

SOLID BOOSTER ROCKET By Joe Sage

This supercharged-turbocharged high-style tank runs smooth and true

It's kind of rare for us to like a front-driver this much—but we were won over by the Volvo S60's great combination of power, style and fuel frugality. It has a beautiful interior, powerful and economical engine, solid suspension and road handling, and feature interface that is relatively easy to utilize. It's comfortable, with a solid ride—a driver's car. It's spacious to the point we had to look it up to make sure it's a midsize and not a full-size, even though we know full well there's a bigger S80. The S60 has 302 horsepower and a 5.6-second zero-to-60 time (accompanied by a sexy drivetrain and exhaust note), yet gets 35 MPG highway. And the price is pretty competitive.

We knew we had a rocket on our hands as we blasted up our first freeway ramp. It's not the fastest or quickest car we've ever driven, but it has such a solid ride, it feels moreso. The S60 feels as solid as a Brinks armored truck, while its supercharged-turbocharged inline four—which feels like at least a six—is a total kick in the pants.

Its 12-cubic-foot trunk is not remarkably big by the numbers (a Dodge Charger's is 16.5 cu.ft.), but is a triumph of proportions (and clever hinge engineering). We were in the midst of a storage-shifting project, and when we opened the trunk on the

S60, it seemed huge and accommodated our loads very well. If that's not enough, the S60 can also tow 3500 pounds—more than its own weight.

As on every current Volvo, the center console control panel is a little too tight and tidy for its own good—a great many buttons restricted to about the size of a phone pad, hard for big fingers and not that intuitive. But functionally it is very straightforward, and that mostly makes up for it.

A lot of vehicles come and go around our office, and we'd be the first to admit that some are greatly anticipated, while others are barely on the radar. We hadn't really thought much about this Volvo in advance, but after a couple of days with it, it was one of those you wish would never leave.

Unlike the solid booster rockets of the Apollo program, the Volvo S60 won't give you a bone-shaking ride. We call it solid not just because it's a Volvo—every vehicle is built solidly now. We call it solid because it gives us such a firm and comfortable ride, tracks straight and true, turns tight and smooth and accelerates beyond what its displacement might indicate. Volvo's combination of supercharged and turbocharged boost in an inline-four is a winning combination.

Those Swedes seem to really know what

SPECIFICATIONS: S60 T6 DRIVE-E

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| ENGINE |2.0L 16v DOHC turbo/superchg inline-4 |
| TRANSMISSION |8-speed auto w sport mode |
| DRIVETRAIN |FWD |
| POWER/TORQUE |302 hp / 295 lb-ft |
| STEERING |Electric power assist rack & pinion |
| TURNING CIRCLE |39.0 ft |
| WEIGHT |3472 lb |
| TOW CAPACITY |3500 lb |
| LUGGAGE CAPACITY |12.0 cu ft |
| FUEL / FUEL CAPACITY |regular / 17.8 gal |
| MPG |24/35/28 (city/hwy/comb) |

BASE PRICE\$39,900

MODEL YEAR 2015.5 ADDTL FEATURES: Sensus Connect and Volvo On-Call w 6-month subscriptions, Sensus Navigation w Mapcar

PLATINUM: Harman Kardon premium sound, dual xenon headlights/washers; Tech Package incl adaptive cruise, collision warn w full brake, pedestrian/cyclist detect/brake, distance alert, lane keep, active high beam and road sign info; Convenience Package w power retract mirrors, rear park camera, accent lighting.....3750

CLIMATE PACKAGE: Heated seats front/rear, heated wheel, heated windshield/washer, interior air quality system.....1550

19" BOR DIAMOND CUT WHEELS:.....900

BLIND SPOT INFO SYSTEM PACKAGE: Blind spot, cross traffic, lane change merge, front/rear park900

METALLIC PAINT:.....550

DESTINATION CHARGE:.....925

TOTAL\$47,575

they're doing. And yes, this is still built in Europe, despite Volvo Cars' new Chinese ownership—but note that an upsized S60 Inscription (see Detroit show, page 47) will be the first Chinese car of any sort built and sold in the US. Others will follow. ■



A mid-year update, the 2015.5 Volvo S60 adds online support and navigation services to its interface.