



# VOLVO 265DL

*The world's first mass-produced \$10,000 station wagon*



THERE ARE DEFINITE automotive landmarks, some technical, others in styling and even a few in pricing. Unfortunately, that latter group has made great strides lately—the \$5000 Volkswagen, the \$13,500 small Cadillac, the \$26,000 Porsche and now, staring at you from this page, Volvo's \$10,000 station wagon.

You would expect the Swedes, of course, to assume that it takes more than pure audacity to charge 10Gs for a type of vehicle many Americans have always assumed should be used to haul groceries, potted plants and large families. Remember that the station wagon is an American phenomenon, a vehicle that makes pretenses at being a delivery van in the guise of a sedan. Of course those two aims are not necessarily compatible and the sedan stylists have usually won out over those fanatics who assumed a wagon should be utilitarian. Perhaps the prime example is the present line of large General Motors wagons.

European wagons are an outgrowth of commercial vehicles. As such they are built for utility first, for style second, which is why some European wagons go to the opposite extreme of the GM wagons and end up overly boxy and often with a roof bulge in the cargo area. Actually the emergence of the European station wagon more closely parallels our vans than our station wagons. Like vans, the imported wagons pick up one excellent rub-off from their more commercial counterparts, that being the fact that business vehicles are usually built to take rugged use and last longer.

So where does the Volvo fit in? Remember Henry Manney's

story in our March issue, the one about driving the Volvo Express? Leaf back through the article and you'll get some idea of what a commercial Volvo wagon looks like allowing, of course, for the many options on the Express.

There have been a few changes since that vehicle was built, most of them coming last year. We've explained those differences before, the 140 series becoming the 240 series, the 160 model series moving up to 260. What is most significant here is that while the 160 series had no luxury station wagon, the 260 line-up does: the 265. With all Volvos now being built on the same basic chassis, that makes the 265 really a luxury version of the 245 wagon, but with the V-6 engine and standard air conditioning. All the external dimensions are identical, the only measurable difference between the Volvo wagons and sedans being an extra inch in height.

The 240 series had all this in 1975, since that new model was introduced here just as it was in Europe, less the overhead cam 4-cylinder engine. The 260s, though, were held off the U.S. market until this year, no doubt to make sure of the V-6 engine's availability and reliability. Now we have the whole 260 package, new sheet metal, MacPherson strut front suspension, revised rear suspension, new dashboard, seats and interior appointments and the V-6. In total, it is an entirely new car with only the basic shape of the body being retained; the similarity of design belies what's underneath.

Main point of interest is the V-6. As we've mentioned before, this engine is the result of a Peugeot-Renault-Volvo combine



The 265 has 53.2 cu ft of usable space. Underfloor compartment can be used for hiding or stowing chains.



in Douvrin, France. It is a 90-degree V-6 rather than the inherently smoother-running 60-degree design, with a cam in each head working the valves through rocker arms. Fuel system is the Bosch continuous-flow injection, the whole unit neatly tucked in the valley between the cylinder banks. Unfortunately, that is the only neat thing in the underhood area, which is crowded with tubes and hoses. At 2673 cc, the V-6 produces 125 hp at 5500 rpm (121 hp at 5500 in California) and 150 lb-ft of torque in the 49 states and 148 lb-ft in the California version, which is the only one needing a catalytic converter and unleaded fuel.

The V-6 has sufficient power and a crispness to hide the fact that it is a fully certified 1976 engine. The injection starts the car easily from cold, with no driveability problems in our California winter climate. Even with a cold engine, just put your foot in it and the V-6 reacts with no stumbling or hesitation.

The only times we were able to feel the uneven firing pulses of the V-6 were at idle, when the car shuddered a bit and later, under full acceleration. Even then, it was very mild, almost more aural and virtually nil compared to the pronounced shake of a few of the General Motors V-6 powered vehicles. We also drove Volvo's V-6 automatic wagon for a few days and there the torque converter smooths the shudder out even more.

We have no earlier 6-cylinder Volvo wagons to compare this

one to, but the acceleration was quite respectable: 0-60 mph in 13.5 sec and the standing quarter mile in 18.7 sec. Fuel economy was a bit disappointing at 16 mpg on our fuel run.

The 265 has a surprisingly light and maneuverable feeling and the quick rack-and-pinion power steering gives the car a turning circle of 32 ft 2 in. The wagon will turn inside such cars as the Saab 99, Fiat 131, Toyota Corona and Porsche 911. We're used to excellent brakes from Volvos, but the 265's still caught us a bit unawares. The four-wheel discs hauled the car down in 146 ft from 60 mph and in 249 ft from 80 mph. The only thing that marred its performance was the necessity to modulate the pedal to keep the back end from swinging around.

