



- Performance**

3 out of 5 stars ***

If performance takes precedence over running costs, the powerful 3.2 six-cylinder and 4.4-litre V8 petrols – which come with a six-speed auto box - will be up your street. Most buyers go for the D5 turbodiesel, however. It's hesitant at low revs, especially with the optional five-speed auto 'box, but it's just about strong enough and makes a lot more financial sense.

- Ride & Handling**

3 out of 5 stars ***

The XC90 disguises its bulk and doesn't feel cumbersome on country roads. It's not as sharp as a Mercedes M-Class or BMW X5, however, and the steering is numb. Supple suspension gives a smooth ride on most roads. The four-wheel drive system automatically normally sends most power to the front wheels, but varies the ratio if it senses a wheel is starting to slip.

- Refinement**

4 out of 5 stars ****

The XC90 does not suffer from the excessive wind- and road noise that plague some 4x4s. While there's a little more noise than with other Volvos, it remains a refined machine. Engine noise on the petrol cars is also kept to a respectable level, but the diesel is unacceptably boomy.

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