

Press Release

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That's why a Volvo looks like a Volvo

To say that the recently launched Volvo XC90 (Detroit Motor Show, 2002), looks like a 1927 Volvo "Jakob" would, of course, be a major exaggeration. Nevertheless, there is a certain affinity, a design idiom, which has remained with Volvo and been carefully refined and developed by its designers for 75 years. Volvo's Chief Designer, Peter Horbury, explains why a Volvo looks like a Volvo.

"First of all, Volvo has always been associated with function, reliability and consideration.

A Volvo has always looked Swedish, just as we gain an impression of the national character from British, German, French or American designs. It doesn't matter if you're talking about clothes, furniture or cars - something about the form of the products speaks volumes about their origin.

"As far as Volvo is concerned, safety and function have always been the focus. Volvo's design has always communicated an intelligent choice."

THE TIMES ARE CHANGING... AND SHAPES TOO

"An intelligent choice can, of course, never be wrong. Volvo's best selling series over the years was the 200 series, one which, perhaps more than any other, communicated a sensible choice. But to keep pace with increased competition and because of the fact that some of our competitors were able to offer cars which were almost as safe and functional but which were also good-looking and fun to drive, the situation changed for Volvo. Something more was required beyond the style which had characterised Volvo models since the introduction of the 140 series in the mid-1960s."

THE FUTURE WAS IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR

"When we began working on today's and tomorrow's Volvo models, we got a lot of inspiration from the Volvo PV, the Amazon and the P1800 ES, i.e. the cars which predated the 'boxy' era at Volvo.

"These classic models signal that crucial 'Swedishness', combined with an elegant, harmonious design idiom. They prove that beauty and brains can go hand in hand. Certain lines, certain characteristic features are the same in today's models. And today, just as yesterday, these features proclaim a Swedish car - a functional, reliable and safe design. What we've added in the design department is an exterior which communicates purity and an interior which breathes warmth. Rather like a house in the north of Sweden on a winter's evening, with the soft light of an open fire shining out through the windows. The interiors of Volvo's cars are therefore light and bright, conveying a warm impression.

"We've also endeavoured to give our cars an exterior form which clearly indicates technological refinement, innovative thinking and performance. These features in no way take the edge off the old traditional Volvo values. On the contrary. Today's Volvo models prove that 'safe sex' need not be dull in any way..."

SOFTER AND ROUNDER, BUT JUST AS SPACIOUS

"When we introduced the new Volvo V70, we transferred the lines of the Volvo S80 to an estate. A fairly big challenge, because the softer lines put some limitations on the cargo space of an estate, one of Volvo's long-standing hallmarks.

We solved this with a design that 'straightens out' the car's lines the further back you go. It's barely noticeable at first glance, but the load space is actually as rectangular as it was in its predecessor,

i.e. roomy and functional, but the eye perceives the car as much more streamlined."
"Working with the whole vehicle in this way is also important in what makes a Volvo a Volvo. An estate from Volvo will never - must never - look like 'a saloon model with a backpack added on'."

ENGINEERING AS THE BASIS OF STYLING

"One of the biggest innovations in the Volvo 850 was its transverse, in-line, five cylinder engine. Since then, transverse

in-line engines have become the norm for all new Volvo models. Thanks to this unique concept, the engineers themselves helped pave the way for innovative exterior styling".

"For obvious reasons, a transverse engine does not require as much of the car's total length as a longitudinal, in-line engine or a V-engine. With the help of leading safety engineering experts, this engine orientation allowed the cabin to be moved forward without compromising safety, making more space available to the car's occupants and their luggage".

"An obvious example of this is the Volvo S60, which took on something of the feel of a sports coupŽ thanks to its cabin-forward design. Nevertheless, it is still an extremely functional, safe and spacious 4-door saloon".

"The most recent addition to the range, the Volvo XC90, is a design which was a dream come true for us designers".

We wanted to create a Volvo of a type never seen before, but which still had to have a definite Volvo look.

"I am personally very proud of the result. It's the most intelligent Volvo ever".

"I hope it shows."

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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