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TEST DRIVE

Wagon Wheels  
2016 Volvo V60 T5 AWD Cross Country Platinum

DAN LYONS | text  
Special to the Times Union

For decades, Volvo had a strong stake in the station wagon segment. That's why it came as such a surprise when the Swedish firm announced five years ago that they were dropping wagons from their U.S. lineup. The move was based on market realities that saw stateside wagon sales in a steady, downward slide.

But the wagon's decline was paralleled by a strong,

2016 Volvo V60 T5 AWD  
Cross Country Platinum  
MSRP: \$41,200 · As Tested: \$49,775

upsurge in crossover sales. So it wasn't so much a case of the demise of the former, as it was the growth of the latter. These wagon/SUV hybrids have come to popular prominence because they blend the people/cargo practicality of the traditional wagon with the all-season sensibility of all-wheel-drive.

Crossovers have become entrenched in our car consciousness and it's had a curious, liberating effect on wagons. Automakers are (finally, slooowly) becoming comfortable in selling straight-up station wagons again, without feeling the need to slap cladding on them and call them crossovers or SUVs.

One example of this happy trend is the reemergence of an out-and-out station wagon in the Volvo lineup, in the form of the V60. It was joined last year by the Cross Country; a variant of the stylish V60 wagon. The Cross



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER

BACKWOODS WAGON. While Volvo's V60 is a sleek-looking station wagon, the 2016 V60 Cross Country's style skews slightly more outdoorsy, with its elevated ride height, trim variations and "Neso" alloy rims.

Country is set apart from the wagon by form (black-out trim, honeycomb grille, model-specific alloy rims) and function (+2.6-inch ride height, 7.9-inch ground clearance, front/rear skid plates). Two versions are offered, both with all-wheel-drive.

The base CT5 Cross Country stickers for \$41,200. In Platinum trim, like my test car, the V60 T5 Cross Country carries an MSRP of \$44,850, and with a handful of additional options, my car had an as-tested price of \$49,775.

The V60 is a sleek-looking station wagon. The V60

Automakers are finally becoming comfortable in selling straight-up station wagons again.

Cross Country's style skews slightly more outdoorsy, with its elevated ride height, trim variations and "Neso" alloy rims. The added ground clearance and Volvo's AWD system equip this model to deal with a hearty diet of northeast winter weather, as well as light off-roading. The electronic management system in the Haldex all-wheel drive system monitors throttle, engine speed/torque, and brakes, and adjusts power output to maximize traction. When a tire starts to lose grip, the system cuts power to that wheel, and sends the available

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