

News monitored for: Volvo Auto India



Auto Bild INDIA
AN INDIA TODAY GROUP PUBLICATION

INDIA'S ONLY FORTNIGHTLY AUTO MAGAZINE
April 1, 2012 | Rs 50

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SONATA
HYUNDAI'S NEW LUXURY SEDAN
IT'S SURPRISINGLY GOOD

2.4-litre direct injection petrol engine
Rs 20 lakh

DRIVEN
Mahindra Xylo
7-seater MPV now even better

DRIVEN
Affordable new Volvo S60 D3

Is it better than Mercedes' entry level C-class?
ROADTEST

AUTO BILD ADVISOR
10 ways to fight night blindness
How to avoid common driving distractions

FEATURING
21 coolest cars for 2012

An SUV battle on tough terrain
There can only be one winner

New Mondeo
FORD'S Luxury flagship set for Indian return

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ROAD TEST

The value proposition

Pictures: Suresh Narayanan



Volvo S60 D3 Summum

With a smaller, less powerful engine, the S60 has now become even more affordable. It's still got good equipment though, and remains a good drive

So, you are beyond brand fascination and are looking for the best value proposition at the luxury end of the spectrum? AUTO BILD INDIA has just the cars for you. But which of the two is better? Keep reading to find out what we discover at the end of this road test

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MERCEDES-BENZ C-CLASS VS VOLVO S60

Mercedes C 220 CDI Classic

Entry-level offering from Mercedes in India, the C-class with its rear-wheel-drive chassis and a decently potent engine makes for a fun to drive car

If you are one who buys brands, then this one's a no-brainer. It's the Mercedes for you, and why not, the Volvo just can't match the snob value of the former in India. But, what if you are slightly more open minded and love a great deal. What if the product matters to you more; you know stuff like driving pleasure, fuel economy, space and practicality and ride and handling - what then? Does the Mercedes still make more sense? It might.

But just to be sure we have the new S60 D3 sedan, launched about a month back, going up against the most affordable Mercedes one can buy in the country - the C 220 CDI Classic. The S60 D3 is also the most affordable Volvo one can buy here, however, we have taken the more expensive version of the D3 sedan - the Summum - for this test to get it as close to the C-class in terms of pricing. Read on then to find out which of the two makes more sense to buy.

The looks

Everyone likes a good looking car, which makes the choice here slightly challenging for both the C-class and the S60 are handsome cars. Both have good street presence, modern styling and nice detailing. We do prefer the Volvo's looks nonetheless; it is edgier and more recent, but there's no denying that the C with the optional Avantgarde grille and the classic and tight proportions is hugely attractive too.

Inside, the C-class instantly it looks pushier. The plastics all round look and feel more expensive, though in terms of quality and fit and finish, there's hardly any difference between the two. But yes, operability is certainly better on the Mercedes. The controls are more intuitive and the operation of buttons and knobs is crisper. The information display, which is part of the instrumentation on the Mercedes and is integrated in the central screen on the Volvo, is ahead in

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ROAD TEST

The S60 is quicker off the line compared to the C 220, but as the speeds rise, the C's more powerful engine gives it the legs to overtake the Volvo. The difference on both counts isn't much though

Volvo S60

The interiors are similar on the D3 as the previous S60. Surprisingly, there's decent equipment on board as well. Quality and ergonomics are good too

Clocks could do with a serious redesign, but are easy to read nonetheless

Button start for the S60 is not backlit, and it's not keyless either

Rear kneeroom not as good as that in the C. Individual TV screens for the rear are optional extras

Stowage spaces: Glovebox is large and there's storage under the armrest too

Engine displaces 1984cc and makes 163bhp. It's still quite gutsy though

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MERCEDES-BENZ C-CLASS VS VOLVO S60

logic, display quality and quality of content on the C-class too. The S60's unit is just not as well sorted or segregated.

Spacewise, it's quite even here, though. Both cars offer decent space at the front, while at the rear, each score in different areas. The Volvo has more shoulder room, the Mercedes, more usable kneeroom. Additionally, the C-class has a bigger boot.

