

Lyons on Wheels

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

2024 Volvo V60 Cross Country B5 AWD

MSRP: \$43,450 (Core FWD) As Tested: \$62,075 (Ultimate)



Station wagons were - once and for decades - the model of choice, for family transport. Eventually, they ceded their crown to minivans, the first of which (Dodge Caravan and Plymouth Voyager) appeared in the 1984 model year. Just after the turn of the millennium, minivans gave way to Sport Utility Vehicles as the most popular pick, which were followed by crossovers; a hybrid of wagon and SUV. Fast forward to 2024, where Volvo is one of the few manufacturers that still carry station wagons in their lineup, as a classy alternative for family transportation.

This week's test drive is in the Volvo V60 Cross Country. This is the entry level of Volvo's three wagon models, joining the plug-in hybrid V60 Recharge, and the larger, V90 Cross Country. Two trim levels are offered: Plus and Ultimate. My test car was the latter, but in either case, the powertrain remains the same. Volvo's B5 engine/transmission combination specifies a turbocharged, 2.0L four cylinder engine, (247 h.p./258 lb.-ft. of torque) linked to an 8-speed automatic transmission. All Wheel Drive rounds out the powertrain. The EPA estimates fuel economy to be 23 city/31 highway/26 combined (I averaged 25 during my test drive). Volvo quotes a 0-60 time for the V60 Cross Country of 6.4 seconds (a tick quicker than its cousin, the XC60 owing, I assume, to its slipperier shape). It's comfortably fast, and quiet as it goes about its business. With its slightly raised ride height (8.3" ground clearance), it's suitable for light off-roading. But, the V60 Cross Country sits lower than many crossovers/Utes, adding carlike comfort to entry/exit. It corners confidently, and has an agreeably smooth ride.

Sliding inside, the Cross Country in Ultimate trim has a suitably upscale look and feel. Volvo's characteristically clean style for the cabin includes a minimalistic controls design. Many functions are channeled through the vertically oriented, 9" center touchscreen.



Photos are courtesy of the manufacturer.

The result is an agreeable absence of the switchgear overload found in many luxury vehicles. The tradeoff is that drivers have to drill through multiple steps to make system adjustments (to HVAC, for example). A more conventional layout (separating HVAC controls from the screen) would be more direct, with less potential for distraction. Some study time reveals the preferred path for making system adjustments. The infotainment system (now Google-based) is compatible with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

Interior dimensions are spacious, with room for six footers to fit comfortably front and back. Cabin stowage spots for pocket items run small, but cargo capacity in back ranges from 22.5-60.5 cu.-ft., depending on how you arrange the seating. Liftover height in back for the V60 Cross Country is comfortably low. Those stowage space numbers compare with 25.8 - 63.3 cubic feet, in the XC60. The difference owes to the more angular styling in Volvo's crossover model, compared to the wagon.

The \$5,050 difference in sticker price between Plus and Ultimate trim levels is accounted for by a laundry list of added features, among them: head-up display, added power seat adjustments fore and aft, 360 degree bird's-eye camera, driver assist and parking assist systems, and a Harmon-Kardon premium sound system (600 watts, 14 speakers). The option sheet also offers a further upgrade of interest to Audiophiles. The Bowers & Wilkins sound system (1,410 watts, 15-speakers) offers stellar sound, for a premium price (\$3,200).

A 40 year resident of the Capital District, Dan Lyons is the author of six automotive books, and photographer of more than 200 calendars.