

Portland Observer Auto Review

News and reviews on new motor vehicles

2007 Volvo XC90 AWD Rated '2007 TOP SAFETY PICK'

BY KATHLEEN CARR

Volvo does things a little differently from other premium brands in the automotive world. For this Swedish manufacturer, safety and kid-friendliness are just as important as luxury amenities and driving performance, and in no vehicle is this more apparent than the Volvo XC90, a midsize 7-passenger SUV.

Easily one of the safest SUV's on the market, the Volvo XC90 pioneered Roll Stability Control when it debuted for the 2003 model year. This bit of technology uses a gyro sensor to identify every SUV owner's greatest fear, a potential rollover situation, and activates the stability control system to avert the danger. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety rated the 2007 XC90 as 'Top Safety Pick,' an award recognizing vehicles that do the

best job of protecting people in front, side and rear crashes, based on ratings in IIHS extensive tests. Volvo's dedication to safety has placed them solidly as leaders in automotive safety.

Safety features debuting in the 2007 model year is the Blind Spot Information System (BLIS), which monitors images from a pair of cameras mounted on the inside mirrors and warns the driver via an indicator light when another vehicle moves into the XC90's blind spot. Of course, the XC90 also provides staples like side curtain airbag protections for all three rows, anti-whiplash seats and an emergency communication system. Volvo crash safety is legendary, scoring very well in both NHTSA and IIHS testing.

In addition to peace of mind,



DESCRIPTION: 3.2-Liter, Inline 6-Cylinder engine; Geartronic 6-speed electronically controlled automatic/manual transmission w/Lockup Torque Converter; CITY is 16-MPG and HIGHWAY is 22-MPG; \$45,200.00 MSRP.

the Volvo XC90 also provides plenty in the way of practicality. Headroom and legroom are ample for children and teenagers in the second and third rows, and both the 40/20/40-split second-row seat and the 50/50-split third row can fold flat into the floor when extra cargo space is needed. There's even an integrated child-

booster cushion for the second row that allows the center section to slide forward for easier access to a fussy toddler.

For all these reasons, the 7-passenger Volvo XC90 is one of our top recommendations to families shopping for an SUV. Although it's off-road performance is merely average as luxury SUVs go. The

Volvo XC90 is still in its first generation, and changes have been minimal over the years. The 3.2-liter six-cylinder engine, rated at 235-horsepower, also debuted in 2007. Volvo's new naturally-aspired inline six is a good replacement for the old 2.5-liter turbo five. The new engine uses variable cam phasing and variable valve lift on the intake cam, for improvements in torque and horsepower as well as decreased fuel consumption and emissions levels. It's matched to the 6-speed automatic transmission. Our test vehicle was equipped with the optional Geartronic 6-speed Electronically Controlled Automatic/Manual transmission, AWD with Volvo's new Instant Traction system. This is great for nasty weather. The XC90 handles well on streets and highways, and offers a solid, quiet, comfortable ride. Keep in mind the laws of physics, the XC90 at nearly 4,500-lbs. is no lightweight, and inertia does make its presence felt when changing directions; the acceleration was adequate but not

exceptional. As this is a premium SUV, all major safety and convenience features are included even on the base model, with exception of rear parking sensors, which are optional.

Major options include rear entertainment system with dual screens, a DVD-based navigation system, a Dolby ProLogic II surround-sound audio system and an interior air quality system that monitors incoming air for toxic substances. Even the mirrors have a safety awareness about them with a water-repellent coating, leaving them always clear.

Volvo's reputation for safety is not just marketing talk. Volvo puts an incredible amount of time, money and effort into research and engineering designed to protect the driver and passengers. Overall, Volvo has put together a sharp-handling, stylish looking and extremely hooked-up fat-ride with a myriad of famous Volvo safety features, with only one mission - to protect you and your loved ones.

SPORTS

Bryant Leads West to Victory

In high-scoring all-star game

(AP) -- Kobe Bryant headlined the biggest act in Las Vegas on Sunday night.

Bryant, Carmelo Anthony and the West high rollers lit up the Strip with their own version of Showtime, romping past LeBron James and the East 153-132 in the NBA All-Star game.

"I think we had a little flair, a little Vegas in there," West forward Shawn Marion said. "Hopefully the fans enjoyed it a lot."

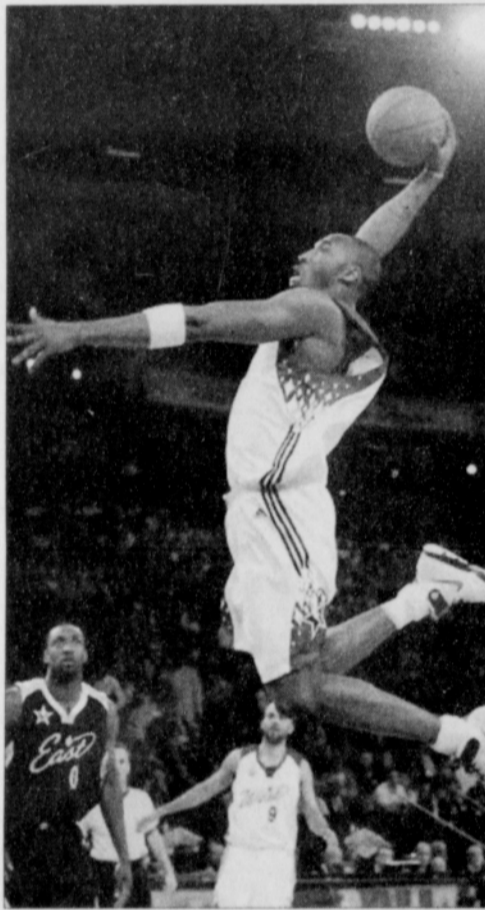
When the showgirls, acrobats, magicians and Elvis impersonators were finally done, it was Bryant who heard the loudest cheers, as fans chanted "MVP!" "MVP!" in the closing minutes.