The two are also close when it comes to seating comfort. The seats all round on both cars are large and supportive and the ingress/ egress height on the S60 and the C-class are pretty similar too. But, as has been the case so far, the Mercedes again nudges ahead slightly. The rear seats on the C are larger and offer better thigh support making it better if you want to be driven around.

The drive

And if you like driving, well, both offer good doses of fun. First, the C-class. It is RWD against the Volvo's FWD layout, which means around a bend, the turn in is sharper, and if you are brave, you can indulge in a bit of oversteer as well. The C-class also feels more chuck-able and lighter on its feet.

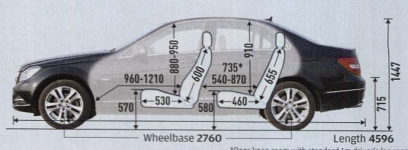
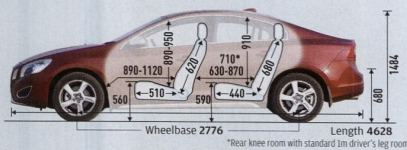
The Volvo on the contrary feels heavier, but it also feels more planted, especially around long fast corners. The grip levels are higher too on the S60 and its steering feels more alive. It also powers out of corners quite well for a FWD car. So, fun to drive, the S60 certainly is, but unlike the C, which is quite happy to take on quick direction changes, the S60 feels lazier and when in

MEASUREMENTS in millimetres
Wheel track F/R 1578/1575
Width 1899
Shoulder room 1370

S60
Tyres 235/40 R18 Continental
Spare wheel No spare

MEASUREMENTS in millimetres
Wheel track F/R 1541/1544
Width 1770
Shoulder room 1345

C220 CDI
Tyres 225/45 R17 Michelin Primacy HP
Spare wheel Full size



(Left to right) The C-class might sit on a smaller wheelbase, but the 1m kneeroom on offer is more. Otherwise, both cars a very similar in interior measurements

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ROAD TEST Mercedes C-class

Avantgarde interiors as shown here get aluminium finish, but otherwise even the Classic interiors are rich looking and very well finished

Driver information system is integrated in the clocks and is more comprehensive. Electric adjust for steering as seen on Avantgarde

Rear seats offer better thigh support and easy ingress as well

C-class looks younger from the rear and the LED lamps are a smart touch. It also gets a fire extinguisher (left). Not that there's ever been a need for it in the past

The engine is a 2143cc, four-cylinder common rail diesel unit that makes 170bhp and 400Nm of peak torque

pushed hard, but it also gives the driver a heightened sense of control.

It's also the more efficient of the two. It might not give 18.5kmpl as certified by ARAI in the normal world, but at close to 12kmpl overall, it isn't bad at all. The S60 is both more efficient in the city as well as on the highway compared to the C 220 CDI and this again has to do with the difference in the gearboxes for some part.

What we also liked about the S60 was its ride quality. It rides well both at slow speed and high and with well suppressed noise as well as vibration levels over broken surfaces it is not very tiring to drive. The C-class rides well too, but compared to the Volvo, it has an underlying stiffness to it. But it must be said, the Mercedes too has a very well insulated cabin and long distance driving is a breeze in the C-class.

On the road, however, the S60 has the advantage initially. With its 2-litre, 5-cylinder engine and 163bhp it actually manages to outrun the 170bhp, 2.2-litre C 220 CDI in the run up to 100kmph. The difference isn't too telling though with the Volvo taking about 0.4s less. But then on, the C-class clearly begins showing off its power advantage and by the time they hit 150kmph, the C 220 actually nudges ahead. But again, the difference is quite small.

