



Have an **ice** day

Volvos are born in the cold world. North of the Arctic circle, in Sweden, Dieter Losskarn had the opportunity to drive some of their cars on frozen lakes and over snow-covered mountain roads.



Volvo is Latin and translates to 'I am rolling',

which is not quite what I was doing. Skating was much more like it. The centimetre-long steel studs scratched across the icy surface of a frozen lake, carving curved lines into it and giving my tyres some sort of faint grip in the tight turn ahead. The back of the Volvo C30 gently touched a snow bank, sending up a cloud of powder snow. What looked and felt like the re-enactment of a James Bond movie was actually Volvo's ice-driving experience in Sweden.

In Lappland, Sweden's northernmost province, Volvo has been winter

testing its cars since the early 1960s, putting them through the most grueling conditions between December and April, when temperatures plunge to a stunning 40°C below freezing point.

At about -15°C, we were experiencing a rather 'warm' day in the Arctic. It started off with a two-lap race in snappy little C30 Volvos, then we did some ABS brake testing and obstacle avoidance in the luxury Volvo S80 sedan.

Experiencing the difference between the regular and the all-wheel drive version is amazing. With four



"It's pure fun milling around the curves of a Swedish country road with a snow-packed surface."

The low-down

Volvo C30

Engine: 2.0-litre 4-cyl, 07 kW/145 hp (R215 000) or a 2.5-litre T5 5-cyl turbocharged diesel, 162 kW/230 hp (R265 000)
0-100 km/h: 9,4/6,7 secs
Top speed: 210/240 km/h
Consumption/100 km: 7,8/10 litres
Fuel tank: 55 litres
Tank range: 705/550 km

Volvo S80 V8 AWD

Engine: 4,4-litre V8, 232 kW/315 hp (R525 000)
0-100 km/h: 6,5 secs
Top speed: 250 km/h
Consumption/100 km: 11,9 litres
Fuel tank: 70 litres
Tank range: 590 km

Volvo XC70

Engine: 3,2-litre V6, 175 kW/238 hp (from R419 000); other option: the D5 5-cyl 2,4-litre turbo diesel 136 kW/185 hp (from R429 000).
0-100 km/h: 8,6/9,3 secs
Top speed: 215/210 km/h

Consumption/100 km: 12,1/8,6 litres
Fuel tank: 70 litres
Tank range: 579/814 km
Ground clearance: 210 mm
Approach angle: 19,8°
Departure angle: 24°
Wading depth: 300 mm

Volvo XC90

Engine: 3,2-litre V6, 175 kW/238 hp (from R469 200); other options: the D5 5-cyl 2,4-litre turbo diesel 136 kW/185 hp (from R479 400), the 4,4-litre V8 232 kW/315 hp (from R545 700).
0-100 km/h: 9,5/10,9/7,3 secs
Top speed: 210/195/210 km/h
Consumption/100 km: 12,7/8,5/14,2 litres
Fuel tank: 80/68/80 litres
Tank range: 740 km
Ground clearance: 218 mm
Approach angle: 28°
Departure angle: 25°
Wading depth: 400 mm

For more information: www.volvo.co.za

With increased boot space, the XC70 is an ideal family car, which doesn't mind the occasional rough road or short river crossing

With lots of space and increased boot space (now 575 litres), the XC70 is an ideal family car, which doesn't mind the occasional rough road or short river crossing.

If you're looking for more adventure, Volvo's XC90 is a good choice, especially when equipped with the powerful 4,4 litre V8 engine. It's pure fun milling around the curves of a Swedish country road with a snow-packed crunchy surface.

The SUV is a great success in the States, where V8s are still second to none, despite fuel prices going through the roof.

At least Volvo's V8, the company's first ever, developed in conjunction with Yamaha, is not one of the very thirsty kind. Transversely mounted, it not only increases the security for the passengers, it also results in ample space for them and lots of luggage.

An optional third row of seats offers room for two kids.

driven wheels, it accelerates almost effortlessly on the frozen surface, picking up speed fast. Despite the slick surface, the ABS managed to brake the car in a straight line, even from 120 km/h. A feature that I really liked was the braking alert, which activates in an emergency braking situation by automatically starting the hazard flashers and rapidly pulsing the brake lights to warn the driver behind.

