

Eleganta Svensk teknik

All-new Volvo S90 breaks new ground by Joe Sage

If you're looking at German, Asian or Detroit premium/luxury brands, don't miss this powerful Swedish insurgent. Volvo's new S90 executive luxury sedan is most impressive, from the big picture down to each detail. Introduced in the wake of their XC90 luxury SUV, which has won awards numbering in the hundreds (and built on its same new Scalable Product Architecture platform), the S90 augurs great things.

It took us about 20 yards behind the wheel to vividly recall why we love a good, powerful, premium performance full-size sedan. Weighing just over two tons and powered, as are so many now, by a two-liter four-cylinder—the key to this T6 being both turbocharging *and* supercharging—the Volvo S90 hits 60 mph in just 5.7 seconds, while delivering 31 mpg highway. What a formula, and it's all enjoyed from within a cockpit reminiscent of the finest modern Scandinavian living room.

What's more, this big luxury sedan can be yours

starting under \$50,000. Our sample, an Inscription with all-wheel-drive, T6 powerplant, plus several comprehensive and reasonably priced packages and options, is in the mid-\$60s—very competitive, and its virtue of being less common than competitors surely makes it a win-win in the category.

The Volvo S90 has a strong and dramatic presence, though at the same time subtle. Its long wheelbase and short overhangs provide a powerful stance and big rear doors, and a high beltline gives a solid look while still allowing superb visibility. Rear sheet metal in particular is distinctive, a very Volvo-esque chiseled look: clean, sculpted, substantial and premium. This could be trendsetting.

The nest of buttons from Volvo center stacks in the last decade is gone, replaced by a handsome award-winning Sensus Connect 9.3-inch vertical touchscreen. We first dug into climate control, where we found clear options for its four-zone front/back system, plus separate options for auto-

matic fan speed and automatic temperature, usually cross-dependent, so a breakthrough in the S90. Instead of the looped “back” arrow on pretty much every other system, it has an “X” (close) icon. Makes sense. When you're done you're done, no need to follow the bread crumbs back out, another example of Volvo rethinking a detail. This returns you to a three-quarter screen for what you last had going, with the other quarter displaying a complete and clear list of other options. The system can also be operated by voice control. It seems to be an interface you will enjoy more and more over time, the opposite of many others.

The optional 19-speaker Bowers & Wilkins audio system goes well beyond the usual controls, with such options as Center Stage or the acoustics of Sweden's Gothenburg Concert Hall, but letting you fine tune these, such as your percentage of intensity and envelopment in Center Stage. Concert Hall is stunning for certain kinds of music—surely for classical—but not for newscasts, as voices boom like Big Brother in that mode. But you can choose, and your options are distinct.

The instrument display in the binnacle is a sin-



gle fully customizable 12.3-inch digital screen.

The Volvo S90 has a fuel-saving auto start/stop feature, but we had to look that up to be certain—it's by far one of the smoothest we've experienced. The tach drops to a 500-rpm mark, labeled “Ready”—another case of rethinking things—then zooming back to life upon motion, with a very cool digital fade sweeping behind the needle's path.

Releasing from Park, the car holds steady for a moment, until you've learned that an intuitive nano-tap of the gas pedal will bring it immediately to life. All this varies among four drive modes—Comfort (the default on every restart), Dynamic (auto start/stop is disabled and revs run higher), Eco (including idle-engine coasting above 40 mph) and Individual (in which you can customize all of the above to your liking, then store it in your key fob so everything is just right every time you enter.

The S90 actually has more legroom in the front than a Mercedes-Benz S-Class (though less in the rear), though we never mastered a position for our tall frame, having to drop down to move back.

We noted confident acceleration and equally confident braking during our week (the larger your wheels, the larger your brakes in the S90 lineup).

Volvo S90 is the first car in the US to offer semi-autonomous (hands-on-the-wheel) driving technology as standard, including pilot assist for steering, acceleration and braking. Two world-first features included as standard are large animal detection (which can stop you or mitigate a collision) and run-off-road mitigation (which under threat of such a situation will gently steer you away from the brink).

Volvo S90, with its unmistakable Swedish DNA, enters the realm of superstar sedans from a smaller place, but arrives in a big way. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	.....2.0L supercharged+turbo 4-cyl
DRIVETRAIN	.....AWD
HP/TORQUE	.....316 hp / 295 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	.....8-speed Geartronic auto
0-TO-60 MPH / TOP SPEED	.....5.7 sec / 130 mph
SUSPENSION	.....F: double wishbone, coils, hydraulic shocks, stabilizer bar; R: integral axle w/transverse composite leaf spring, hydraulic shocks, optional air suspension
STEERING	.....rack & pinion elec power assist
WHEELS	.....optional 20-in Inscription alloys
BRAKES	.....F: 13.6" / R: 12.6" disc brakes w/ ABS, EBD, electronic brake assist
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....195.4 in / 115.8 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....37.4 ft
CARGO VOLUME	.....17.7 cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....4080 lb
FUEL CAPACITY / FUEL	.....15.9 gal / 91+ octane
MPG	.....22/31/25 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE\$52,950

INSCRIPTION FEATURES: Active bending added to standard LED headlights w/ Thor's Hammer DRLs and auto high-beam; high-pressure headlight washers; illuminated Volvo door sill plates; high-level interior lighting; linear walnut wood inlays; Apple CarPlay and USB hub; heated/ventilated front seats; Nappa soft leather seats; leather dash and upper door panels; power side support for front seats; manual sun curtains, rear side windows; 4-zone electric climate control, cooled glovebox; 19" 10-spoke silver diamond cut alloy wheels (upgraded further on ours; see below); decklid Inscription badge; color-coordinated Nappa leather key fob3300

VISION PACKAGE: 360° surround view camera; retractable rear view mirrors; auto-dim interior and exterior mirrors; blind spot info and rear cross traffic alert1950

CLIMATE PACKAGE W/ HUD: Heated steering wheel; heated rear outer seats; heated windshield washer nozzles (integrated in wiper arms); graphical heads-up display1950

CONVENIENCE PACKAGE: HomeLink; compass in rearview mirror; power trunklid; 12v power outlet; park assist pilot and park assist front (rear standard)1000

BOWERS & WILKINS PREMIUM SOUND2650

METALLIC PAINT560

20" INSCRIPTION ALLOY WHEELS750

DESTINATION CHARGE995

TOTAL\$66,105

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- ▼ Roadshow Editor's Choice Award - CNET
- ▼ IIHS 2017 Top Safety Pick designation
- ▼ Volvo T6 Drive-E engine named one of Wards 10 Best Engines. Editors called it “arguably the new benchmark for high-output 4-cylinder engines.”

