

PRESS INFORMATION

The all-new Volvo S40:

Minimalistic centre stack – the ultimate design icon

- **Sources of inspiration outside the car world**
- **Minimalist product design**
- **Extremely slim free-floating centre stack with functional design**
- **The ultimate design icon of the all-new Volvo S40**
- **Transparent decorative panel gives a high-tech appearance**
- **Discreet theatre lighting promotes a cosy interior**

The all-new Volvo S40 introduces an entirely new approach to interior design – with a unique stand-alone free-floating centre stack.

This is an entirely new solution in the car industry, specially developed for the new Volvo S40 and previewed recently in the Volvo VCC (Versatility Concept Car).

When the time had come to fashion the interior of the Volvo S40, one of the challenges was that the occupants should enjoy a perception of space and airiness despite the compact body. This required new approaches and a decision was taken to tackle the design work from an entirely fresh angle. The design team turned their attention to other sources of inspiration than the car world.

“If you want to be innovative, there is little point in looking at what the competition is doing. It is far more valuable to look at what they’re not doing,” says the head of design at Volvo Cars, Henrik Otto.

Influence from outside

One natural influence was the Scandinavian design tradition of clean surfaces and uncluttered lines – along with a natural lightness of material and structure. A couple of excellent examples are the world-famous designer Arne Jacobsen’s classic compression-

moulded chairs Series 7 and the Ant chair, along with Alvar Aalto's typically Nordic functional architecture and furniture design.

Trends in high-tech quality products such as audio systems, cameras and computers were also a rich source of inspiration. Not just in terms of form and function but also for ways of using and combining new materials – and of making them part of the overall experience.

These ventures into parallel environments not only provided inspiration, they also formed the very foundation for how the interior of the new Volvo S40 would be designed.

Minimalist expression

In order to best utilise the various materials available and link them together in a natural way, the interior was built up in layers, with the centre stack as the topmost, free-standing feature. With its prominent position, it constitutes the car's foremost control panel, like the remote control in the modern home entertainment system.

Behind the centre stack there is a practical storage compartment for personal items, easily accessible from both sides. This space is discreetly illuminated, further enhancing the impression of a free-standing stacked panel – and the feeling of well thought-out functionality.

Since a modern audio system with a CD player does not require as much lateral space as the older cassette player units, width too could be minimised. The result is a very slim panel with a minimalist appearance, further contributing to a particularly noticeable sense of interior space.

“The panel is the ultimate icon of the car and a revolution in itself. It required considerable ingenuity and hard work to find a technical solution for this super-slim format,” says the designer behind the unit, Guy Burgoyne.

Four décor levels

Like the other panels in the car, the centre stack can be customised with a variety of décor panels. The choice allows the buyer to tailor the car's interior to suit his or her individual tastes:

- At base level, the centre stack is the same colour as the interior trim.
- The “Iced Aqua” Transparent version is entirely unique. It gives a high-tech impression since the technology can be seen under the skin.
- The dark “Wood Effect” panel gives a more elegant and sober impression.
- The “Aluminium” panel (made of genuine aluminium) gives the most product-oriented and high-quality impression.

Multi-function controls

The controls in the new centre stack have an ergonomic and functional design. Most are used for several functions, in a logical and convenient way. The top half of the control panel is used to operate the audio system and the integrated phone, while the lower half controls the climate system.

The main system functions are regulated via the four large rotary controls. All the minor function buttons are collected together in a panel that resembles a remote control, all the push-buttons have a marked profile to avoid the risk of pressing two buttons at the same time. The design language continues throughout the various parts of the interior.

The audio system in the all-new Volvo S40 can be specified with the Dolby Surround Pro Logic II, the same level of high-class car audio technology that was introduced in the Volvo XC90.

Theatre lighting

The interior of the new Volvo S40 has a number of discreet lighting points. The overall effect is of theatre lighting, with soft illumination of various parts of the interior. The centre stack, for instance, is constantly illuminated from the roof, so softly and gently that the light does not distract the driver.

The light is only noticed when the driver moves his or her hand towards a control, thus assisting in operation in the dark. This is yet another sign of the consideration and creativity that characterises the design of the new Volvo S40.

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