There is nothing on the dashboard that wasn't seen in last year's 240 series, but we have to say the instrument panel is a bit barren. There is only a speedometer and fuel level and temperature gauges. Since our test car came with the smooth-shifting 4-speed manual transmission with standard electric overdrive (the automatic is a no-cost option) we would have liked the optional tachometer included. Of course, there is the optional rallye dash available, but for the price . . .

Ventilation was up to the usual Gothenburg standards, with plenty of dashboard vents and the ability to direct the airflow with the push of a button. As before, the ergonomics are excellent with only the radio a bother, mounted so low the dial is unreadable. The Volvo seats just seem to get better and for



# ROAD TEST

# VOLVO 265DL



SCALE: 10" DIVISIONS

### PRICE

List price, all POE ..... \$9495  
 Price as tested ..... \$9900  
 Price as tested includes AM/FM stereo (\$170), roof rack (\$80), floor mats (\$30), dealer prep (\$125)

### IMPORTER

Volvo, Inc  
 Rockleigh, N.J. 07646

### GENERAL

Curb weight, lb ..... 3320  
 Test weight ..... 3660  
 Weight distribution (with driver), front/rear, % ..... 53/47  
 Wheelbase, in. .... 104.0  
 Track, front/rear ..... 55.9/53.1  
 Length ..... 192.6  
 Width ..... 67.1  
 Height ..... 57.5  
 Ground clearance ..... 7.1  
 Overhang, front/rear ..... 38.9/49.7  
 Usable trunk space, cu ft ..... 27.8 + 25.4  
 Fuel capacity, U.S. gal. .... 15.8

### ENGINE

Type ..... sohc V-6  
 Bore x stroke, mm ..... 88.0 x 73.0  
 Equivalent in. .... 3.46 x 2.87  
 Displacement, cc/cu in. .. 2673/163  
 Compression ratio ..... 8.2:1  
 Bhp @ rpm, net ..... 121 @ 5500  
 Equivalent mph ..... 137  
 Torque @ rpm, lb-ft. 148 @ 2750  
 Equivalent mph ..... 69  
 Fuel injection ..... Bosch CIS  
 Fuel requirement .. unleaded, 91-oct  
 Exhaust-emission control equipment: catalytic converter, exhaust-gas recirculation, air injection

### INSTRUMENTATION

Instruments: 130-mph speedo, 999,999 odo, 999.9 trip odo, coolant temp, fuel level, clock  
 Warning lights: oil press, brake system, parking brake, alternator, overdrive, rear-window heat, bulb failure, exhaust-gas recirc, seat-belts, hazard, high beam, directionals

### CHASSIS & BODY

Layout ..... front engine/rear drive  
 Body/frame ..... unit steel  
 Brake system ..... 10.3-in. discs front, 11.0-in. discs rear, vacuum assisted  
 Swept area, sq in. .... 420  
 Wheels ..... steel disc, 14 x 5 1/2  
 Tires ..... Michelin X, 185-14  
 Steering type ..... rack & pinion, power assisted  
 Overall ratio ..... 17.1:1  
 Turns, lock-to-lock ..... 3.5  
 Turning circle, ft ..... 32.2  
 Front suspension: MacPherson struts, lower A-arms, coil springs, tube shocks, anti-roll bar  
 Rear suspension: live axle on trailing arms & Panhard rod, coil springs, tube shocks

### DRIVETRAIN

Transmission .. 4-sp manual with OD  
 Gear ratios: OD (0.80) ..... 2.98:1  
 4th (1.00) ..... 3.73:1  
 3rd (1.37) ..... 5.11:1  
 2nd (2.16) ..... 8.06:1  
 1st (3.71) ..... 13.84:1  
 Final drive ratio ..... 3.73:1

### ACCOMMODATION

Seating capacity, persons ..... 5  
 Seat width, f/r ..... 2 x 20.0/51.0  
 Head room, f/r ..... 37.0/35.5  
 Seat back adjustment, deg ..... 80

### MAINTENANCE

Service intervals, mi:  
 Oil & filter change ..... 7500  
 Tuneup ..... 15,000  
 Warranty, mo/mi ..... 12/unlimited

### CALCULATED DATA

Lb/bhp (test weight) ..... 30.2  
 Mph/1000 rpm (OD gear) ..... 25.0  
 Engine revs/mi (60 mph) ..... 2400  
 Piston travel, ft/mi ..... 1150  
 R&T steering index ..... 1.13  
 Brake swept area, sq in./ton .. 230

### RELIABILITY

From R&T Owner Surveys the average number of problem areas for all models surveyed is 12. An average of 7 of these problem areas is considered serious enough to constitute reliability areas that could keep the car off the road. As owners of earlier-model Volvos reported 10 problem areas and 4 reliability areas we expect the overall reliability of the Volvo 264 to be better than average.

