

## Communiqués

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# Designed in Sweden and built in Italy – the Volvo 262C turns 40

Forty years ago, Volvo turned perceptions of what its brand stood for upside down. The [Volvo 262 Coupé](#) left no one unmoved and sold significantly better than expected, despite costing more than twice as much as the basic model in the 200 series.

The Volvo 264 was presented in the autumn of 1974, and two years later it was time for Volvo's first six-cylinder estate: the 265. But that was far from the end of it - at the Geneva Motor Show in March 1977, perhaps the most unexpected model version saw the light of day: a two-door coupé with heavily slanting windscreen pillars and the roof lowered by 60 mm. To get the car to be perceived as sleeker, the rear spare wheel pods had been removed - the remainder of the body was identical.

What really made the 262C into what it was could be found in the passenger compartment. This offered an extravagance of leather and hardwood. The seats, headrests, door sides - even the curve handles had been upholstered in leather.

When the Volvo 1800ES was discontinued in 1973, there was no natural successor to the role of top range sports model. Volvo's CEO Pehr G Gyllenhammar saw this as a problem. It was especially important that there was a model of this kind in Volvo's biggest export market in the USA and a luxury coupé seemed more right at the time than another sports car.

Volvo's chief designer Jan Wilsgaard did sketches for the shapes of the prestige car, but no clay model was ever built. Instead, he used a Volvo 164 that had been used to test new interiors. It was taken to the Italian designer Sergio Coggiola's company in the Italian city of Turin, where the four-door body was rebuilt into a two-door body with a lower roof. The roof was clad with vinyl and the wide C-pillar adorned with three crowns - Sweden's heraldic national symbol. The three crowns were replaced with one larger one on the production car, which is one of the very few differences between it and the prototype - except the obvious one that it was based on a 164.

The engine in the 262C was initially a 2.7 litre, 140 hp V6. It was shared with all the other body versions in the 260 series and had been developed together with Peugeot and Renault. Manufacturing took place in Douvrin in France under the auspices of the Société Franco-Suédoise de Moteurs-PRV company. Volvo's engine designation was B27E and thanks to engine blocks and cylinder heads made from aluminium, it weighed less than 150 kg.

Such a niche product, built in small numbers, didn't fit into the Volvo plant in Gothenburg. Instead, final assembly took place at the Italian Carozzeria Bertone, who also built the 264TE limo. Kits were sent to Turin where the bodies were modified, painted and assembled into finished cars. A small badge on the lower part of the front fenders showed that Bertone had built the car.

For the first few years, the 262 was only available in silver metallic with a black vinyl roof. From 1979, it was also available in gold metallic without a vinyl roof. That year, all saloon models in the 200 series also received a new rear with a boot that went down at the rear edge. The tail lights were also new and went around the body corners. In 1980, black and light blue metallic and silver metallic with vinyl roof was phased out. In the USA, the model was sold under the name of the Volvo Coupé from 1980.

The model year that stands out the most was also its last. In 1981, the 200 series underwent a major update with new, more slender bumpers and a new headlight set up. The B27E became a B28E as the engine gained in terms of cylinder volume and had another 14 horsepower added to it. The new colour combination was a two-tone paint job in gold and nougat.

The aim was to manufacture 800 units per year, but expectations for demand had been set far too low. Apart from in 1977 when production started late in the year, and the final model year, production figures were more than double the forecast. When the final cars were sold in 1981, they were already considered to be collectibles. In total, 6,622 cars were built between 1977 and 1981.

It was only in 1985 that the successor to the 262C was presented, Volvo 780. The collaboration with Bertone continued, but the 780 was both designed and built in Italy.

### **Five things you should know about the Volvo 262C**

1. The 262C was not the first two-door model in the 260 series. In 1976-77, 3,329 262 GLs were manufactured exclusively for the North American market. They had a standard two-door body like a 242, but with a V6 engine and the far more exclusive front from the 260 series.
2. The 262C is the only Volvo to be delivered from the factory with vinyl over the steel roof.
3. The unique prototype built by Coggiola is now part of the Volvo Museum collection in Gothenburg.
4. The independent firm Solaire built a cabriolet edition of the 262C on behalf of Volvo Cars of North America. Only five units were ever manufactured.
5. Volvo's CEO Pehr G Gyllenhammar had a specially made 262C as his company car. It was painted red and its entire interior was also red - even the headrests! It did not feature the usual V6 engine, which was replaced by the four-cylinder B21ET turbo engine. The body frames and grill were in matte black, which heralded the high black grill that the GLT and Turbo would feature in 1984.

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### **Volvo Car Group in 2016**

*For the 2016 financial year, Volvo Car Group recorded an operating profit of 11,014 MSEK (6,620 MSEK in 2015). Revenue over the period amounted to 180,672 MSEK (164,043 MSEK). For the full year 2016, global sales reached a record 534,332 cars, an increase of 6.2 per cent versus 2015. The record sales and operating profit cleared the way for Volvo Car Group to continue investing in its global transformation plan.*

### **About Volvo Car Group**

*Volvo has been in operation since 1927. Today, Volvo Cars is one of the most well-known and respected car brands in the world with sales of 534,332 cars in 2016 in about 100 countries. Volvo Cars has been under the ownership of the Zhejiang Geely Holding (Geely Holding) of China since 2010. It formed part of the Swedish Volvo Group until 1999, when the company was bought by Ford Motor Company of the US. In 2010, Volvo Cars was acquired by Geely Holding.*

*As of December 2016, Volvo Cars had over 31,000 employees worldwide. Volvo Cars head office, product development, marketing and administration functions are mainly located in Gothenburg, Sweden. Volvo Cars head office for China is located in Shanghai. The company's main car production plants are located in Gothenburg (Sweden), Ghent (Belgium), Chengdu and Daqing (China), while engines are manufactured in Skövde (Sweden) and Zhangjiakou (China) and body components in Olofström (Sweden).*

### **Mots clés:**

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