2014 Volvo S60 - Review



Introduction

The TCC Rating is a clear numeric rating value based on a 10-point scale that reflects the overall opinion of our automotive experts on any vehicle and rolls up ratings we give each vehicle across sub-categories you care about like performance, safety, styling and more.

Our rating also has simple color-coded "Stop" (red), "Caution" (orange), or "Go" (green) messages along with the numerical score so you can easily understand where we stand at a glance.

Our automotive experts then also collect and show you what other websites say about these different aspects of any vehicle. We do this leg work for you to simplify your research process.

The Volvo S60 may not have much in common with your image of the brand. It's sleekly designed, with advanced features and sharp handling--things you'd associated maybe with Acura or Infiniti, not the boxy visage of Volvo past. Get used to it: the S60 is the snappy, safety-minded harbinger of Swedish things to come.

With large wheels and a wedge-shaped nose-to-tail design with swooping lines in the middle, the S60 is more noticeable on the road than any Volvo to come before it. Inside, there's a blend of flamboyance and Scandinavian simplicity that's both smart and stylish. High-quality materials, pleasing textures and that 'floating' center stack give the car a decidedly hip vibe over some of its more traditional competitors. The exterior of the car has been updated for 2014 to include a slightly revised front bumper, hood, and grille; new headlight design; and LED daytime running lights.

The S60 is just a bit smaller than most U.S.-market mid-size sedans, yet it's a five-seater with true space for four adults. Front seats aren't quite the Volvo perches we like from other larger models; they're a little bit shorter in the lower cushions. But back-seat accommodations are surprisingly good for adults, thanks to some smart contouring. Factor in the quiet cabin and good ride quality and you have a true luxury-car feel--in all but the R-Design, which picks up more road harshness. The 4C dynamic chassis system in the T6 makes it the pick of the bunch for combining performance and comfort; T6 models get driver-selectable steering feel, too. The T6 R-Design throws that out in favor of a dedicated Sport suspension that's lowered and noticeably stiffer.

In addition to all the expected safety features--such as front, side, and side-curtain airbags; anti-lock brakes; and stability and traction control--what sets the S60 apart is its safety technology. And there's a lot of it. Corner Traction Control directs torque across the car to enhance grip in aggressive maneuvers; a radar-based Pedestrian Detection with Full Auto Brake can identify and brake for pedestrians or other objects-like cyclists-in the road if the driver doesn't give the system indication they're trying to avoid it. The Blind Spot Information System has been updated for 2014 to also include cross-traffic alerts.

Styling

A quick look at the exterior of the S60 will tell you a few things about the car–first, that it's absolutely a Volvo, and second, that it's probably one of the sportiest, most rakish-looking Volvos ever designed. With its smooth contours and sweeping lines, expressive, organic details; plus its flashy alloy wheels and wedge-like exterior, the S60 really does look like it's moving, even at a standstill.

For 2014, the S60 has been given a slight refresh, with a new hood, as well as a grille that features a larger Volvo ironmark as well as a new horizontal pattern and a little more brightwork. LED running lamps are added, too, and the shape and design of the headlights has been retouched. In back, there's a new integrated exhaust pipe outlet.

The top-performance R-Design model sets an even bolder look inside and out. From the outside, the 2014 S60 R Design model somehow manages to make it look even more aggressive, with a rear diffuser, sport tailpipes, a spoiler, special wheels, and other R Design

elements. The R Design gets its own theme, with a unique steering wheel, upholstery, and other trim items adding to the more track-oriented look.

Volvo's Swedish design ethos really shows inside, where the brand has taken textured surfaces and contrasting hues to a new level. Unique wood and metal detailing, along with the captivating floating center stack, really set a design direction inside. Up close it's stark and simple, yet somehow welcoming, with a dash material modeled after the rippled surface of water, and the two-tone elements extending to the upholstery, instrument panel, and material textures.

Performance

The 2014 S60's performance matches its aggressive styling in most trims, though the highend R-Design models may not deliver quite the handling and refinement to match some enthusiasts' demands.

There's more than enough power to please everyone else, though, with power coming from turbocharged in-line five- or six-cylinder engines. There's also the option of front- or all-wheel drive for those in need of an all-weather sedan. As a front-wheel-drive model, the base T5 is capable of getting from 0-60 in only 6.8 seconds—not shabby for a base engine.

