

DESIGN CONCEPT

In brief:

The S80's shapely and contemporary Scandinavian style boldly introduced a new era of Volvo design architecture at its launch in 1998.

A strong V-shape flows from the front grille up the bonnet, along the distinctive side shoulders and ends at the vertical rear boot line to give the S80 a strong visual presence, and make it instantly recognisable as a Volvo.

The S80's distinctive original design still looks as fresh and modern, so in 2003, five years after its launch, Volvo only needed to make detail enhancements to the S80's exterior design for added elegance and prestige. These included:

- A dynamic dark silver square-mesh grille.
- Chrome door handles.
- Chrome highlights under the side windows.
- Smaller rear light clusters with brighter LED brake lights and lower chrome strip, plus reprofiled one-piece boot lid with chrome strip above the number plate and redesigned, colour-coded bumpers.
- New smoother front section around grille, bumper and spoiler with chrome strip across lower air intake, and larger apertures for the fog lamps.
- Redesigned, more aerodynamic door mirrors for improved air flow to keep side windows cleaner.

Further exterior enhancements for 2006 models includes graphite 'egg-crate' grille, clear lens side marker lights and brushed aluminium door mirrors housings.

In full:

- S80 introduced bold, new contemporary Volvo design language now seen across the range, and classic, simple Swedish design.
- Designed as a large, premium, executive saloon – not a derivative of a Volvo estate.
- Low 0.28 drag co-efficient.
- SE Lux and Executive variants with higher standard specifications than many other premium brand rivals.

The S80 is not a saloon derivative of a Volvo estate, but was designed specifically for its target market – the large, executive saloon sector.

Its contemporary Scandinavian style boldly introduced the start of a new era of bolder Volvo design language and architecture that has subsequently been carried across all the range - including the S80's saloon range siblings, the compact S40 and coupe-like S60 - and makes them instantly recognisable as a Volvo.

A strong V-shape flows from the front grille up the bonnet, along the distinctive side shoulders and ends at the vertical rear boot line to give the S80 a strong visual presence, and low drag co-efficient of 0.28.

The S80 design, overseen by Volvo's British designer, Peter Horbury, now Design Director at Ford's world headquarters in Detroit, USA, "a very Swedish design simplicity," which Horbury believes is crucial to Volvo's success.

"A Volvo buyer displays terrific self confidence," he says. "Nobody shows-off in Swedish culture, and a Volvo's not a show-off's car. People buy Volvos because they know what they want and they're happy if nobody, apart from other Volvo drivers, notices them," he continued.

As a consequence, there is minimal visual external differentiation between the SE Lux and the flagship Executive variant.

Cleverly, the S80's design still looks as fresh and modern as it did at its launch in 1998, so by 2003, five years after its launch, Volvo only needed to make detail enhancements to the S80's exterior design to make it more elegant and exclusive. These included:

- A dynamic dark silver square-mesh grille.
- Chrome door handles.
- Chrome highlights under the side windows.
- Smaller rear light clusters with brighter LED brake lights and lower chrome strip, plus reprofiled one-piece boot lid with chrome strip above the number plate and redesigned, colour-coded bumpers.
- New smoother front section around grille, bumper and spoiler with chrome strip across lower air intake, and larger apertures for the fog lamps.
- Redesigned, more aerodynamic door mirrors for improved air flow to keep side windows cleaner.

Another British designer at Volvo, Steve Harper, was responsible for the enhancements to the new S80 that help it create an overall impression of a more prestigious car in Volvo's model range.

Harper explains: "All the S80's new parts are like cut diamonds or precious gems. Correctly designed and placed in the appropriate setting, they forge a powerful image of subtle elegance and prestige."

Further exterior enhancements for 2006 models includes graphite 'egg-crate' grille, clear lens side marker lights and brushed aluminium door mirrors housings.