

Setting the



Standard

Ian Lamming finds favour with the Volvo XC60

Fact File

Volvo XC60
Engine: 2.4 five-cylinder turbo diesel
Power: 215PS
0-62mph: 8.1 secs
Top speed: 130mph
Combined miles per gallon: 43.5
Transmission: six-speed automatic
Insurance: 31E
CO2 g/km: 139

Data provided by JATO Dynamics

STANDARDS, we all have standards and while some of us are quite laid back, others can be a bit pernickety.

I love cars – it's why I do the job – and I'll always find the positive in any motor. To be fair to the automotive world there are very few howlers on our roads today; when was the last time you heard a car joke?

But some of my breed are much more critical than others and one such critic shares my house.

It's not often a test car passes through the mill – or at least the hall – without some stinging remark, angled at the heart with maximum pejorative penetration.

On a weekly basis I end up defending the marque – but not this time. Volvo's sizeable off-roader the XC60 gets a resounding thumbs up from all the family and so it should because it is flawless.

Its new look freshens without radically overhauling this appealing SUV and it is better for it. It looks well in the drive, prompts approving smiles on the school run and gains respect on the road and in the car park. It is smart, no question.

Inside is luxury personified with glorious leather seats and trim, fantastic switches, dials and dashboard and an air of quality that befits the marque.

You cannot fail to feel good about yourself as you glide along belonging to a class above the rest.

The 2.4 litre engine has five cylinders; I love five cylinders. They make the power delivery different, lusty, off-beat, charismatic.

Torque pours out in waves large enough to surf on; it is delightful. It also makes what is a large vehicle very spritely and the beat slows to a virtual flat-line when cruising along the highway, making the XC60 a supreme and relaxed long-distance tool.

The large tank and 37mpg consumption also gives it a great range precluding regular trips to the pumps.

Handling is dynamic and again for such a behemoth the XC60 feels sharp and planted, safe and very secure, thanks in no small part to the sophisticated all wheel drive.

Volvo remains a family favourite across the range and the XC60 is no exception. I would have loved it anyway but even better that it found favour with more important people than myself.