of a cyber-world.

All this technology is a must on a modern car and for the luddites out there it is easy and

intuitive to use. But the real strength of the V90 has moved little from Volvo's basic ethos of practicality comfort and driving dynamism.

Bit like the retro bike in the back, it's gone full circle.

Fact File

- Volvo V90 D4
- Engine: 2.0 diesel
- Power: 190PS
- 0-60mph: 8.2 secs
- Top speed: 140mph
- Combined MPG: 62.8
- Transmission: Automatic
- CO2 g/km:119

