



We Like

- Striking looks
- Luxurious interiors and features
- Engine refinement
- Superb ride and handling
- Large boot
- Attractive price

We Don't Like

- Rear passengers not getting many features
- Lack of under-thigh support at the rear



Interesting proposition!

Think estate cars in India, and the first image that comes to mind is the large and lumbering [Tata Estate](#) from the 90s; also images of [Skoda Octavia Combi/Estate](#), Maruti Suzuki Baleno Altura, Chevrolet Forrester, Tata Indigo Marina, Fiat Palio Weekend/Adventure, Opel Corsa Swing, Rover Montego Station Wagon, Premier Safari, and HM Ambassador Estate. A couple of friends had the Tata Estate, and they had their own issues with them – from performance to handling, to parking; no small wonder then that estate cars haven't really done well in India. Volvo invited me to Coorg to test drive a new vehicle they were launching in India – [V90 Cross Country \(CC\)](#). Volvo has an estate version called the [V90](#), but that has not been introduced in India. Hence, one can call the V90 CC as the V90 on stilts, but it is unfair on both. Apart from cladding, the V90 CC gets all-wheel-drive and raised ride-height for starters. I couldn't make it to Coorg. So Volvo gave me the V90 CC for a couple days in Mumbai. Volvo has had success with its CC models in India – first with the [V40](#) and later on with the [S60](#). Hence the decision to launch the V90 CC in India – it is the spiritual successor of the [Volvo V70 XC](#) or the [V70 CC](#). But what exactly is the Volvo V90 CC? How does it drive? Should one be considering it at all? All valid questions that could only be answered by driving it. Read on...

Quite a looker

The V90 CC is one of those cars where the pictures don't really do justice to what the car appears in the flesh...er, rather, metal. It is a handsome and immaculate car that would be at home in any jungle – urban or otherwise, effortlessly fording the dirt tracks of the rugged outback and the pothole-strewn city roads, and at the same time providing a luxurious cocoon for its passengers, and at the same time a lot of visibility due to all that glass area. The V90 CC reminds me so much of the [S90](#), on which it is based. But don't make a mistake of assuming that the V90 CC is just a jacked-up or beefed-up S90 with body cladding slapped over to give it a crossover image. The V90 CC is a striking vehicle (and a very different one – not just a rehash of the S90), and one of the prettiest ("dandy" is another word that comes to mind) estate cars that I have seen.

This isn't one of the boxy designs that highlighted traditional estate cars or station wagons. The silhouette is something to fall in love with, and the V90 CC looks sleek from whichever angle you view it. For a large vehicle (in terms of footprint), carrying all the lines in a refined manner is a big ask, and Volvo designers have delivered – the long body, the low roof line, and a beautiful rear. The extra-long body doesn't look out of a whack – it mimics the S90 to a large degree from the snout to the C-pillar, and then culminates into a lovely *derrière* leading from the D-pillar and the sharply raked small rear windscreen (almost mirroring the large front windscreen). The large grille garnished with chrome, with the Volvo "Iron" logo in the centre, dominates the snout, as do the large LED "Hammer of Thor" DRLs, nestling within the typical angular headlamp cluster, which also houses adaptive and bending bi-xenon lights. The DRLs double up as the turn indicators. The grille itself is

Volvo V90 CC – spec sheet

Price (Rs. Lakh – ex-showroom, Delhi)	65.31
Engine	
Fuel	Diesel
Delivery	Twin Turbo
Installation	Front Transverse
Type	In-line Four
Capacity	1969 cc
Power	235 bhp @ 4000 rpm
Torque	480 Nm @ 1750-2250 rpm
Transmission	
Gearbox	8-speed automatic
Drive	All-wheel
Dimensions	
Length	4939 mm
Width	1879 mm
Height	1543 mm
Wheel base	2941 mm
Ground Clearance	210 mm
Boot volume	560 litres
Fuel Tank	60 litres
Chassis & Body	
Construction	Monococque
Weight	2440 kg
Wheels	10-spoke 20" alloys
Tyres	245/45 R20 tubeless radials
Spare	T125/80 R18 Space saver
Suspension	
Front	Air Suspension
Rear	Air Suspension
Steering	
Type	Electric Power
Turning Radius	5.90 m
Brakes	
Front	Ventilated Disc
Rear	Ventilated Disc
Others	
Top Speed	230 kmph
Fuel Efficiency*	12.5 kmpl

