

Press Release

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A new Volvo at the Geneva Motor Show 25 years ago: Italian flair and Swedish engineering

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In March 1985, Volvo Car Corporation showed the result of yet another cooperation in the field of luxury between Sweden and Italy, the Volvo 780, designed and built by Bertone in Turin. The event took place on the Volvo Cars stand at the Geneva Motor Show.

Exclusive Volvo coupes made in smaller series as top models have been around since the early 1960s. Volvo realised early the importance of expanding into new market segments with the help of such cars, hereby making more customers interested in the less exclusive models.

That worked with the 1800 series which stayed in production for almost thirteen years - with close to 48,000 cars sold, and it was also the case with the top model of the 240/260 series, the 262C.

The 262C was designed and built in Italy by Carrozzeria Bertone and came to the market in 1977. When the next generation of Volvo cars, the 760/740 were launched in the beginning of the 1980s, it did not take long before Volvo repeated the strategy; two saloon/estates were followed by a very exclusive coupe.

Totally new model

If the 262 was just a light modification of the existing body, the 780 was a totally new model that did not share any body panels with the four or five door cars. Again Bertone was the master behind the design and they were also responsible for the manufacturing, in the Turin factory. The car was launched at the Geneva Motor Show in March 1985.

"With the 780, we can offer an elegant touring car with a personal design, exclusive details solutions and a unique engine programme with emphasis on comfort," said the Volvo Car Corporation marketing manager Carleric Häggström in the press release on the new car.

Comfort was also the best word to describe the model. It was not a sporty car but very comfortable, luxuriously appointed and loaded with all sorts of equipment and accessories as standard features.

Twice the price of a 760 GLE

Most things were electrically operated: Seats, windows, mirrors, sun roof. There was an air conditioning unit, ABS brakes, self-leveling system, a trip computer and state-of-the-art audio equipment. Certainly it was expensive with a price tag of SEK 290,000 or about twice the price of a 760 GLE.

There were three engines to choose from: the 2.8 litre V6, a turbocharged four or the straight-six turbo diesel that Volvo used at the time. None of these engines, however, were capable of giving the car a top speed of 200 kph (125 mph) which is a psychological threshold on the German Autobahn, but it was exclusive, comfortable and quiet. It was primarily aimed at the USA, Japan and a few markets in Europe, one of them was Sweden.

The Volvo 780 stayed in production until 1990 without any major changes to the exterior but

technically it kept up with the 760 and got independent rear suspension for model year 1988. It eventually also received the cult status exclusive cars usually get. Only 8,518 780s were made and today it is a collector's item, cared for by owners in both Europe and the USA.

For more information on classic Volvos: Try www.media.volvocars.com or www.volvocars.com/heritage or contact Claes Rydholm +46 31 594526.

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Descriptions and facts in this press material relate to Volvo Cars' international car range. Described features might be optional. Vehicle specifications may vary from one country to another and may be altered without prior notification.

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