

MOTORING



Volvo still

The ES90 is Volvo's first electric saloon. In an ever-increasing catalogue of SUVs, it's a refreshing sight.

My father was never a petrolhead. Not in the same way I am, anyway. He always liked racing more than road cars and he never spent money he didn't have in a car he loved.

That's not a criticism – obviously. Common sense ruled his car-buying decisions all his life and the one reason he drives the car he loves the most today is because me and my sister bought it for him with his own money without him knowing. That was a good day.

He still has that BMW X6, so I guess we made the right call. Ever since the first generation was launched in 2007, he fell in love with it and it was his 'if I could' car. Turns out he just needed a little push.

When I was looking for that X6, I remember thinking if that time had come 30 years before, I would probably be looking for a Volvo wagon. You see, I was always – always – into cars since I was a small kid and I can remember almost every conversation I had with my father about his cars or the cars he would buy if he could. For a few years when I was around

eight or nine years old, in the middle of the nineties, the Volvo wagon was it.

I thought they were quite square and a little too boxy, but my dad used to say it was a high-quality product, a car bought by people in the know. The herd would be buying a Mercedes or BMW, but the connoisseur would get a Volvo.

Inconsequential as those thoughts may have been, in my head Volvo became just that. A high-quality product. Anyway, fast-forward 30-odd years and I write about cars on a weekly basis. I have been for 17 years, meaning I have driven more cars than I care to remember. One thing is still true though: when I look at a Volvo, my mind immediately goes back to those pre-conceived ideas of three decades ago.

I still have not let go of this 'it's-a-Volvo-it-must-be-good' concept. And, truth be told, they usually are. Volvo is not the same company it was when I was in pre-school, but some things remain. The approach regarding safety first; the unmistakable design; that Swedish *je ne sais quoi* and,



unquestionably, the ever-present quality.

Volvo want to go fully electric more than most other manufacturers but have just announced it will keep on producing hybrids past 2030 because it's what the clients want. I am not going to discuss the merits of that plan once again. This eagerness to get to a fully electric catalogue puts, in

my opinion, a bigger weight on every electric Volvo of today, as they must represent everything this company wants to be. Which brings us to this week's car, the very new ES90.

The ES90 is Volvo's interpretation of a modern saloon for the electric age. It's a much taller car than the average saloon and, at 5m long, it's big. Global parking spots are going to halve if cars keep growing at this rate.

The public for this kind of car puts technology in front of everything else, so the ES90 seems more like a space shuttle than a car. It does so many things that if I wanted to learn them all, I would have to stop going places with it and start pressing its enormous screen, looking at menus and sub-menus and sub-submenus just to get a grasp on the thing.

Except I don't care much about any of that. So let me complement the information you can get on any Volvo video on YouTube regarding all the latest tech the ES90 has by saying this car is really rather good at doing old car stuff. Like moving. Being comfortable. Going around corners. Braking. Accelerating. The basics. Which are the most important things really.

It also feels... you guessed it: high-quality. It's a car developed by people with good taste and who definitely care about design and the beauty in small things.

Three versions will be available: Single Motor Extended Range with 245 kW (333 hp), 92 kWh battery, up to 650 km of range and 0-100 km/h in 6.6 seconds; Twin Motor with 330 kW (449 hp), 106 kWh battery, up to 700 km of range

and 0-100 km/h in 5.4 seconds; Twin Motor Performance with 500 kW (680 hp), 106 kWh battery, up to 700 km of range and 0-100 km/h in 4 seconds. Prices start at €72,950.

The only thing I absolutely hated about it was the key-card. It doesn't work. Sometimes it opens the car, sometimes it doesn't. And when the sky is falling down on you with rain that becomes a serious problem. Volvo say they want customers to use the Volvo app to interact with the machine. I say bring back a key with a remote that allows me to *always* open the car with ease. Change isn't always progress.

The ES90 is an appealing electric saloon, in tandem with today's market and with a distinctive personality. Maybe not for everyone, but still definitely very much a Volvo.



*'Volvos are great at not being German and that simple fact is their first selling point'*

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