

CARGAZING



For 2023, Volvo's S60 is exclusively available as a plug-in hybrid called the Recharge. It combines an electric motor and gasoline engine to deliver a muscular 455 horsepower without sacrificing fuel economy.

No More Tradeoffs

Volvo S60 Plug-In Hybrid Does Everything Flawlessly, For a Price

By Derek Price

CARGAZING.COM

Choosing a car always involves tradeoffs. If you pick a powerful engine, you'll get bad gas mileage. If you pick sleek, sexy styling, you'll have to sacrifice practicality.

This week, I'm driving a car that almost completely eliminates those tradeoffs, assuming you can afford its lofty starting price of around \$52,000.

It's the Volvo S60 Recharge, and it seems custom engineered to make critics' jobs difficult. It just doesn't have any downsides.

It makes Herculean power — 455 horsepower and 523 pound-feet of torque — using a gasoline engine and electric motor. Coupled with a crisp, carefully tuned suspension and all-wheel drive, it's the kind of car that's worth enjoying on its muscular sports-sedan merits alone.

The usual tradeoffs for the S60's level of over-the-top power are twofold: dirty emissions and glutinous fuel economy. Fortunately, the people who engineered this car said "we won't be participating in tradeoffs."

The S60 Recharge is a plug-in hybrid that can operate as an electric vehicle for up to 41 miles when fully charged. That means if your daily commute is 20 miles or less, you can operate it without



The S60's cabin creates a calming feeling through its Swedish visual simplicity. It's also a solid, spacious, well-designed space that helps justify this car's starting price of roughly \$52,000.

burning a drop of gasoline, making your miles per gallon infinite and irrelevant just like a pure electric car.

On the other extreme, if you never plug in the car to charge up its battery, the S60 Recharge is still rated for a thrifty 31 mpg in combined city and highway driving.

If you fully charge it, the fuel-economy wonks rate it at 74 mpg over 530 total miles of range.

That makes this Volvo the per-

fect EV for American lifestyles. It can drive on battery power for local trips, which is what most of us use our cars for most of the time. Yet it also can run on gasoline power for longer trips, which is by far the most convenient way to get around the vast expanses of America in 2023.

Again, there are no tradeoffs needed.

Same thing with the styling. Today's S60 has the classic pro-

portions of a proper sports sedan with a long hood, sleek roofline and low-slung shape. It's timelessly beautiful, and it looks even better in person than it does in pictures.

That doesn't take away from the fact that, at its core, this car is still all about practicality. It has a big trunk, roomy seats and four wide-swinging doors that make it blissfully easy to load people and cargo.

My tester was the Black Edition

which, as you can guess from the straightforward name, has lots of high-gloss black trim and badging. You can choose between black paint, which makes it look sinister and unassuming with badges the same color as the body, or white paint for the opposite effect. It's a striking look.

Inside, the S60 is a great example of Volvo's simple, sophisticated cabin design. It's a calming place to spend hours on the road.

Every Volvo comes with a wheelbarrow full of safety features, and the S60 is no exception. Its driver-help suite called Pilot Assist is especially refined and easy to use, doing a good job keeping the car centered in the lane and smoothly adjusting to the speed of traffic.

I also liked its Google-designed tech features better than the last time I experienced them. They're nicely integrated, including the ability to look up the nearest gas stations on Google Maps with just one click when the fuel light comes on. It's smart and simple, a good fit for Volvo's overall ethos.

As perfect as the S60 is, its one downside is the price. It's not cheap, starting at \$51,950 for the Core version and \$55,995 for the Plus, which adds the Pilot Assist functions and a few other goodies.

The luxurious Ultimate trim tops the lineup at \$58,495.

A CLOSER LOOK



AT A GLANCE

FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

What was tested? 2023 Volvo S60 Recharge AWD Ultimate (\$57,950). Options: Climate package (\$750), metallic paint (\$695), Bowers and Wilkins premium sound (\$3,200). Price as tested (including \$1,095 destination charge): \$63,690

By The Numbers

Wheelbase: 113.1 in.
Length: 188.1 in.
Width: 80.3 in.
Height: 56.3 in.
Power: 2.0-liter turbocharged four cylinder plus electric motor (combined 455 hp, 523 lbs. ft.)
Transmission: Eight-speed automatic
Fuel economy: 74 MPG equivalent

RATINGS

Style: 10
Performance: 9
Price: 6
Handling: 8
Ride: 7
Comfort: 8
Quality: 9
Overall: 9

Why buy it?

It has one of the world's best combinations of power and fuel efficiency wrapped in sleek Swedish design.

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