

VOLVO

REVISIONS

Modifications to Entire Range for 1973

By Stuart Bladon

External styling changes; new facias with four ventilation outlets; new heaters; increased safety by heavily padded steering wheel boss, body side reinforcement and seat belt reminder light.



This revised radiator grille, and heavy side-mounted indicator lamps, feature on the Volvo 144 models for 1973. Bumpers are in anodised aluminium

FOLLOWING another successful year in which Volvo sales increased by a remarkable 46.8 per cent to a new record of 15,476 cars in the UK, Volvo have introduced minor but significant changes throughout the range. Most of the modifications are internal, affecting facia, switches, and so on; but there are also some external revisions.

Both the 140 series and 164 have new radiator grilles and rear lamp clusters, and the bumpers are different. Made of anodised aluminium with rubber inserts, they have a large recess in the centre for the number plate. Side lamps and front indicators are attached to the top of the bumper on the 164. Large square-shaped indicators are attached to the side of the front wings on the 144, with each side lamp between this and its head lamp. A less obvious change is the addition of tubular

side impact members running horizontally within the doors. These line up with load bearing body sections and provide resistance to side impacts, and these feature also on the 1800ES, which is otherwise unchanged, apart from the details given later.

Entirely new facias appear on all the saloon models, and Volvo introduce a new safety steering wheel with a large padded centre section, following the style of that used in the Mercedes-Benz 350SL. The anchorage of the steering column has a special built-in crumple zone to absorb accident impact, and this also allows the steering wheel to align with the driver's body if he is flung forward against it in a collision. Somewhat buried behind the steering wheel are the instruments, set in square frames, although round dials are used. The speedometer has straightforward marking, and

the old strip speedometer with its speed limit marker has been abandoned. In the right-hand square, matching the speedometer, are temperature and fuel gauges. Provision is made for a rev counter between the main instruments.

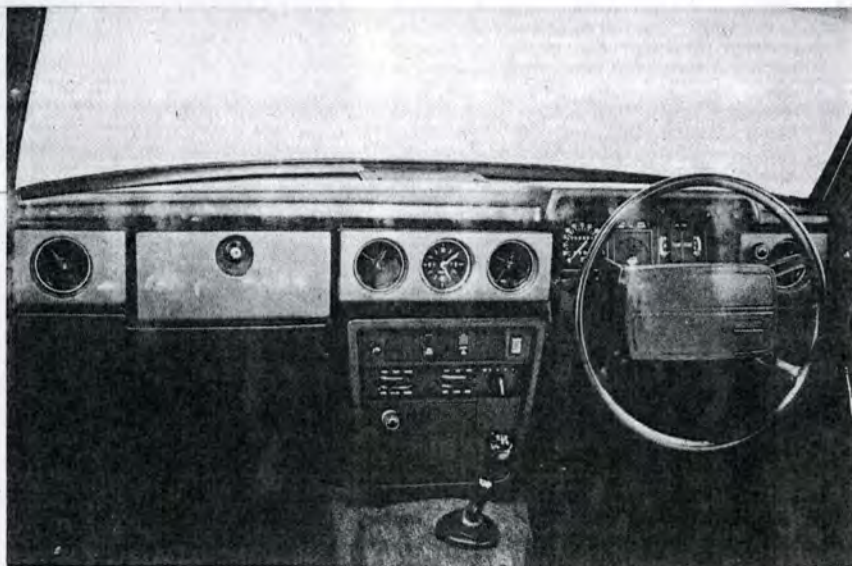
Heating and ventilation have been revised, and the new system incorporates four facia outlets, two for cold air, and two for mixed ventilation blending warm with cold. Twist knobs are used for the three-speed fan on both models, and on the 164 series a matching knob is turned to regulate temperature and there are pushbuttons to control the air flow. The 140 series have horizontal levers on discs, as before. Heavy padding and recessing of all knobs and switches are a feature of the Volvo for added secondary safety.

Seat belts are fitted as standard, as they have been for a long time on Volvo, but now there is an automatic tell-tale light which comes on if the car is driven with the belts unfastened. Windscreen wipers and washers are now controlled by a three-position lever on the steering column. Child-proof safety catches are now standard on the rear doors.

Other changes include alteration of the front wheel geometry to make the steering lighter, and the clutch action has also been lightened. It is hoped that these refinements will take some of the effort out of driving the Volvo. Automatic transmission is available on all models, including now the 1800ES, and an unusual shape of selector lever, with large release button on its sensibly big knob, has been designed. It has unobstructed movement between Drive and Intermediate.

Halogen head lamps become standard on the 144GL, 145E and 164. Volvo are planning to produce nearly a quarter of a million cars of the complete range next year, of which about 80 per cent will go to export markets.

As well as the new side impact protection, the 1800ES now has halogen head lamps as standard, and Volvo claim to have reduced the level of engine noise. As before, standard equipment includes seat belts, heated rear window, dual circuit brakes with discs all round, and under-sealing.



Entirely new facia has round instruments in square frames, and the steering wheel has a huge padded boss to prevent injury to the driver in event of an accident