

Portland Observer Auto Review



Specifications: 3.2-Liter, 6-Cylinder 235-hp @ 236 lb-ft. torque engine; 6-speed Adaptive Shift Logic transmission; 16-City 24-Highway MPG; \$34,410. MSRP

2008 Volvo V70 Station Wagon

The luxury wagon

BY: KATHLEEN CARR

While some say wagons are a dying breed, having largely been ditched in the U.S. in favor of SUVs and crossovers, it's unfortunate because, as evidenced by the redesigned Volvo V70, there are plenty of compelling reasons to consider one. This Volvo offers a comfortable ride, upscale interior, a number of safety features and a large cargo area.

Volvo's hallmark has been and remains safety, and the V70 is available with advanced safety features like Collision Warning with Brake Support. This system uses a light and sound to warn the driver if it senses a collision may occur with a car in front of it; the system brakes the car if the driver doesn't heed the alert.

Volvos are still about the safest cars on the market Volvo wisely figured out that safety was nothing to be ashamed of.

Volvo has made the front end of the V70 a bit more assertive and muscular; a sleeker updated appearance. The V70 features a raised hood designed to lessen the effect of an impact with a pedestrian. Xenon high-intensity-discharge headlights that turn in concert with the steering wheel are available. A power liftgate is optional.

The sole engine offered in the wagon is a 3.2-liter inline-six-cylinder

that makes 235 horsepower and 236 pounds-feet of torque. This engine drives a smooth-shifting six-speed automatic transmission that incorporates a clutchless-manual mode for driver-controlled gear changes. With EPA estimates of 16/24 mpg city/highway, gas mileage in this front-wheel-drive wagon is unimpressive.

The 2009 Volvo V70's inline-six

Thanks to the car's length, there's an abundance of cargo and seating space. Our family rolls with lots of stuff, and we had no problem fitting it all in and retaining lots of legroom. The built-in booster seats have become a Volvo trademark, and they are super-cool. To me, that convenience alone almost seems worth the price of admission.

The best thing about the simplicity of the controls is that it's

iPods.

More impressively, the V70's options include a rear-seat entertainment system with two 7-inch headrest-mounted displays. It is rare to see seatback-mounted screens even on luxury vehicles, and their availability on the V70 shows that Volvo is aiming at the higher end of the market with its third-generation model. An auxiliary video input jack also allows connection of video games or external DVD players.

Another notable—if gimmicky—tech highlight on the V70 is the Personal Car Communicator which uses two-way radio technology and a heartbeat detector to notify the driver if there is anyone in the car while the alarm is activated. What I found more useful is the Keyless Drive system, which lets drivers unlock the car and start the engine without removing the key fob from their pockets.

The V70 is a comfortable and capable long-haul cruiser that takes Volvo's traditional safety focus, enhances it with some advanced technology, and wraps it in a stylish design inside and out. The result is a stylish, well balanced car that will appeal to tech-savvy and safety minded drivers. The 2008 Volvo V70 is a smart choice in family transportation.

The V70 is a stealth performance car masquerading as a family hauler; the station wagon with a split personality -- useful and fun.

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engine is smooth-running and delivers adequate power when driving in the city or on country roads; it doesn't offer a lot of high-speed passing power. It's not poky, but I was expecting more.

The five-seat V70 has a simple, clutter-free dashboard and a floating center control panel. The rear seats are split 40/20/40 to accommodate various cargo-carrying needs, and a movable cargo floor is available. Leather upholstery, automatic climate control and power front seats are among the available amenities.

really kind of deceptive: there's some sweet technology in this car. The V70 sound system really bumps! The system has a built-in amplifier pushing 4x40-watts of output through the eight speakers, including a subwoofer and a long center-fill speaker on top of the dash.

The system has: two five-band graphic equalizers allowing drivers to tweak audio for the front and rear speakers independently, while simple bass and treble settings are also available for on-the-fly tuning with an auxiliary-input jack for

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