

Press Release

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Volvo's Your Concept Car — interior like a personal living room

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The interior of Volvo's Your Concept Car (YCC) is all about choice and individuality.

Interior designer Cindy Charwick, one of an all-woman team that designed and developed the YCC, set out to create an interior that could be personalized to suit the individual - you choose the information and settings you want; you choose the colours and how you like the interior to look and you choose how high you like to ride.

"It was all part of the aim of making life easier," Charwick says. "The cabin environment has been designed so that everything you need is at your fingertips. And your surroundings need to make you feel good, too."

Interior features of YCC include:

- Ergovision, an ergonomic system that provides a customized seating position with optimum line of vision (patent pending);
- Easy entry and exit to an airy interior characterized by an extreme sense of space;
- Everything within reach;
- Multi-purpose storage;
- Light, Scandinavian look with "honest" materials
- The feel of a living room rather than a cockpit, with modern furnishing fabrics;
- Choice of eight upholstery and carpet styles, easily switched to match mood, season or trends.

Charwick wanted to complement the easy access provided by YCC's gull-wing doors, so she designed seats with side supports that are lowered when the driver or passengers get into the car. In fact, when the gull-wing door is open, the whole seat will also be in its lowest and farthest-back position and both steering wheel and car body will be raised.

All these settings add up to maximum freedom of movement before the door is closed. When the gull-wing door is closed, the side supports in the seat will return to their regular position and the seat returns to the owner's personalized driving position.

To ensure the driver, regardless of height, would be able to sit correctly when driving and have the optimum line of vision, YCC's designers developed Ergovision.

It works this way: A driver's whole body is scanned at the dealership, then this data is used to define a driving position just for that person. The specifications are stored in digital form on the key unit and are used to automatically adjust the seat, steering wheel, pedals, head restraint and seatbelt.

The settings can be changed if necessary, then re-stored on the key unit. The system will warn the driver if his or her line of vision is wrong by means of a lenticular hologram, an eye symbol displayed on the A-pillar, between the windscreen and door.

The YCC interior has other features designed to make driving as comfortable, safe and trouble-free as possible. For instance, the driver's heel rest is fully adjustable because the height of the driver's heels may differ from one day to the next. Similarly, the head restraint has been adapted to cater to hairstyles such as the ponytail.

Charwick's interior design echoes the flowing lines of the exterior styling. The instrument panel is S-shaped, adding to the sense of space and air in the cabin.

To reinforce the floating, hovering impression the exterior gives, with its colour-change paint and the lift of its gull-wing doors, the front-seat mountings have been moved inward, out of sight. The seats look as though they are hovering above the floor.

YCC is packed with smart technology, but the technology has not been allowed to complicate matters for the driver. Thus, the instrument panel is clean-cut, simple and restrained. There are few instruments - a speedometer, a distance indicator and a navigation system - and these are close enough to be easily read. All other information can be accessed from a control panel beside the steering wheel.

YCC has storage options in new places. By moving the gear levers up by the steering wheel and implementing an electronic parking brake, the designers have freed-up the space between the front seats. Here there are both shallow compartments and deep ones, with room for things such as notebook computers, handbags, parking money, drinks, keys, CDs and mobile phones.

In real-world use, the rear seat is less likely to carry passengers and more likely to carry things. The rear seat is actually two separate fold-down seats, much like theatre seats that spring back up when not in use. The compartment on the back of the front seat is actually a removable compact briefcase, and the trunk is big enough for a set of golf clubs.

Spaciousness and light were the key impressions of the interior sought by Charwick and colour and trim designer Maria Ugglå. They wanted anyone sitting in YCC to get a strong sense of being in a living room. The colour and trim is strongly influenced by home interior design.

"Let's bring the living room into the car," Ugglå says. "Let's use materials we have in the home - honest materials, not obscured by coats of shiny enamel."

Interior surface materials set the tone. All the horizontal surfaces are of laminated bleached oak, augmented by all functional surfaces in brushed aluminum.

It's in the seats and the carpeting that the real scope for individuality comes into play - the chance to customize the interior according to trends, personal taste or style with a range of eight seat pad options with matching carpets.

Swapping them around is quick and simple, and they are easy to care for. Some are even machine washable.

They range from a conventional dark brown leather complemented by a short-pile carpet of tufted linen to an anything-but-conventional shimmering pale yellow with embroidered flowers combined with a bouclé-based dark brown carpet with strands of pale yellow linen.

Many of the materials have never before been used in cars. Each seat top option has its own label, reinforcing the link with home interiors.

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