## ROAD TEST RESULTS

### ACCELERATION

Time to distance, sec:  
 0-100 ft ..... 3.8  
 0-500 ft ..... 10.3  
 0-1320 ft (1/4 mi) ..... 18.7  
 Speed at end of 1/4 mi, mph ..... 70.5  
 Time to speed, sec:  
 0-30 mph ..... 4.5  
 0-40 mph ..... 6.5  
 0-50 mph ..... 9.1  
 0-60 mph ..... 13.5  
 0-70 mph ..... 18.5  
 0-80 mph ..... 25.5

### SPEEDS IN GEARS

OD (4230 rpm) ..... 108  
 4th (5300) ..... 108  
 3rd (5500) ..... 82  
 2nd (5500) ..... 51  
 1st (5500) ..... 29

### FUEL ECONOMY

Normal driving, mpg ..... 16.0  
 Cruising range, mi (1-gal. res) ..... 237

### HANDLING

Speed on 100-ft radius, mph ..... 31.9  
 Lateral acceleration, g ..... 0.678

### BRAKES

Minimum stopping distances, ft:  
 From 60 mph ..... 146  
 From 80 mph ..... 249  
 Control in panic stop ..... good  
 Pedal effort for 0.5g stop, lb ..... 23  
 Fade: percent increase in pedal effort to maintain 0.5g deceleration in 6 stops from 60 mph ..... 26  
 Parking: hold 30% grade? ..... yes  
 Overall brake rating ..... very good

