



Cross country motoring

Bob Arora test drives the Volvo V40 Cross Country

The car I have had the pleasure of driving this month is the Volvo V40 Cross Country courtesy of Mill Volvo, Newcastle.

My first car was a Volvo 340; it obviously wasn't the trendiest car for a young driver but one of the safest around. I think it was a 1.7lt engine and it wasn't the best for fuel consumption partly due to the boxy un-aerodynamic shape, although while I owned the car, it never skipped a beat and it was totally reliable, whatever the weather.

The V40 has been a phenomenal sales success for Volvo and it's really easy to see why.

The cute looking car is something a little bit different to the run of the mill Focus, Astra and Golf. Being a Volvo not only is the design a little bit quirky to look at, but it's also cool and funky inside too.

The car I had the pleasure of driving recently was the V40 Cross Country, which looks like a V40 that has been to the gym working out.

The car has a higher ride height along with chunkier bumpers, sporty looking silver roof rails and integrated led lights.

Despite looking like a quite serious off roader, this car is only front wheel drive; a four wheel drive version is available in the range topping 2.5lt 5 cylinder engine. I am sure the front wheel drive car will get most owners out of most trouble in bad weather.

The Cross Country carries a £1000 premium over the V40. Anyone looking for a higher driving position and funky looking styling should look no further. The cars main



competition is likely to be the Nissan Qashqai, Skoda Yeti, Audi Q3 and the BMW X1.

The car I drove was priced at just under £25,000, which is on par with its competitors; while the car's trump card has to be its amazing fuel economy.

I drove the D2 version that is fitted with a 1.6lt Diesel engine. This car has 115bhp and it helps get you up to 115mph or 62mph in 11.2 seconds.

Picking the car up I noticed the Cross Country's fuel economy figure of 74mpg and 99g/km CO2 emissions. As I normally have quite a heavy right foot I remember thinking it was going to be totally unachievable. So as I set off I decided to put the computer readout onto fuel economy and I was amazed to see the car was returning well over 60mpg, which I thought was excellent considering the car was an automatic.

Now believe me when I say I have never

seen these consumption figures with my rather spirited driving style.

Inside, you are greeted with a large steering wheel and the indicator and wiper stalks wouldn't look out of place in a Volvo lorry.

The car feels very well put together and it goes without saying it feels a very solid and safe place to be.

The two-tone leather interior seemed to give the inside a bit more life and soul. My car also had a panoramic roof, which again helped make the car feel a lot more light and airy.

Some of the minor controls were a bit confusing especially when on the move and I am sure they could be simplified. My favourite bit of the dash had to be the electronic speedo and rev counter. You could change the dials to suit your driving style so if you were feeling sporty you can choose the sport option or the Eco mode that puts the emphasis totally on fuel economy and driving economically.

The car's boot space is 335ltrs with some extra stowage space underneath the boot floor, which was ideal for hiding away valuables or for extra storage.

The seats also fold down if extra space is required. And, as with most Volvos, the car's rear middle seat can be made into a child's booster seat which, for young families, is a real bonus.

After driving this car I remembered why I loved my first car and thankfully the car was way more fuel efficient than my original Volvo.

Anyone looking to buy a great looking and practical car really needs to head on down to Mill Volvo, because, as they quite regularly tell us, now is the time to choose Volvo!