"To have this type of reaction here in this All-Star game is very humbling," Bryant said. "I just feel very blessed and very fortunate to be able to come out tonight and put on a really good show."

Bryant scored 31 points, had six of the West's record 52 assists and was selected the MVP. Amare Stoudemire added 29 points for the West, which quickly built a big lead and held it this time, a year after blowing a 21-point cushion in a loss in Houston.

An event that some locals called the biggest thing fell a little short in the basketball department — the West had a large lead for most of the final three quarters — but that didn't seem to matter to the fans or the players.

"We got here at 2 o'clock," the East's Shaquille O'Neal said. "There's a lot of stretching and standing around. We were all kind of stiff, so the game was a little lopsided. But that's OK, they came here to see a show and they got



Kobe Bryant of the Western Conference dunks as the East's Gilbert Arenas looks on during Sunday's NBA All-Star Game.

a show."

And the players agree with Las Vegas officials that the game should come back here — whether Las Vegas ever gets an NBA team or not.

"If they don't do it here every year, they should at least have it here every other year," East guard Richard Hamilton said.

James scored 28 points for the East, and Dwight Howard had 20 points and 12 rebounds. The East barely shot 40 percent through three quarters in a game that isn't known for its defensive intensity before a late flurry during garbage time.

The game was secondary to the show in this most unusual of All-Star games — and it was quite a show.

With tickets unavailable to the public, brokers were asking more than \$20,000 for a top seat. Jay-Z, Beyonce, Diddy, Prince, Eva Longoria and Adam Sandler were among those who scored spots in the front row, and Christina Aguilera and Toni Braxton performed at halftime.

The event started with a celebrity red carpet, where Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman, flanked as usual by his showgirls and backed by entertainer Wayne Newton, vowed again to get the NBA here full-time with a new arena to play in.

Magicians Siegfried and Roy then welcomed the fans to Las Vegas, before introducing the showgirls who escorted Newton out to the stage for a performance of "Viva Las Vegas." After the East All-Stars were introduced, Newton took the stage again for another performance before the West players were announced.

After another Las Vegas entertainer, Danny Gans, sang the national anthem, it was finally time for some basketball — after about a 45-minute pregame.

Perhaps that took its toll on the players. There were missed dunks and passes thrown out of bounds by both teams, but the East was by far the worst. They missed seven of their first nine shots, including a blown dunk attempt by Shaquille O'Neal.

Hate Talk Taken Back

Hardaway said reaction was like he 'killed somebody'

(AP) -- Former NBA All-Star Tim Hardaway apologized again Sunday for his anti-gay remarks, saying he "didn't mean" to say what he said on a Miami radio program last week.

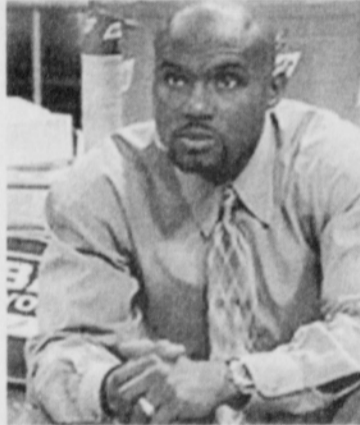
Hardaway acknowledged he made a major mistake by saying "I hate gay people" when asked how he would react to having a gay teammate.

"I don't hate gay people," Hardaway said. "I'm a goodhearted person. I interact with people all the time. ... I respect people. For me to say 'hate' was a bad word, and I didn't mean to use it."

Hardaway made the anti-gay comments a week after John Amaechi became the first former NBA player to reveal his homosexuality. Hardaway said he didn't believe gay players should share a locker room with heterosexual players, then added, "I don't like gay people, and I don't like to be around gay people."

On Sunday, he acknowledged "that was very bad."

His remarks quickly drew criticism from both the NBA and sev-



Tim Hardaway

eral gay and lesbian groups, and Hardaway said the firestorm surprised him.

"It was like, you know, I had killed somebody. ... I never knew that this was going to escalate that high," Hardaway said.

Hardaway was banished from some NBA-sanctioned appearances he was scheduled to make in Las Vegas as part of the All-Star weekend. He also lost at least one of his endorsement deals, and he ordered his name dropped from advertising at a car wash he owns in Miami, saying he made that decision to ensure the safety of his employees.

Hardaway played parts of 13 NBA seasons with Golden State, Miami, Dallas, Denver and Indiana, and played in five All-Star games.

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