



Volvo C30

My first Volvo

Review | Volvo is not my thing. I have nothing against safety or Scandinavian design. But an S40 is unnecessarily large and a V50 is only for fathers with kids. That's why Volvo now introduces the C30: this compact Volvo offers all qualities of the larger models, but now packaged in an attractive design. Does the C30 drive as well as it looks?

Just how good the C30 looks depends on the angle one looks at it. Straight from the front the newcomer is hardly distinguishable from any other Volvo. That's not very surprising, because the front of the C30 is technically identical to the S40. Volvo gave the C30 a slightly sharper look, but the structure underneath is exactly the same as the S40. The front is just as big and even the wheelbase equals that of the S40.



Company car or pimp car?

That is why the compact C30 is at least as roomy as the other Volvo's. For the interior the manufacturer only borrowed the best looking parts from other models. For example, the C30 is fitted with the "floating center console" on which most buttons can be found. This center piece of many Volvo-interiors is not only available in aluminium, but also in white (to match the iPod) or decorated with a motive.

This highly individual design is characteristic for the C30. Both the exterior and the interior can be adapted to one's own taste.



The C30 can be configured as a sleek premium company car to be the envy of all colleagues. Especially in "flint grey metallic" the lines of the car really come out. And how about leather seats which can be electrically adjusted and heated? A DVD based navigation system, keyless entry, Bluetooth car kit, parking aid and Volvo's "On Call" personal phone assistant make the C30 a highly desirable lease-object.

To draw a crowd, the square Volvo-dealer will pimp this C30. Fitted with a two colour body kit, two tone sports seats, sports suspension (lowered by 20 mm), rear spoiler, tinted windows and 18 inch alloy wheels this is the "badest" Volvo ever! The optional "Premium" audio system is unbelievably loud yet as crisp as possible. This is the best factory fitted audio system to date.



Space

Four lads or four business associates: despite the trim the compact C30 offers space for four. Both the head and leg room on the two separate back seats is sufficient for adults and even better than in most other compact cars. Because the rear seats are not centered behind the front seats, the C30 offers a pleasant feeling of freedom even in the back.

The glass back door provides easy entry to the modest luggage space. The space is limited, but usable for daily groceries, a sports bag or other goods. Because a spare is optional (the C30 comes with a repair kit and spray can as standard), the room underneath the spare is also available for storage.

Engines

Because the nose of the C30 is equal to the bigger models, it also has room for those bigger engines. A big engine in a small car is always good news and that certainly goes for the tested car.

The car was tested more than a month before the dealer-introduction. Volvo started production of the C30 with the top models and therefore only the top engines are available this early. Or to quote Volvo: it demonstrates how good the C30 can be.



better road holding, but the difference with the C30 is small.



That certainly goes for the 180 hp / 350 Nm strong D5 turbo diesel. This C30 can drive elegantly through city traffic as if it were a true limousine. Thanks to the standard five step automatic gearbox the C30 feels like a luxurious gig car. However this transmission uses deprecated technique (a "torque converter") and therefore uses more fuel than necessary. When provoked this strongest diesel on the price list is a real power house and performs very well. This is accompanied by a rather exciting sound for a diesel engine.

The T5 five cylinder petrol engine (220 hp / 320 Nm) is also fitted with a turbo, but is even livelier and stronger than the diesel. When driven with a cold engine the T5 suffers from turbo lag. Once the engine is warm the T5 is very quick, especially in city traffic. On the highway the T5 can accelerate endlessly and mercilessly. The engine performs best between 80 and 120 km/h, especially those speeds that are actually used in daily traffic.

Not a tank

The C30 is smaller and quicker than other Volvo's and especially livelier. The C30 certainly does not drive like a Swedish tank, like some other models still do. The C30 follows the road and does not try to eliminate every little bump. Steering is not too light and not too tight, making the C30 a pleasure to drive. Road handling is better than that of most competitors. Only rear wheel drive cars (read: BMW 1-Series) have even

On top of all the fun this Volvo of course offers lots of safety. According to the engineers the C30 is at least as strong and safe as the other Volvo's. Innovative extras like BLIS (blind spot alert in the mirror) is also available on the C30. Because of the driving pleasure the dynamic stability control and traction control have been tested frequently but needlessly.

Although the C30 is not a bargain, the car is worth the money. The C30 may be small, it offers big fun, excellent build quality and a high trim level. Therefore competition is scarce. The BMW 1-Series is even better to drive, but doesn't look half as nice. The strongest point of the Audi A3 is its image. The MINI is more fun, but less of a company car. The Volvo C30 offers a complete package: comfort and safety on a sleepy Monday morning, but good looks and driving pleasure whenever time permits.



Conclusion

I've been looking forward to driving the C30 for a long time and the car does not disappoint. Volvo understood very well why some customers do not buy their cars and found a solution for each problem. The C30 doesn't just look good, the design is also very smart. The interior is remarkably roomy for a car of this size.

The driving characteristics are just as I hoped for: comfortable, but not so comfortable that there's no room for fun left. The strong engines and lively ride make the C30 more than the smallest Volvo: it is a best Volvo. Volvo, that's my thing! (Ivo Kroone) ■



Specifications

Volvo C30 D5 Geartronic SE Lux

Size and weight

Length x width x height	425 x 178 x 145 cm
Wheelbase	264 cm
weight	1.379 kg
Trailer	750 kg
Trailer - braked	1.500 kg
Fuel capacity	60 l
Luggage space	251/894 l
Tyre size	205/50R17

Engine and performance



Capacity	2400 cc
Cylinders / valves	5/4
Max power	180 PS @ 4000 rpm
Max torque	350 Nm @ 1750 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	8.4 secs
topspeed	220 km/h
Average mileage	6.9 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	9.5 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	5.4 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	182 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 23,795
Price base model	Â£ 14,750