Source: IIFL Research; Volvo India * claimed

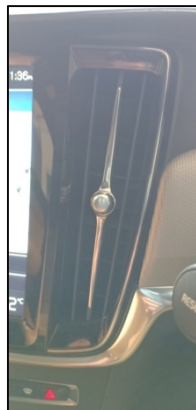
concave in shape and has vertical black fins within – but instead of the normal chrome fins that we are used to, this time around they have patches (or studs) of chrome in a neat design. The long snout looks chiselled out of a block of stone, and the front end is the now famous Volvo look. The chin of the V90 CC gets some protection, while muscled flanks continue through a strong shoulder line into powerful haunches.

The V90 CC looks well planted on those attractive 20-inch rubber and gorgeous 10-spoke diamond-cut alloys as a standard. They fill the large wheel wells nicely – the flared wheel arches emanate a hint of muscle, while the panoramic sunroof is made for the outdoors. While the floor to roof height may mirror that of the S90, Volvo has lifted the V90 CC by a good 60mm to give it a SUV-ish stance, and also to ensure that when you go offroading in this luxurious estate car, the 210mm ground clearance (more than many SUVs) means that there is no fear of scraping the underbody on normal surfaces found in such areas. There is body cladding on the sides and the wheel arches, and there is a fold along the bottom of the doors for effect. If the front end is the typical modern Volvo look, the rear end has the signature Volvo tail lamp cluster, which makes for a beautiful render, with the split parts cutting deep into the boot and going under the projecting part and ending at the alcove for the registration plate. Additional body cladding with “Cross Country” etched on it has been provided on the rear bumper, below which sits some under-body protection and the chrome-tipped trapezoidal exhausts at both ends. Overall, this is a very premium looking car.

Soothing and premium interiors

Open the wide and heavy doors, and the first thing that strikes you is the expanse of cabin, and that is followed by the pleasant feeling that one gets. This is a familiar interior that debuted on Volvo cars with the [XC90](#). The amber (or tan) colour of the leather gives the cabin a bright look (but a sure dirt magnet), as do the large glass area all around, including the panoramic sunroof. The V90 CC comes with a choice of amber, black charcoal, and brown maroon Nappa leather seats coupled with a black interior. The exceptions are the black and white cars, which offer all three options. If you want a specific combo, prepare to wait! Slide into the wide, well-bolstered, comfortable seats, and it is a very pretty cabin that one finds oneself in. The king-size seats are designed in association with orthopaedics, and have a cooling/heating function. Not only do the front two seats come equipped with 8-way electric adjustments, they also come with multiple (types and intensity) massage functions. They also get seat extenders. But the rear passengers are bereft of them. Neither do they get access to the massages, nor do they get seat extenders; and not the heating/cooling function either – this is a strict “no-no” in India as the owners typically sit at the rear, and they would want these functions.

The rest of the layout is all too familiar from the XC90 and the S90. For the V90 CC though, Volvo has given woven aluminium inserts instead of wood on the dash. The estate car also gets a new steering wheel, with paddle shifters, and a heating option. The large leather-clad 3-spoke steering with neat dials behind, the tab-like vertical infotainment screen, the overall dash layout, the

