

# VOLVO TO THE CORE

The Volvo Cars Brand Experience Centre is a new facility in Gothenburg which showcases the company's forefront research and development in the fields of safety and the environment. A meeting place for the media, public-sector organisations, companies and customers alike.

Agenda Magazine went along to take a look.

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**SEE-THROUGH VERSION** "Look, Mommy, I'm gonna sit back there." Four-year-old Juliet Barrera and mother Janet take a look inside an XC90 like the one they have come to Gothenburg to collect. This cutaway version is at the new Brand Experience Centre.

THE VOLVO CARS BRAND EXPERIENCE CENTRE will not have its official opening until next month, but it has been open to visitors on a small scale since December. The area at the Safety Centre which used to house an exhibition was remodelled and an equally large Environment section added on last autumn. After investment of 25 million kronor (about \$3.16 million), the new centre has the very latest technology, lighting and information materials to offer. Interactive stations are one exciting innovation.

"Would anyone like to test their reaction time in the elk avoidance test?" centre guide Lena Emilsson asks a little group of American customers who have come to Gothenburg to take delivery of their new Volvos on this cold Friday afternoon in January.

Scott Hill is happy to give it a go. He and his wife Yvette have come all the way from Houston, Texas, to collect their new S80. This is their first holiday abroad without their children. They listen attentively to their guide's description of the latest safety innovations.

"I had read quite a lot about it before, but I hadn't grasped all of Volvo's safety work," says Scott. He will be using the S80 a lot in his work, which is in finance.

Their other car is a Chrysler Pacific, used mostly by their children.

"The S80 is a really cool car, I love it!" says Yvette enthusiastically.

AFTER ANOTHER hands-on test – this time of multi-tasking behind the wheel – the group is shepherded on to look at an XC90 which has been partly cut away to reveal its safety equipment and the extra reinforcements in its structure. Two young sisters called Juliet and Sasha are rather taken with this one. They climb aboard and try out the driver's seat for their dad. The girls will have a new baby brother or sister by next summer, so their parents, Janet and Mark Barrera, decided to buy the largest Volvo of all.

"It's mainly for the safety record of the third row of seats. And I really like the look of the car," says Mark, who is stationed at the Spandahlen military base in Germany.

"I didn't know we were such bad parents," says Scott Hill, after studying Volvo's child car seats and the research-based advice that children should sit in rear-facing seats until they are at least three years old.

THE GROUP grows solemn at the sight of a crashed S60. It was owned by a man named Samir Ladraa, who had an accident in it three years ago. The Volvo Accident Research Team came to the scene to investigate, and Samir Ladraa was later invited to the Safety Centre to watch a simulation of exactly the same accident scenario. Screened for the group is a short film of the simulated crash, then Samir Ladraa himself appears in it, looking shocked as he sees how his car must have looked when he was still inside it. Safety development work suddenly seems much more concrete – and vital – to the little band of visitors. Lena Emilsson tells them that around 400 cars of various PAG brands are crashed deliberately in the laboratory just through the wall, every year.

Moving into the Environment section of the Brand Experience Centre, the group learns more about cars and the greenhouse effect. They hear how today's engines have been made both cleaner and more efficient, and that Torslanda is one of the world's cleanest car factories. In a special 'lung room', visitors find out about how the catalytic converter, the lambda sensor and modern particulate filters have all helped to reduce the impact of cars on the natural environment.

EVER GREENER CARS are one thing, but just how environmentally friendly are our individual driving styles? The last of the centre's interactive stations allows up to five people to compare the effects of their behaviour behind the wheel – how hard they accelerate and brake, how they manage their gearshifts. On city streets and the open road. It proves a very even match between Mark Barrera (helped by four-year-old Juliet on the gearshift) and Steve Tuggle, an American living in Norway, who will be driving his new XC90 across the border later today. a



**CONCENTRATION** American customers Steve Tuggle, Mark Barrera and Scott Hill try out the simulators that test how well they cope with distractions while driving.



**THAT HEAVY?** A child's head is much heavier than an adult's – relative to its overall body weight. Steve Tuggle and Mark Barrera find out how it feels. Little Juliet just wonders what her daddy is up to.

► **MORE FACTS**

The Volvo Cars Brand Experience Centre was conceived to give visitors a total brand experience and to learn more about Volvo Cars' core values. Administered as part of the Visitors' Centre, the Brand Experience Centre includes an auditorium and conference facilities. It is staffed by two permanent guides and a bookings administrator. Bookings can be arranged either by emailing [vcbec@volvocars.com](mailto:vcbec@volvocars.com) or calling +46 31 325 10 93.