

Safety First

*Motor
Madness*

Ian Lamming considers the huge strides Volvo has made with the latest XC60

HOW about this for an incredible goal? By 2020 the aim is that nobody will be killed or seriously injured while travelling in a Volvo.

Now that's what I call a vision and when you drive the latest offering, from a manufacturer that invented safety, it is not at all far fetched.

The latest XC60, like its bigger brother the XC90 which it resembles, is an awesome machine. Now plenty of posh cars come with a flotilla of touchy feely gadgets and one problem is that they can distract the driver from a basic rule of driving, namely, to look through the windscreen at where you are going.

Modern cars are full of gizmos that you find by touching and sweeping, pinching and scrolling through countless menus. You can see why it is easy to take your eyes off the road and that's before you factor in iPhones and infotainment centres. Potentially, it's an accident waiting to happen.

But as we drive inexorably towards the driverless car, XC60 introduces vital interim technology to make the world a safer place.

Become distracted and wander out of your lane and the XC60 is watching for you. It will spot a potential head-on crash and steer you back into your lane. It will also sniff out anyone inhabiting your blind-spot and stop you being rear-ended or side-swiped.

It will take over the throttle and brakes when

on cruise control, avoid all manner of collisions with pedestrians and cyclists and alter the ride height depending on road conditions, lowering you closer to the ground when exiting. It even protects your trousers or tights from the typical mud and grime that sticks to paintwork this time of year and ends up on the backs of our legs.

Range topper XC60 comes in the form of the T8 Inscription Pro, an awesome beast of a car that lacks for nothing.

Here are some of its more showy-off bits: a 2.0 petrol motor that is super-charged and a turbo-charged to shove out 320 mighty horses through the front wheels, while the rear set are driven by an 87hp electric motor – all wheel drive by default then. Add those up and it comes to 407hp which is enough to propel this SUV to 60mph in just five seconds. Staggering, particularly as the combined fuel figure in the brochure claims 134.5mpg; how does that work then? I managed 30.7.

Independent air suspension takes care of the ride, which is peerless, and the eight speed automatic gearbox reacts to all manner of settings depending on how you feel.

Wrap all this up in glorious leather, woold and top notch trim, add an 1,100 watt, 15-speaker Bowers and Wilkins sound systems, with a forward-facing dash-mounted tweeter that limits acoustic reflection from the windscreen, and

I'm a happy man. It will even replicate the exact sound of the Gothenburg Concert Hall – really!

XC60 truly is an awesome car on a road to an incredible and commendable goal just over two years away. It has convinced me completely that Volvo will achieve its aim with plenty of time to spare.

Fact File

- Volvo XC60 T8 Inscription Pro
- Engine: 2.0 four-cylinder, super-charged, turbo, petrol/electric hybrid
- Power: 407bhp
- 0-62mph: 5.3 secs
- Top speed: 143mph
- Combined miles per gallon: 134.5
- Transmission: eight-speed automatic
- CO2 g/km: 49