More relevant to the South African market are Volvo's two all-terrain vehicles, the station wagon XC70 and the full-size SUV XC90.

The XC70 is a third-generation model that received a facelift in 2007, 11 years after its introduction. With a more sloping windshield than its predecessor and an enlarged Volvo iron logo, framed by a chrome-rigged black egg-crate grille, it's lost a fair amount of its Nordic dispassion. The car is not only attractive from the outside. The sleek interior comes in either a walnut or an aluminium finish. And those seats are very comfortable indeed.

The car combines what Volvo is well-known for: a stylish station wagon with all-terrain features. It's now more capable of going off the beaten track than ever. Increased ramp and departure angles, higher ground clearance and wading depth are still no match for its SUV sibling, the XC90, which I followed up a steep, snow-covered mountain road. But in conditions like

that, the XC70 has no problem keeping up. Despite the deep snow, it ploughed on imperiously.

The model I drove was equipped with the new 3,2 litre straight-six engine. Alternatively, there is a second-generation 2,4 litre five-cylinder D5 turbodiesel. Despite the lack of a low-range gearbox, stopping on the steep slope didn't cause me any trouble, thanks to the hill descent system, 'borrowed' from Land Rover. It also works in reverse, which is good news for boat owners, who are often faced with steep slipways when reversing their trailers into the water.



OPPOSITE: Holiday on ice: the four-wheel-drive Volvo S80. **BELOW:** The powerful XC90 with its economical V8 could help freeze petrol costs.



The six-speed Geartronic automatic transmission works well with this powerplant. It can be shifted manual or automatic. Volvo's Instant Traction, obviously perfected in this kind of environment, improves pull-away and traction on slippery surfaces. What works like a dream on snow and ice will also be great for muddy dirt roads in Moremi National Park or along the Wild Coast. As soon as one of the front wheels tends to slip, power is immediately transferred to the back wheels.

The real story, as with any Volvo, is safety. The XC90 is safe indeed, from Dynamic Stability to Traction Control, from Roll Stability to Roll-over Protection. And just in case an accident becomes unavoidable, a full-length curtain airbag automatically inflates from the roof lining, while seat belts and their pre-tensioners keep driver and company firmly in their seats.

As with the XC70, what used to be only safe and practical now looks attractive as well. The XC90's fenders are punched out from the elongated hood, giving the vehicle a longer, meaner look. At the rear end, the tail lights stretch all the way up the C-pillar, creating an interesting design style.

Inside, it is elegant function over funky fashion, Nordic restraint, with premium materials used. The XC90 is real competition to its German rivals, the Mercedes ML 500 and the BMW X5 4,4 litre, and it comes quite a lot cheaper.

No wonder Volvo doesn't stop there. At the Geneva Motor Show, its new compact SUV was unveiled. What the Q5 is for Audi, the Tiguan for VW, the GLX for Merc and the Roxster for Porsche, the XC60 will be for Volvo. Hailed as the safest and most attractive Volvo ever, it is due to hit South African showrooms later this year. As soon as it does, we'll definitely take it for a ride into the mountains in search of something rare in our part of the world: snow and ice. ■

Next month in Wheels: We have lots of fun in the Winelands and around the Cape Peninsula in South Africa's most affordable cool car, the agile Mini Clubman Cooper S.

Boys' toys



Fun bike trips

Pretoria Harley dealer Johan Kriek organises trips on either Harley-Davidson or Buell Ulysses bikes all over Southern Africa. If you are contemplating buying one, it's a good idea to do a trip first. *Getaway* checked out Johan's Mpumalanga/Limpopo trip which has some spectacular curve combinations, ideal for the Buell funbikes. You can also rent Harleys and Buells for individual trips. Check prices and get info from Johan at Menlyn Park Shopping Centre in Tshwane, tel 082-460-2131, e-mail rentals@harleyon-safari.com, web www.harleyonsafari.com or www.harley-pta.co.za.