The difference in driveability isn't much either, but in all the three kickdown tests, the S60 emerged quicker. One of the main reasons for this is its 6-speed automatic 'box against the 5-speed unit on the Merc. The Volvo's is also better to use, particularly in manual mode. One can make full throttle up and down shifts on the S60, which on the Mercedes are impossible and are dictated more by throttle inputs. As a result, the S60 is not only more fun to drive when

Volvo's boot is smaller on paper but in terms of usability, it does come close to the Mercedes' larger boot

doubt, it almost always tends to understeer – safe, but definitely less exciting.

As far as engines go, the Mercedes displaces higher capacity and makes slightly more power on paper as well. The torque outputs though are the same for both.

ENGINE	MERCEDES	VOLVO
Made of	All aluminium	All aluminium
Capacity	2143cc	1984cc
Cylinders	4 cyl, inline	5 cyl, inline
Installation	Longitudinal	Longitudinal
Valvetrain	4 valves/cyl, DOHC	4 valves/cyl, DOHC
Bore x stroke	88.0mmx88.3mm	81.0mmx77.0mm
Max power	170bhp@3700rpm	163bhp@3500rpm
Max torque	400Nm@2000rpm	400Nm@1750rpm
Max engine speed	4750rpm	5000rpm
Specific output	79bhp/litre	82bhp/litre
P-t-W	105bhp/tonne	97bhp/tonne
Gearbox	5-speed automatic	6-speed automatic
Driven wheels	RWD	FWD
Fuel efficiency (ARAI)	17.0kmpl	18.3kmpl

TESTED	MERCEDES	VOLVO
Acceleration		
0-60kmph	3.3s	3.5s
0-80kmph	6.2s	6.1s
0-100kmph	9.3s	8.8s
0-120kmph	12.9s	12.8s
Top speed	215kmph	210kmph
Driveability		
30-80kmph	5.2s	4.9s
40-100kmph	7.4s	6.7s
80-120kmph	7.0s	6.5s
Braking		
80-0kmph	24.5m	23.5m
100-0kmph	39.6m	36.4m
In cabin noise		
At 50kmph	59db	61db
At 100kmph	65db	65db
At 130kmph	69db	68db
Co2		
	227g/km	223g/km
Fuel efficiency		
	11.6kmpl	11.8kmpl

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MERCEDES-BENZ C-CLASS VS VOLVO S60

LUST FACTOR This is about taste and does not affect our final points rating

SMILEY	MERCEDES	VOLVO
😊	★★★★★	★★★★★
CATEGORY		
Design	★★★★★	★★★★★
Character	★★★★★	★★★★★
Handling	★★★★★	★★★★★
Wellness	★★★★★	★★★★★
Image	★★★★★	★★★★★
TOTAL	★★★★★	★★★★★

To die for ★★★★★, Enticing ★★★★★, Lovable ★★★★★, Could be better ★★★★★, Boring ★★★★★

Between the Volvo and the Mercedes, we'd take the latter. And not because we are brand conscious. The Mercedes is just more fun to drive than the Volvo. Being rear-wheel-drive helps of course, but its light steering and slightly better visibility, also makes it easier to drive around in congested city traffic. Then of course, the C-class has a higher wellness coefficient, courtesy plusher looking interiors. Wish it had more equipment.

BODY	MERCEDES	VOLVO
Chassis	Monocoque	Monocoque
No of seats	5	5
Suspension F/R	Multi link with gas charged dampers front and rear	McPherson struts with anti roll bar/ coil springs with anti roll bar
Brakes F/R	Ventilated discs/discs	Ventilated discs/discs
Wheels	7.0Jx16in	7.0Jx17in
Steering	Rack & pinion with power assist	Rack & pinion with power assist
Turning circle dia	10.8m	11.9m
Fuel	Diesel	Diesel
Tank capacity	66 litres	67 litres
Boot space	475 litres	380 litres
Kerb weight	1,610kg	1,680kg

