

# So you already thought Volvo was into safety? Meet the car that can stop itself



By Barbara and Bill Schaffer

Exceptional styling, performance and technology would be enough to place the new Volvo XC60 near the top of the heap of small premium sport utilities, but add the world's most advanced safety equipment to the equation and it reaches the pinnacle.

From the twin slanted rows of LED driving lights flanking each side of the classic Volvo grille, to the taut hood, sweeping roofline and Volvo signature tall LED taillights, which remind us of a glowing lava flow pouring from the sides of the petite rear spoiler, the design is one of a kind.

Inside, the two-tone interior fits the passengers with the elegance of a finely tailored suit. Add an accent of light Scandinavian wood, brushed aluminum trim and the unique asymmetrical center console, and the XC60 could land on any "best dressed" list.

Volvo engineers matched the unique design with class-leading performance. Powered by a 281-hp turbocharged 3.2-liter in-line six-cylinder engine with a six-speed automatic transmission and all-wheel drive, the XC60 accelerates from 0 to 60 mph in just over 7 seconds. On a long drive up the northern California coast, the XC60 demonstrated excellent handling on tight turns and sweeping high-speed corners. The car is quiet, comfortable and—most of all—fun to drive, with a light, agile feeling.

On our return drive on interior California freeways, the new DVD navigation system with Real Time Traffic proved helpful in avoiding traffic slowdowns. We also appreciated features like Adaptive Cruise Control, which uses sensors to keep the car a selected distance from the vehicle ahead, and the Blind Spot Information System that automatically identifies vehicles just out of sight of the side view mirrors and then flashes a warning in the outside mirror surface. The list of available technology is a page long, with four main option packages that add everything from an Interior Air Quality System to power tailgate.

To make travel more enjoyable, the XC60 is the first of offer HD Radio as standard equipment, updating the radio to digital quality. The audio system is also equipped with AUX and USB inputs for connection to devices like iPods and memory sticks. Sirius™ Satellite radio and

The Volvo XC60 has a look that is simultaneously slim and broad-shouldered, a lean and muscular look that is well-suited to these transitional times.



Bluetooth hands-free phone interface are also standard.

There is only one very well equipped model available, with a starting price of \$38,025 including the destination charge. Add the climate, technology, collision-avoidance and convenience packages along with an optional paint color, and the price tops out at about \$45,000.

Volvo has a passion for vehicle safety, and the XC60 has list of safety features that reads like a Who's Who of the available equipment. The latest and greatest is the new City Safety feature for avoiding low-speed collisions under 19 mph. When a vehicle ahead brakes suddenly and the system determines a collision is likely, the brakes are pre-charged. If the driver fails to respond, the car applies the brakes automatically. When the relative speed difference between the vehicles is less than 9 mph, it may



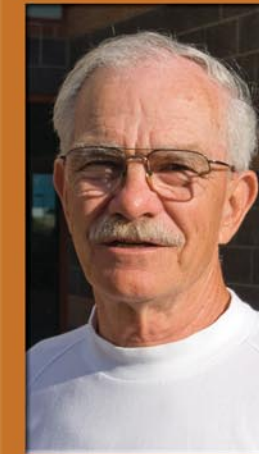
We tried the City Safety System at Powell Volvo on McDowell Road in Scottsdale. Instead of the inflatable car Bill and Barbara tested with, we had three vertical barriers. It can be disquieting (not surprisingly) to bear down on an obstacle with no intent to brake, but not as disquieting as the crash you could one day have without this feature. Volvo points out that this system applies 100% of the brakes, compared with about 40% maximum by most humans.

help the driver avoid the collision altogether. Between 9 and 19 mph, it focuses on reducing speed as much as possible prior to the impact.

To experience the feature, we drove the XC60 at about 19 mph, ignoring the large blue inflatable car in our path. Just feet before we crashed into the dummy car, the brakes activated stopped the car a few feet short of a crash, without the driver even touching the brake pedal.

The only downside we saw was the fuel economy, which is rated by the EPA at 15 mpg city and 22 mpg highway. Other than that, the Volvo XC60 has just about everything we could ask for in a car. ■

## Opinions...



**Don Bilderback, Tempe**

"You really need to try that City Safety brake mechanism. They say keep your feet off the brake pedal, it'll stop, and boy it does! The vehicle has style and size: look at the interior, really comfortable, and I like the Sandstone Beige and Espresso color combination. This vehicle has the most power in its class. It has the torque of a small V-8 and at much lower RPM, about 1500 versus 3000-4500 in others." *Would he drive with the City Safety feature every day?* "I'm not sure. There's one instance where somebody else having it would have saved me, when I was rear-ended. But if a person's driving normally, it won't even kick in. It gets VERY close before it stops. It works to 19 mph, max, for stop-and-go driving."



**Wendy Engelhardt, Phoenix**

"It was really cool, actually! I like the feature, but it's only available on the XC60, which isn't my first choice among Volvo models. I did enjoy driving the XC60 more than I thought I would, but I tend to like cars more than SUVs or crossovers. The feature comes standard on the XC60, which is a plus if you want that kind of vehicle, but for a car person like myself who would choose a different Volvo, it's a non-factor for now. *Wendy currently drives a Saab 9<sup>3</sup>, her second 9<sup>3</sup>, and she really likes that a lot, but she's considering trading for a Volvo, though has some issues with the remaining lease on the Saab.*

**Ray and Kelly Leppien, daughter Clarisse, Tempe**

*Kelly: "I just kept waiting for (the braking) to happen. It's amazing how quick it is, when it reacts." Ray: "It reacts real quick. The car waits at first, and then the sudden stop surprised me the most. My instinct was to brake. They say don't use the brake, or it turns control back over to you."*



*The Leppiens have an Escalade and two Volvos in the family: an S60 and their son's S40. They have in fact had a long line of Volvos, primarily for the safety factor, also because*

*they've held up well. If City Safety were an option on any of the vehicles, they'd say, "yes."*



**Steve Westwood, Mesa**

*Steve is a long-time member of the Cactus Chapter, Volvo Club of America. He worked at Powell Volvo as a lot boy 25 years ago and is now restoring a classic Volvo 240 turbo wagon. He's been helping organize the VCOA Western Region Annual Meeting at the Volvo Arizona Proving Grounds on May 16, 2009. His six-year-old son, Superman Sam, has been a VCOA member since age one month. "The all-wheel-drive system in the new XC60 is fantastic. I fully expect to see one out exploring the dirt roads I ride my dual sport motorcycle on. The City Safety feature was so sensitive, it actually detected the breeze blowing the demo barriers."*