

## Volvo Concept Estate - I choose you!

Just when I thought the Volvo Polestar V60 was the height of Swedish wagon awesomeness, the Volvo Concept Estate bows at the Geneva Motor Show and changes everything.

The Volvo Concept Estate is the third in a series of concept cars from the Swedish automaker this year that's meant to showcase where they're going with their future interior and exterior design. If the real thing looks ANYTHING like this car - we're going places. Good places.



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On the outside, you can clearly see influence from the early 1970s Volvo 1800 ES wagon, just like you could see inspiration from the regular 1800 in their earlier "Concept Coupe" that debuted in Frankfurt.



The new headlight design with its split-level appearance is bold, and the larger grille is prominent and reminiscent of a Mercedes-Benz, and that's a good thing. My favorite element of the exterior design, though, has got to be the large glass roof panel. While I doubt it would make production if Volvo ever gives this car the green light, it's certainly an interesting touch that really opens up the already-massive interior.



Speaking of the interior, they've finally updated its layout with a large tablet-like touch screen panel, and unlike most cars, it doesn't look like an afterthought. The air conditioning vents beside it are proportional and classy, and the rest of the center stack appears to be high quality.



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"The basic idea is to organize controls and information in a perfectly intuitive and user-friendly way. Everything is exactly where you expect it to be, making the drive more enjoyable, efficient, and safe," according to Thomas Ingenlath, senior VP of design at Volvo.

Rather than eschew all buttons in favor of touch controls, the system here in the Concept Estate leaves some features with hard controls, such as volume, hazard lights, and play/pause for your media. I think this strikes a good balance, because then you can still control the important functions by feel, and look over for more technical operations if necessary (or, you know, save them for when you're stopped or parked). Volvo interior design director Robin Page says, "Not having to deal with buttons and controls for a growing number of functionalities is like being freed from a pair of handcuffs."

Personally, I also adore the floating seats, orange carpet, and plaid accents. They're delightfully whimsical and uniquely Swedish all at the same time. The auto industry needs more than just black and tan for interior color choices, and it seems that Volvo is in agreement.

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The instrument cluster is now an LCD panel as well, and integrates many crucial features, including navigation, right between its twin gauges. That means you can keep your eyes on the road where they belong, which translates to less distraction, and a safer drive.



Unfortunately, Volvo is being tight-lipped on powertrain options for the gorgeous wagon. Hopefully, they take the same proposed powertrain from the Concept Coupe: a 400 horsepower and 443 lb/ft. hybrid powertrain that's both turbo AND supercharged. The engine drives the front wheels, while the electric motors (which make their peak torque straight from 0 RPM, mind you), power the rear wheels. That's green technology I can get behind.

How about you? Are you as excited as I am about Volvo's new wagon concept?