

## **INTERIOR DESIGN**

### **In brief:**

- **Unique free-floating, ultra-thin central instrument stack.**
- **Design inspired by Scandinavian heritage and top entertainment systems.**
- **'Layered' interior creates impression of space and quality.**
- **Space for five adults.**
- **Generous (404 litre) boot capacity with fold flat rear seatbacks.**
- **Passenger seat back folds forwards to accommodate loads up to accommodate extra long loads.**

**While the exterior of the new Volvo S40 could be described as evolutionary, the interior represents nothing less than a revolution in car design. The cabin is constructed of several visual "layers", which focus attention on an ultra-thin central instrument stack. The stack is a world first is ultra-thin and appears to be free floating. It was previewed on the Volvo VCC (Versatility Concept Car) at the 2003 Geneva Motor Show and is a reflection of Volvo's Scandinavian design heritage and its commitment to premium quality.**

**Form and function go hand in hand in a cabin that offers comfortable accommodation for up to five adults accompanied by a large (404 litre) boot. The rear seats also split/fold to leave a flat, versatile load space, and the front passenger seat also folds forward to accommodate long load items.**

### **In full:**

- Unique free-floating, ultra-thin central instrument stack.
- Design inspired by Scandinavian heritage and top entertainment systems.
- 'Layered' interior creates impression of space and quality.
- Space for five adults.
- Height and reach adjustable steering column, plus multi-adjustable driving position.
- Head restraints and three-point seat belts for all seats – plus rear seat belt reminder.
- Shopping bag holder in boot to keep items contained and/or upright (SE and SE Sport).
- Generous (404 litre) boot capacity with fold flat rear seatbacks.
- Front passenger seat also fold forward to accommodate long loads.

**Scandinavian style**

While the exterior of the new Volvo S40 could be described as evolutionary, the interior represents nothing less than a revolution in car design. Its focal point is an ultra-thin central instrument stack, which appears to be free-floating. This is a world-first for the automotive sector and was previewed on the Volvo VCC (Versatility Concept Car) at the 2003 Geneva Motor Show. It is a reflection of Volvo's Scandinavian design heritage and its commitment to premium quality.

"The super-slim format is the ultimate icon of the car and a revolution in itself," says its chief designer, Guy Borgoyne.

The inspiration for the interior came from outside the car world. "If you want to be innovative, there is little point looking at what the competition is doing," explains Volvo's Design Director, "it is far more valuable to look at what they're not doing."

Volvo's design teams were influenced instead by the Scandinavian design tradition of clean surfaces and uncluttered lines. They drew inspiration, for example, from the elegant simplicity of the classic compression-moulded Series 7 chair, designed by the world-famous Arne Jacobsen.

Trends in high-tech electrical equipment, such as cameras, audio systems and computers, were also studied. Notes were taken on how the designers use and combine new materials so that they form part of the user-experience. These disparate influences – classic Scandinavian style and high-tech innovation – were combined to create a radically different interior concept.

The interior is built up of several visual layers. The first is an edge that flows around the base of the windscreen and along the door frames, trimming the entire interior. This provides occupants with the impression that they are safely ensconced in a cocoon.

The second layer is the primary fascia, which is minimalist. The air vents and secondary controls are positioned in individual islands, while the main instruments are grouped in two round gauges, surrounded by contrasting metal bezels. The choice of fascia finish is also significant – Volvo has eschewed the traditional leather-look in favour of a new texture that conveys a sense of cutting-edge technical innovation.

The ultra-thin central instrument stack forms the uppermost layer. Boasting a prominent position in the centre of the car, it fulfils the role of a remote control unit in a contemporary home entertainment system. Constructing such a novel feature was no easy task – "it

required considerable ingenuity and hard work to find a technical solution for this super-slim format," explains Burgoyne. But no-one will doubt that the hard work has paid dividends. The slim design creates a feeling of luxurious space and the effect is enhanced by "theatre style" illumination, which discreetly draws the occupant's attention to the unit.

The centre stack on 'S' models has a Bauxite grey metallic finish, aluminium in 'Sport' or 'SE Sport' models, while SE models have a choice of either the aluminium or wood effect. The dark 'wood effect' panel is a sober, elegant solution, while the aluminium panel (made from genuine aluminium) has a high-tech, premium feel.

#### Comfort and convenience

While the interior of the Volvo S40 places an emphasis on style, form has not been allowed to take precedence over function. The fascia ergonomics have been carefully designed and drivers will find that the controls are sensibly positioned and within easy reach. The driver's seat is multi-adjustable and the steering wheel adjusts for both rake and reach, ensuring that driver's of all shapes and sizes can get comfortable.

The development of the ultra-thin technology enabled Volvo's designers to introduce a useful storage area behind the central stack, which can be accessed from both front seats.

There is also plenty of room for passengers. The benefits and convenience of a four-door bodyshell in a class dominated by three or five-door alternatives also should not be underestimated. The new Volvo S40 is 54mm wider and 44mm taller than the outgoing model and the wheelbase has grown by 78mm. Together with packaging improvements, these increased dimensions have created a car with significantly more interior room. Five occupants can travel in comfort and all benefit from head restraints and a full three-point safety belt system. A rear seat belt reminder system automatically alerts the driver via a message on the instrument panel if any rear passengers are not wearing a seat belt.

With the rear seat in place, the boot capacity is 404 litres, which compares favourably against the Audi A3 (350litres). Should the need arise, the luggage bay can also be extended. The rear seat splits into two sections and the backrest folds forwards to leave an entirely flat load floor. The Volvo S40 has a fold-flat front passenger seat, which allows loads up to 3.02m long to be carried.