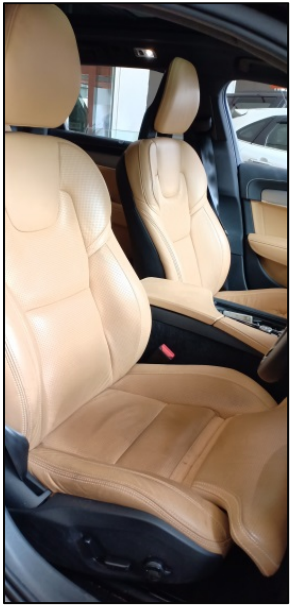


materials used, and the prominently placed round speaker on the dash – all of them establish the resemblance with the XC90 and S90 yet again. This is familiar territory and features top-notch equipment – there is only one variant (D5 Inscription) that Volvo has launched in India, and they feel that they would prefer giving all features in one variant, and not confuse the buyers with multiple variants at different price points. One can keep admiring the dash, which is a medley of leather, brushed metal, and high quality plastic. They all blend very well in a classy manner, with the high point of convergence being the large vertical centre console, which can be mistaken for a tab. The touchscreen is extremely easy to read, operate, and browse through. This is the Sensus, Volvo's in-car OS, which debuted in the XC90. It comes with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, and responds very well to the touch, is very comprehensive, and allows one to control every aspect of the V90 CC.

The vertical 9-inch touchscreen is well suited for following the navigation maps and allows larger fonts to be used. One of the coolest things that one encounters in most Volvo cars is the Heads-Up Display (HUD), which tells you the speed at which you are driving, the speed limit applicable on the highway/road/street that you are driving on, and the GPS directions applicable (if co-ordinates fed in) a little ahead on the windscreen! That is so useful in India, where even a moment's lack of attention on the road ahead would mean that an accident is waiting to happen. The data thrown up by the HUD doesn't interfere with your vision or doesn't fade out in extreme sunlight or night, providing one with the comfort of keeping one's eyes peeled on the road ahead. Other data can be had in the instrument console behind the steering. Direction of travel is given on the IRVM – cool.

The steering and centre console are almost bereft of buttons, with the 9-inch touchscreen providing all the support that one needs in terms of seat adjustments, climate control, seat heating and cooling, *et al*. But the lack of buttons can also be a bane, as for the most basic of functions you have to rely on the screen – that means eyes off the road! The AC vents had gone angular in the S90, with the knobs in the form of a wristwatch key (exuding real class), and that continues in the V90 CC. The 19-speaker Bowers & Wilkins music system is by far one of the best sound systems. It all starts with the cute speaker looking askance at you in the middle of the dash – and then there are others, including a set of tweeters designed to play without any reverberations and an air-ventilated subwoofer (the only one of its kind found in a standard fit auto audio system). All this ensures the audio is wonderful no matter what your choice of music or equalizer setting is – it will excite that audiophile in you. And there are ways to enhance sound effect depending on your mood. The 1400 Watt B&W surround entertainment system is just phenomenal – every note of your music is heard distinctly and clearly.

The V90 CC gets the full suite of radar-based safety systems, including automatic braking when the car detects a vehicle or obstacle in your path and Pilot Assist that warns you when you drift from your lane. It also gets adaptive cruise control, distance alerts, and park assist apart from the standard seven airbags. At the rear, the doors open wide and ingress/egress is nearly as easy as it is upfront – despite the raised ground clearance. There is ample amount of space available for tall



passengers, although the seating at the rear can be tiring over long journeys. My co-passengers complained that they were tired sitting at the rear. There is no reclining of the seat backs, and under-thigh support is also inadequate. That is where seat massagers and seat extenders would have really come in handy. The rear seat is appropriate for only two adults, although there is space in the middle for a third. Adults can only travel short distances while seated in the middle row; else, a protruding arm rest and rear AC vents, as also a tall transmission tunnel will have to be dealt with. How I wish Volvo had taken a leaf out of Hyundai Tucson's books and provided a proper 3-point seat belt for the middle passenger – but then the seating tells you that the rear bench is fit for two.

