

Sunshine on a



rainy day

Ian Lamming avoids the winter blues in the Volvo V40 T5 R-Design

Fact File

Volvo V40 T5 R-Design Lux Nav Geartronic
 Engine: 2.0 five-cylinder turbo petrol
 Power: 245BHP
 0-62mph: 6.3 secs
 Top speed: 149mph
 Combined miles per gallon: 47.9
 Transmission: eight speed automatic
 CO2 g/km: 137

DARK, dank and dreary, the Sunday afternoon is typical of the winter season – well almost.

If it was light the sky would be sullen and grey, miserable and malevolent. It's the sort of afternoon that has you reaching for the sunlamp or the comfort foods and hibernating by the log-burner.

But there's a child to be collected and from up the dales forcing daddy chauffeur on to the roads.

Why then is there a daft grin on my face? The weather is truly vile, the roads are standing in floodwater and there is danger around every bend.

I'm as happy as Larry, or should that be Sven, because I'm behind the wheel of a T5. For those who remember when boys and girls in blue used to police our roads in Volvos, the T5 was the wickedly quick turbo-charged estate car that sported blues and twos and the orange stripe of old.

T5 remains the performance variant of the marque and in this instance it lies at the heart of the wonderful looking small hatch/estate the V40. It also comes with four wheel drive and the sharpness of a sports car – now you can see why I'm smiling.

Superb lights illuminate the murky depths ahead and the dales roads become as challenging and rewarding as they are on a summer's day. With every flood

comes the potential to aquaplane but the 4WD system just shrugs the water away with reckless abandon.

The T5 produces huge swathes of torque without recourse to unnecessary revs so the power delivery is efficient and boosts traction thanks to power pulses that bury all four tyres into the road.

A magnificent automatic gearbox keeps the engine right in its powerband and is smoothness personified with its changes.

Dynamically the V40 is second to none and the cabin adds to the experience with its superb, orthopedically designed seats, which must rank as the most comfortable ever. The cabin is a masterpiece of design too with lovely clocks and dashboard, intuitive controls and quality fittings; it is faultless.

V40 is an ultra modern hatchback with great lines, super-sexy rear lights and a very purposeful stance.

There's also the comfort of knowing that safety devices and specification are off the chart.

T5 brings sunshine to the dullest day with its combination of abilities, looks and quality feel.

It can't fail to stave off seasonal affected disorder to even the most susceptible and will bring joy all year round to its driver.