Smart coffee

It's often a problem finding a decent cup of coffee during any outdoor event in SA. Not anymore. Caturra, known for its excellent roasted coffee beans supplied to many restaurants, has equipped a couple of Smart cars with more than R100 000 worth of Swiss coffee machines. While they have space for only the driver, the coffee is a smart choice. Caturra managing director Klaus Becker plans on having about 150 aromatic Smarts on the roads of Cape Town, Durban and Joburg by the end of the year. And if you like it as a business idea, you can buy a mobile coffee shop franchise, complete with Smart and a trailer carrying a silent Honda generator, espresso machine with coffee grinder, smoothie machine, refrigerator and marketing material for around R300 000. For more info, tel 021-593-1199, web www.caturra.co.za.



Escape the blazing sun

Front Runner has launched its lightest awning so far, the Feather-lite. Made from a lightweight yet hardwearing fabric, the awning is 3,3 metres wide and 2,7 metres deep, offering almost 9m² of shade. Its innovative gable-shaped design allows for easy water run-off. When attached to a vehicle, it needs five aluminium poles to erect. The whole awning easily rolls up into a 1,1-metre portable bag. Optional fronts include a door and a window, and sides with windows. Front Runner's Featherlite costs R2 250 for the awning, R795 for a pair of sides and R1 085 for a front panel. Web www.frontrunner.co.za or tel 011-466-0155.

Stuck

We were crossing the Mdonya River in my 1987 Range Rover in the Ruaha National Park on a recent trip to Tanzania. The water never came above the top of the wheels on the causeway but, about five metres from the far side, the Rover bogged in some sand left by the eddy. As I reversed to take a run at the sand, the rear wheel fell into a hole in the concrete road under the water, tilting the car over. Within five minutes, the water pressure had rolled it over the edge. With the help of a couple of park vehicles, we dragged the car out. After three days of cleaning and fixing, I got it running. We did another 4500 kilometres round Tanzania and had a fantastic holiday.

Justyn Lane and Amanda Willett, Lilongwe.



If you have photographs of a 4x4 getting stuck, e-mail them to wheels@getaway.co.za or post them to Getaway

Wheels, PO Box 180, Howard Place, 7450 Cape Town. You could win a Nissan Secure Tech Survival Kit worth R1 000, comprising an Off-Road Tactix manual and DVD, as well as a recovery bag with pull strap, shackles and a pair of gloves.



Kruger vehicles

When the *Getaway* team headed out to explore Kruger National Park for this edition, Nissan suggested we try some of their 4x4s to see if they met with our approval.

Nissan Pathfinder 2,5 dCi 4x4

A tough, no-nonsense 4x4 with an intuitive automatic gear-box with simple over-rides. It has loads of room for luggage, but if you need to transport people, two extra seats appear from under the floor, making it a slightly cramped six-seater. The Nissan Pathfinder is anything but basic. Leather seats come standard and no expense seems to have been spared in making the spacious interior as luxurious as possible. When you spend most of your day in the vehicle (as one does in Kruger), this is something you seriously appreciate.

Price: R446 500

Engine: 4-cylinder, 2,5-litre

0–100 km/h: 11,6 seconds

Top speed: 174 km/h

Consumption: 10,1 litres/100 km

Fuel tank: 80 litres



Nissan Navara 2,5 dCi 4x2

This powerful double cab has great fuel economy, which is a real plus for long-distance journeys in these days of petrol-price hikes. Its enormous loadbox area allows you to transport almost a ton of gear, more than you'll need for even the most comprehensive Kruger holiday.

Price: R291 800

Engine: 6-cylinder, common-rail diesel

0–100 km/h: 12,9 seconds

Top speed: 173 km/h

Consumption: 10,31 litres/100 km

Fuel tank: 80 litres

Nissan Patrol 4,8 Tiptronic GRX 4x4

Big and imposing, yet comfortable and surprisingly easy to handle, this is the ideal vehicle in which to take the family to Kruger. Besides the Patrol's famed off-road capabilities (standard with a rear diff-lock and low-range gear box), this model's five-speed automatic gear box (and selectable tiptronic) also make it a great open-road cruiser. But comfort and style come at a price: the GRX retails at R555 000 and is pretty thirsty too.

Price: R555 000

Engine: 6-cylinder, 4,8-litre

0–100 km/h: 9,7 seconds

Top speed: 190 km/h

Consumption: 22 litres/100 km

Fuel tank: 95 litres + 40 litres in sub tank