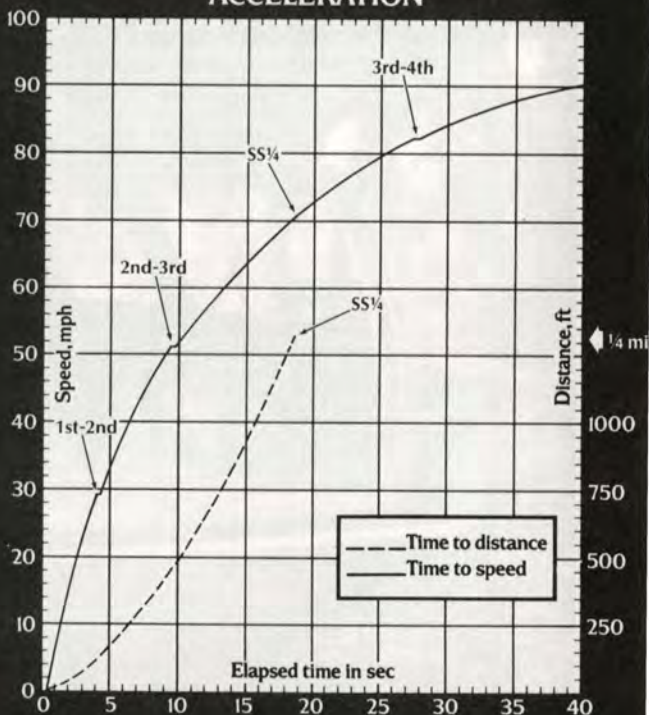
### INTERIOR NOISE

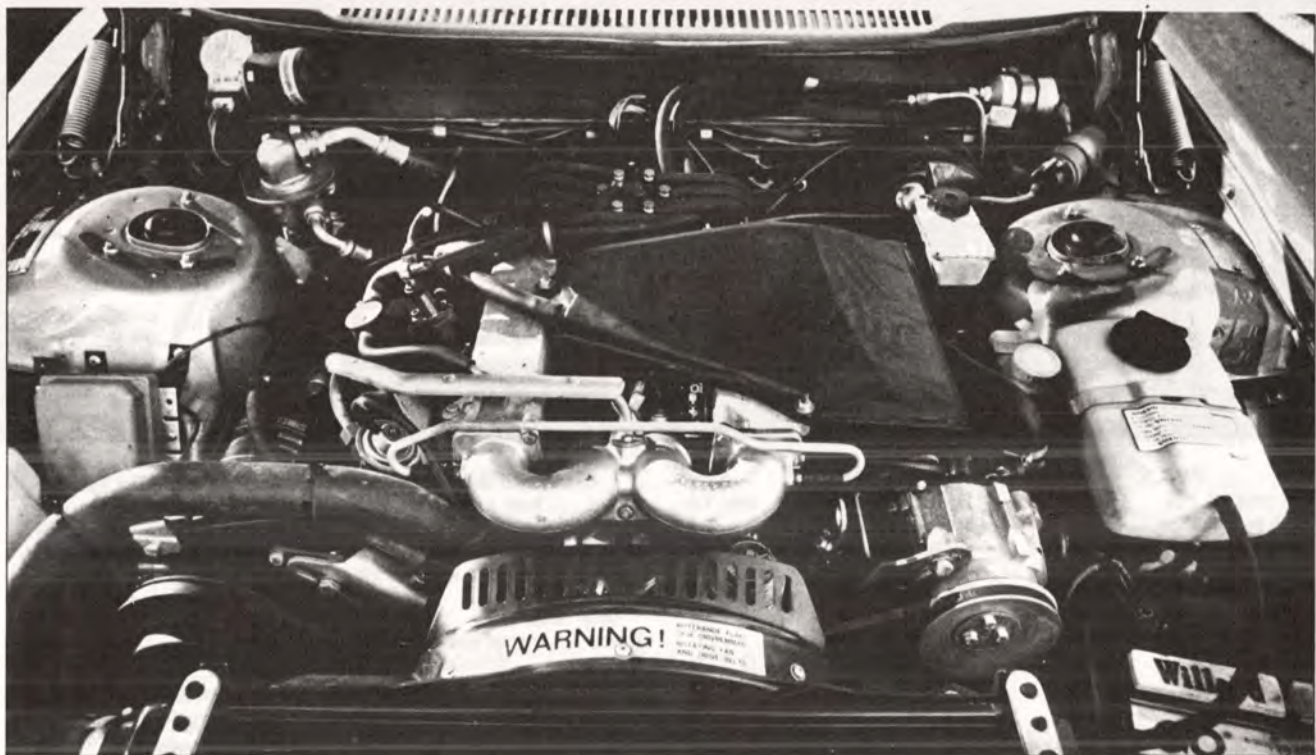
All noise readings in dBA:  
 Idle in neutral ..... 56  
 Maximum, 1st gear ..... 78  
 Constant 30 mph ..... 67  
 50 mph ..... 71  
 70 mph ..... 75

### SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph indicated is actually .. 31.0  
 50 mph ..... 51.0  
 60 mph ..... 61.0  
 70 mph ..... 70.0  
 80 mph ..... 80.0  
 Odometer, 10.0 mi ..... 10.0

## ACCELERATION





PHOTOS BY JOHN LAMM

someone with a bad back, sitting in them is like putting on a pair of old, friendly shoes.

The business end of the Volvo wagon shows its commercial heritage, with 53.2 cu ft of usable space and strong, close-fitting floor panels that are edged with aluminum and swing on strong piano hinges. They are cut precisely and when you fold the second seat (a rear-facing third seat is optional) forward, everything fits into place easily, leaving a flat, smooth load surface without disturbing the range of adjustment in the front seats. The spare is tucked neatly behind the left wheel well, with extra space available behind the right well and under a floor panel at the extreme rear. The fifth door opens easily and props up positively with a locking strut. Hinged at the top, the door opens down to the bumper so you needn't climb over a tailgate. It's all very well finished and efficient.

But does all that make the Volvo 265 worth \$10,000? Everyone on the staff who drove the wagon seemed to enjoy it. The package size is excellent, the performance more than adequate, and the 265 may have the best ride-handling compromise of any wagon made; the very concept hooked our imaginations. But then we don't have to shell out the \$10,000. Taken in that light, the 265 is an answer to a question we've asked, but at a price we couldn't have envisioned just two years ago. It is probably as good as that mythical Mercedes-Benz station wagon the inveterate M-B fans long for, but it lacks the Mercedes star. So when you consider the cost of such vehicles as Volvo's own 245 wagon (\$7495 base price), Peugeot's 504 wagon, the Dasher and Fox wagons, the Hornet Sportabout and even a well outfitted van, the 265 wagon becomes a very expensive way to satisfy one's imagination. 