At the top rung is the S60 R Design, which essentially gets a 'chipped' version of the same turbo six good for 325 horsepower and 354 pound-feet of torque; and there's really no fuel economy or drivability tradeoff. To go with it, the R Design gets a unique tuned suspension system standard, offering crisper handling and sportier ride.

The S60 T6 gets a 3.0-liter turbocharged in-line six-cylinder, rated at 300 horsepower and 325 pound-feet of torque. It feels even stronger than its numbers might suggest, and while it's disappointing that there's no manual gearbox available the six-speed automatic transmission and all-wheel drive pair for easy driving, fast acceleration, confident traction and great all-weather capability. These models can get to 60 mph in about 5.8 seconds.

Even in its other variations, the S60 already steers and handles well, and a MyCar menu system that offers three different levels of driver-tunable assist for further enhancement. The S60 is a little heavier than it looks, yet it's nimble enough for hairpins and maneuverable enough for tight city streets. In 2013 Volvo increased the front disc brake diameter of R-Design models, from 12.4 to 13.2 inches, which addresses one performance issue we noted on the track.

The S60 does now offer steering wheel paddle-shifters, and they're even included in the T5 if you get the Sport Package. But the manual mode doesn't hold gears like you'd expect, unexpectedly downshifting on heavy throttle when you might not want to use a lower gear.

Quality

While the name 'S60' may sound like a large number for a large, sedan the truth of the matter is that the S60 is almost small enough to be considered compact. It's closer in size to an Acura TSX or Mercedes-Benz C-Class than it is a BMW 5-Series or Infiniti M. That said, it makes good use of the small space, and there's plenty of room for passengers.

Inside, it's a European luxury-car experience. The S60 isn't perfectly quiet, but wind, tire, and road noise are well-controlled. Touring, Dynamic, and Four-C Active Chassis options provide a wide range of firmness, and the available Four-C Active Chassis suspension enables Comfort, Sport, and Advanced modes for increased driver control.

New front sport seats are the most significant new items inside the S60 for 2014; they're a little more aggressively contoured than what was offered in these models before, although just as comfortable. The back seat looks tighter from the outside than it actually is when you get in, thanks to good contouring for adults, and outboard positions that are 'scooped in' somewhat. Even though over six feet tall can sit back there, with enough legroom, and possibly enough headroom.

Trunk space, as hinted by the tall rear deck, is abundant. Rear seatbacks fold forward and are 40/60-split, with loading ease quite impressive.

Features

Last year, Volvo changed the way the trims and packages worked on the S60 models. They're still offered in T5, T6 and R-Design trims, but you can then opt for Premier, Premier Plus and Platinum versions on top of those engine selections.

With a price range from \$33,315 up to nearly \$55k for a fully optioned R-Design Platinum, the S60 appeals as both a stylish, safe and comfortable car for the family, as well as a powerful sport sedan with some of the latest feature technology, convenience and active safety features.

For example, throughout the lineup, a Technology Package includes a long list of active-safety items (including pedestrian detection with full auto brake, adaptive cruise control, and a new road-sign info system), all for just \$1,500. Otherwise a \$1,550 Climate Package adds heated front seats, a heated steering wheel, and a heated windshield, as well as heated washer nozzles. And a Sport Package brings the Dynamic Chassis setup, 18-inch Other wheel options and Urbane Wood inlays are among other extras.

Entry-level S60 T5 models include power accessories, cruise control, driver control interface, a trip computer, Bluetooth hands-free communication and Bluetooth audio streaming, HD Radio, USB/iPod/auxiliary input, CD/MP3 audio system, and more. At the Premier level you get upgraded alloy wheels, bright window trim, and a new adaptive TFT

configurable display that has Elegance, Eco, and Performance themes. Last year, Volvo added rain-sensor wipers, headlight washers, a tunnel-detection feature for the headlights, and new dual tailpipes for the base T5.

Premier Plus models add leather, a power passenger seat, a garage-door opener, park assist, dual xenon headlamps, and a power moonroof, while Platinum models get Keyless Drive, a voice-control navigation system with real-time traffic, and a rear camera system. Heated rear seats are even offered on T5 models.

Those features are roughly the same for T6 and R-Design models, although all T6s get the Personal Car Communicator, Keyless Drive, larger 18-inch wheels, and a few other items.