WORTH WAITING FOR...?

VOLVO XC60

Price On sale From £25,000 (est) September 2008

WHAT IS IT?

Volvo's first compact 4x4. It should be a belter. The Swedes say it's the safest car they've ever made, and point to a long list of clever features to back up the claim.

TSA will be of greatest interest to caravanners. Short for Trailer Stability Assist, this upgrade to the car's stability-control system aims to recognise a snake and correct it quickly and safely.

The new City Safe system uses lasers to detect vehicles up to ten metres ahead. At speeds of up to 19mph, if it determines that a collision is likely, City Safe automatically applies the brakes if the driver fails to do so. If the difference in speed between the two vehicles is below 9mph, it stops the car completely before impact.

Buyers will have a choice of one petrol engine and two diesels. The diesels have either 161bhp or 183bhp. The range-topping petrol will have 281bhp, although expect



to make frequent visits to your local petrol station.

Initially, all versions will come with four-wheel drive as standard. In 2009, however, Volvo will launch a two-wheel-drive version for buyers who want the raised ride height of a 4x4 but with a lower purchase price and better fuel

consumption. For this model, Volvo is targeting CO₂ emissions of 170g/km. That's 24g/km lower than a Land Rover Freelander diesel. However, it's not yet certain that this version will be sold in the UK.

Practicality features, too. There's 480 litres of luggage space and the rear seats split 40/20/40.

WORTH WAITING FOR?

Competition is tough. The likes of the Land Rover Freelander and Volkswagen Tiguan are great to drive, practical and make fine towcars. On paper, however, the Volvo has what it takes to challenge the best in this class, and the safety features are genuinely innovative.



VAUXHALL INSIGNIA

Price On sale From £16,000 (est) October

WHAT IS IT?

The replacement for the Vauxhall Vectra. Vauxhall wants to distance the new model from the staid image of the old car. It looks more modern, with a bolder, more assertive look than the Vectra.

The Insignia's a much bigger

car than the one it replaces, too. At 4.8 metres, it's longer than the Ford Mondeo, so expect improved passenger and luggage space.

Interior build quality is also said to have taken a step forward. There'll be a choice of cabin finishes, with a more traditional, elegant look or a sportier design. An electronic handbrake, like that on the Volkswagen Passat, should make for easy hill-starts.

There will be a choice of five engines from launch, including two new turbodiesels with 128bhp or 158bhp. Four- or five-door models arrive in October, with an estate following a few months later.

WORTH WAITING FOR?

It will take quite a car to beat the Mondeo, and the Citroën C5 and Honda Accord. However, the Insignia could be the car to do it.



VOLKSWAGEN GOLF

Price From £13,000 (est)
On sale Early 2009

WHAT IS IT?

Expect more space from the sixth-generation small hatch, also the demise of the old 1.9-litre diesel. Three- and five-door hatchbacks will arrive first, with other body-styles to follow.

WORTH WAITING FOR?

There's not a lot wrong with the current car, but the new car promises much.

WE SAY The Golf is still good enough to win awards, so the new car should be a cracker.