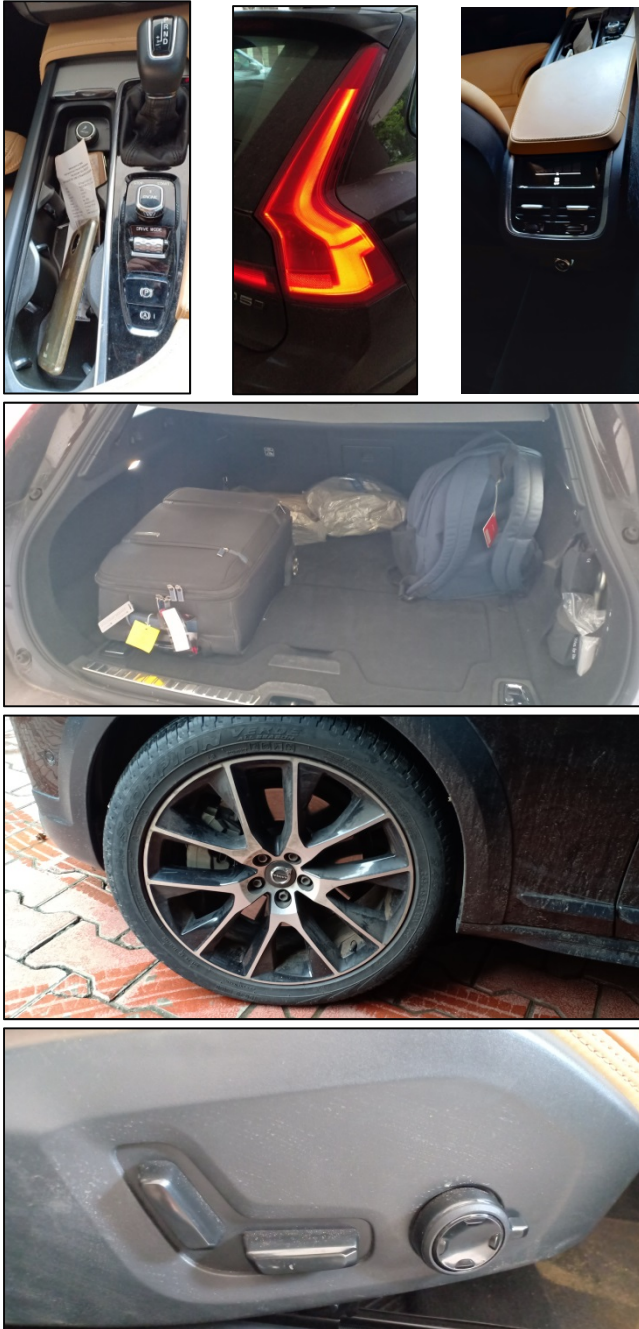
There are handy pull-up sunshades for rear passengers. Both rear seats come with ISOFIX and also provisions for attaching child seats. The centre armrest comes with flip-out cupholders; it also has a shallow storage compartment with lid and a small smartphone tray. Attention to detail that has gone into cabin design is one of best that I have seen. So, no USB port for the rear seat passengers is a glaring omission. There is a 4-zone climate control, with a 2-zone at the rear; the rear AC vents are mounted on the B-pillar. Overall the interior exudes a classy, minimalist design. One of the biggest draws of the V90 CC is the cavernous, 560 litres of boot space that can be increased to a whopping 1,536 litres by dropping the electrically foldable rear seats. Lift the boot floor to reveal a T125/80 R18 space saver. The loading lip is low for ease of use. The V90 CC comes with the "virtual pedal" to open the rear, but it takes a graduation course to get it right – a lot of trials before you pass!

A comfortable drive

Turn the starter knob to fire up the engine and the refined motor comes to life. Like the XC90, even the V90 CC comes with the D5 engine. This 1969cc diesel unit pumps out 235 bhp of peak power @ 4000 rpm and 480 Nm of peak torque @ 1750-2250 rpm. Compared to this, the D4 oil burner under the S90's hood produces 187 bhp and 400 Nm of torque, despite having the same displacement. This makes the D5 one of the most powerful diesels available on sale in India. But even a powerful mill has the old bugbear of diesel engines – the turbo lag. To eliminate this to a great degree (with just a hint of turbo lag), the D5 in the V90 CC gets Volvo's PowerPulse technology.

