

VOLVO V60 D4

By Jim Mc Cauley

The square-cut image of the earlier Volvo estates is now a distant memory, and the company's latest generation vehicles have evolved into sleek and elegant designs with much broader customer appeal. The V60 estate has been further refined for the 2014 model line-up with the assertive lines



of the exterior balanced by the simple and restful appeal of the interior.

Test choice was the D4 model which features Volvo car company's new 2.0 litre powertrain. This is Volvo's first diesel engine from the new 2.0 litre 4-cylinder Drive-E family which will range in outputs from 120 to 230 bhp. Driving through its 6-speed manual gearbox, this 181 bhp unit can take the car through the initial benchmark sprint from 0-60 mph in 7.2 seconds with the potential to reach 140 mph. But even more importantly is its massive 400 Nm of torque from 1750 to 2500 rpm that leaves it staggeringly responsive across all gears.

On the road, there is no doubting the substance of the car which is firm and solid, hugging the tarmac even over irregular surfaces. Throttle response is always instantaneous, although the driving experience would be further elevated if there was more feedback through the steering to confirm the driver's control. Nevertheless, this estate car can be moved on enthusiastically showcasing the début appearance of the 2.0 litre diesel to perfection. While the suspension is firm in order to have to cope with a fully laden vehicle at times, overall ride was uncomfortable particularly for rear seat occupants.

Load-wise, the V60 is not as cavernous as earlier models but has some very useful storage elements such as the pop-up panel in the boot floor with restraining strap and bag hooks, as well as under-floor storage trays.

Cabin layout is clean-cut Scandinavian minimalism which is pleasantly restrained in the black leather interior of the test car, but there is a lot going on in the instrument panel. A useful triangular blip appears on the speedometer to indicate lower speed limits and there is a gear-shift indicator on the right hand side as well as an Eco-guide on the left to encourage maximum economy from the new power unit. This is officially given as 67.3 mpg on the combined cycle while the actual figure on a week's mixed driving on local roads returned 63% of this at 42.7 mpg.





Electric adjustment on the driver's seat allows for a good driving position in the legendary comfortable Volvo seats which in the case of the test car were also heated along with the optional heated steering wheel for those planning to plunge into cooler climes. A push button on the lower right-hand dash operates the auto-releasing handbrake, and as in all Volvos the car comes with a comprehensive safety package branded 'IntelliSafe'. Features include City Safe which is upgraded on the latest models to act at speeds of up to 31 mph and automatically brakes the car if the driver fails to react in time when the vehicle in front slows down or is stationary. The auto-braking function now

also includes pedestrian and cyclist detection. Also introduced is an enhanced Blind Spot Information System (BLIS) which now uses radar sensors to warn of overtaking vehicles in the mirrors' blind spots.



Overall, the updated Volvo V60 with the new 4-cylinder turbo-diesel is well presented to challenge the dominant Germans, but cost may be an issue with the price in among the German competitors as well, while a more tempting opening price might seduce a wider range of buyers. The basic car as tested is listed at £32,995 and with a selection of extras fitted to the test vehicle the price rose to just over £41,000. Among the options was an Exterior Styling Pack at £850, Detachable Tow Bar at £700, Load Compensating Suspension at £535, Security Pack at £700 and Rear Park Assist at £525.

This engine option with manual transmission has a CO2 emissions of 99 gms/km keeping its annual road tax to zero, and on the safety front has the maximum 5-Star EuroNCAP rating.