EQUIPMENT	MERCEDES	VOLVO
Model	C 220 CDI Classic	S60 D3 Summum
Airbags	2	6
ABS/ESP	Yes/ Yes	Yes/ Yes
AC/climate control	2-zone climate control	2-zone climate control
Power windows	All four doors	All four doors
CD/MP3 player	Yes	Yes
Sun roof	No	Yes
Xenon lamps	No	Yes
Warranty	2 years/ unlimited km	2 years/ unlimited km
PRICE (OTR, Delhi)	Rs 32.1 lakh	Rs 31.8 lakh

SCORECARD

	Max Points	VOLVO	MERCEDES
BODY			
Front Space	15	9	9
Rear space	15	9	9
Feeling of space/ambience	10	7	8
Boot space/flexibility	15	12	12
Visibility	5	4	4
Feel of quality	15	13	13
Payload	5	3	3
Safety	20	11	8
Intermediate results	100	68	66
DRIVE			
Acceleration	15	10	10
Top speed	5	4	4
Driveability	10	10	10
Engine characteristics	5	4	4
Gearbox	10	7	7
Fuel efficiency	40	22	21
Range	5	4	4
Environment	10	5	5
Intermediate results	100	66	65
COMFORT			
Ride quality	30	23	21
Front seats/ingress	10	9	9
Rear seat/ingress	10	7	7
Driving noise	10	8	8
Handling	15	13	13
Comfort equipment	15	13	10
Operability	10	8	9
Intermediate results	100	81	77
DYNAMICS			
Steering response	15	13	13
Directional stability	15	13	13
Manoeuvrability	20	14	16
Braking	25	23	21
Grip	10	8	8
Turning circle	15	11	13
Intermediate results	100	82	84
TEST RESULTS	400	297	292
COST			
Price	60	6	6
Resale	20	13	15
Warranty	20	14	14
Intermediate results	100	33	35
TOTAL	500	330	327
Final position	1	2	

The AUTO BILD points system at work

Clear winner, fair grading - cars are rated over 500 points, with 100 points for each section. Also, each section focuses on a single aspect for easier understanding

The Mercedes is slightly more spacious, but not enough for it to reflect in the points. At the rear, it offers more usable knee room, while the S60 has more shoulder room. But, because of the cabin's design, the C does feel more spacious of the two. Usable boot space is quite similar as well even though on paper, the C's boot is much larger. The S60 also scores higher for safety.

These might have completely different engine configurations - one's a smaller, 5-cylinder diesel, the other a larger, more powerful, 4-cylinder unit - but in the real world the difference in performance isn't stark at all. Yes, the Volvo is quicker initially, but then the C-class has a higher top speed and a faster 0-150kmph time. But like we said the difference isn't much at all.

When it comes to comfort, the S60 with its plusher ride quality at both low speed and high, and more comfort and convenience features outshines the Mercedes. In all other aspects be it seating comfort or easy ingress/ egress or even in-cabin noise, the two are almost at par. The C-class does have better operability however.

The C-class, thanks to its smaller turning circle and better visibility, not to mention lighter controls is the easier of the two to manoeuvre around town, and park as well. And that's the only advantage it has over the Volvo when it comes to dynamics, for under every other head the difference between the two cars isn't significant at all.

The S60 D3 Summum and the C220 CDI Classic are priced very close. However, there's also the S60 Kinetic, which is cheaper, but remains better equipped than the C. Considering the two versions here, the C certainly has better resale and the reason it scores two additional points under this head.

FINAL PLACING

1 330 POINTS
Volvo S60 D3 Summum
 If you are looking for an efficient, good to drive, well equipped value-for-money buy, the S60 D3 is the one to go for.

MOST COMFORTABLE CAR 149/200 points

2 327 POINTS
Mercedes C 220 CDI Classic
 Easier to drive, rich looking and feeling interiors and decently potent, the C-class loses out on equipment and some bit of comfort.

BEST DRIVER'S CAR 157/200 points

Verdict
 As our Scorecard shows, the S60 D3 is the more sensible buy compared to the entry level C 220 CDI. The Volvo has more comfort and safety equipment, rides better and drives better for most part too. But, what's truly exceptional is the amount of equipment the D3 comes with at this price, making it the better value proposition.

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