The PowerPulse shoots compressed air into the turbo to unleash it sooner when it is actually needed by the driver – in instant overtaking manoeuvres on the highways or when gaps suddenly form in urban stop-go traffic scenarios. At that time, rapid acceleration is demanded from low revvs. The PowerPulse stores air in a canister, which is constantly topped up to ensure continual operation. So power comes in early, from as low as 1500 rpm. But that doesn't mean that it can accelerate out of the blocks like a sprinter – it will still pause, collect its breath, cough, and only does it start to pull convincingly. And if it is on an incline, the pause could be a trifle longer – but fret not, as the V90 CC has got it all covered. Power delivery is quite linear and it feels very punchy through the revv range. The shifts by the 8-speed auto tranny are quick, but downshifts feel a tad slower, especially when driven aggressively. The V90 CC is eager to be pushed and hits the high notes very easily; but it doesn't get into redline territory very easily – in that sense, this is a pretty sombre drive.





The V90 CC doesn't come with a 'Sport' mode, but has the tiptronic mode or the paddle shifters for the times when you want to take control and not let the ECU dictate terms. Besides, there are four driving modes – 'Eco', 'Comfort', 'Off-road', and 'Dynamic'. As expected, 'Eco' results in dull engine response and is geared more towards sedate travel and better fuel efficiency. 'Comfort' gets you on middle ground, and 'Dynamic' stiffens up the suspension, makes the steering heavier, and elicits a sharper engine response. 'Off-road' is for the broken tarmac that one would encounter, especially when you are in the mood for some adventure. I managed to do some bit of off-roading, wherein the V90 CC acquitted itself admirably well. But the moment, the speed would go above 40 kmph, the vehicle would switch into 'Comfort' mode. But from whatever little that I managed to engage the V90 CC in, it was good. But given the nature of off-roading by buyers opting for such vehicles, I would think that the off-roading capabilities are more than adequate – most buyers are looking for AWD badges for bragging, and are more interested in soft-roaders than hardcore off-roading beasts.

The V90 CC handles very well on meandering highways, narrow roads, and also sharp turns. It is no corner carver, but doesn't protest being thrown into such situations – body roll is contained largely. This car offers fun, and a lot of straight line stability. At high speeds on flowing corners, the V90 CC handled itself pretty well, and rear passengers didn't really complain about being thrown around – their major grouse was about lack of under-thigh support and a straight back rest that stiffened up the body after a long journey. Overall ride quality is excellent – while there is a feeling of floating when travelling on smooth tarmac thanks to the air suspension, it handles itself fairly well even when faced with potholed urban roads or rutted tracks. It is only when you hit these at high speeds or when larger obstacles come in its way that the noise levels seep into the otherwise quiet cabin. And when you throw it around sharp corners, the vehicle is easy to handle despite its size in terms of length. The steering weighs up or lightens up admirably depending on speeds, gives adequate feedback where it is needed, and does your bidding instantly. Braking is sure, and the 'IntelliSafe' radar-based safety system is great to follow traffic in tight situations.

Option to consider?

It was a revelation driving this car around, and a real pleasure too. While estate cars haven't had much success in India in the times gone by, Volvo feels that the time is ripe for India to have estate cars, and hence the V90 CC. Their success with CC vehicles in India also gives them this quiet confidence. Given the kind of fun that I had driving this large vehicle around, the comfort levels within, the features that have been provided, the kind of handling and drive it offers, and the high safety standards that Volvo is known for, I think the V90 CC stands a chance to make its mark. It will not be a volume giver for Volvo, since it will operate in a very niche segment. People wanting a larger executive sedan with loads of comfort, luxury, and features will surely be tempted to try out the V90 CC. Volvo has priced the vehicle quite aggressively, despite it being a CBU import; and that is really tempting. Indeed, I believe that it will be a shame if one didn't even evaluate the V90 CC by taking a test drive.

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