

Volvo XC60 D5 Geartronic AWD



By [Ilse van den Berg](#)

6 Aug 2018

In my younger mind, I always used to think a Volvo was the car of choice for older citizens. Without any intent of sounding snooty. It just so happened to be my perception. Perhaps you've had the same perception?

Perception is a funny thing. It changes depending on where you stand (or sit, for that matter), doesn't it? Perception can be defined as the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses.

How glad I was to recently have a change of perception of Volvo after having had the chance to drive two of the newest Volvos including the [XC40 \(at launch\)](#) and the XC60 (on test for a week).



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Ilse van den Berg 19 Apr 2018



The Volvo XC60 D5 Geartronic AWD (173kW and 480Nm) quickly got my nod of approval and I soon realised why it was voted World Car of the Year 2018.



The XC60 is fully-loaded with new technology that makes it feel like fully autonomous cars might really be around the corner. Its technology is stupendous and it's by far the safest I have felt in a car in a long time. I know I wasn't imagining it because I also found out that the all-new XC60 is, in fact, one of the safest cars ever made.

Last year it was tested by Euro NCAP and received the highest score of all new vehicles tested, with 98% in the Adult Occupant category.

It doesn't matter how much you want to highlight this incredible car's various features - such as the comfortable cabin and leather seats, overall spaciousness, impressive boot space and so forth - the dominant topic of discussion is certainly the technology which also means safety has been taken to another level. That shouldn't be surprising since the manufacturer's main focus has always been safety.



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Just as well. Over 1.2 million people die in traffic accidents around the world each year, I shiver to think just how many of those deaths occur on South African roads alone. 94% of all accidents are caused by human factors.



Volvo believes its vision of an injury- and fatality-free future can soon be a reality. By using advanced safety technology the manufacturer believes it can help to reduce the human factor in traffic accidents. After thoroughly testing the XC60, it's hard not to believe them, too.

A casual drive up the West Coast up to Melkbosstrand for a couple of nights gave me a good idea of this classic SUV's capabilities. With no roof rack, I had to resort to trying to fit my surfboard inside the car, along with my luggage and other travel essentials. You'll be happy to know, I didn't even break a sweat.

Standout features and technology

Standout features and technology include Volvo's City Safety Autonomous Emergency Braking system which has been

enhanced with steering support for when automatic braking alone may not help avoid a potential collision.

In Sweden alone, Volvo has seen a decline of around 45% in rear-end frontal crashes thanks to its collision warning with auto brake system.



In addition, oncoming lane mitigation with steer assist (which helps mitigate head-on collisions) and blind spot information system (BLIS) with steer assist functionality, has been added to reduce the risk of lane-changing collisions.

A bit strange to get used to at first, pilot assist (optional feature) is Volvo's advanced semi-autonomous driver assistance system. With the push of a button on the steering wheel, Pilot assist takes care of steering, acceleration and braking on well-marked roads up to 130km/h. A bit sceptical at first, my jaw quite literally dropped at the accuracy and effectiveness of this function.

Bye bye parking woes

As if that wasn't impressive enough, I simply had to try all the forms of the XC60's park assist feature. I set out, looking for one of the tightest parking spots I could find and hesitantly allowed the car's technology to take over and park me perfectly.

Have a look for yourself...

Locally, the all-new XC60 is available with two diesel engines (D4 and D5) and two petrol (T5 and T6), all mated to an eight-speed Automatic AWD gearbox. Three trim levels are available: elegant Momentum, sporty R-Design and the luxurious top-of-the-range Inscription.



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Nine years since its launch, it became the best-selling premium mid-sized SUV in Europe with one million units sold globally. The XC60 today represents around 30% of Volvo's total global sales and is also the manufacturer's best-selling vehicle in South Africa.

The Volvo XC60 is a classy, standout SUV in all respects. It's a car that won't attract judgemental eyes (like some SUVs of other brands seem to often get), but rather looks of awe and respect.

At less than R800,000 (depending on the trim level), I think pricing is reasonable for what the car offers in terms of technology, safety, performance and looks when compared to competitors in its class.

ABOUT ILSE VAN DEN BERG

Ilse is a freelance journalist and editor with a passion for people & their stories (check out Passing Stories). She is also the editor of Go & Travel, a platform connecting all the stakeholders in the travel & tourism industry. You can check out her work [here](#) and [here](#). Contact Ilse through her website [here](#).

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