

**T**HERE'S DONNA REED, in shirt-waist dress and maybe even her little apron, meeting the hubby after his bread-winning day in the city. And, of course, she's driving the family station wagon. Put the image into current focus and perhaps it's having a tailgate picnic before the game, bringing home that oversize antique or simply hauling a goodly number of kids and their kids-stuff to somewhere or other. So what were a trio of us doing out there along a twisty ridge road known as the Angeles Crest Highway? Little Murgatroyd and his friends would have been carsick from the onset, the armoire would have fallen out at that first uphill hairpin and the canapes would have been as tossed as the salad. And, we might add, Donna Reed was nowhere to be seen. Station wagons indeed.

What we were doing, of course, was examining another aspect of the modern wagon, the sporting side, with said examination prompted by the introduction of two new members into the clan, the Audi 5000S and Peugeot 505S. We invited the Volvo along as an old friend, a benchmark sporting wagon enhanced these days by its intercooled/turbo GLT nature. Our comparison trip involved rather more than bombing up the Angeles Crest, what with a 600-mile mix of

suburban traffic, urban freeways, high desert isolation and even some controlled craziness of lapping Willow Springs International Raceway. Along the way, our drivers performed subjective assessments in categories ranging from handling to quietness, luggage and loading to exterior styling and finish. As usual, each element was rated on a scale of 1 (the worst imaginable) to 10 (perfection itself); and, as is our latest nuance in reporting this information, the appropriate chart shows averages of each car's ratings. Nor did we ignore everyday experiences with this practical threesome: In the course of their visit, we filled the wagons with people, their notebooks with comments. We tried carting around some 4 x 8 sheets of plywood, not to say an occasional Siberian husky. And we put each wagon through our usual track testing, plus instrumented acceleration and braking with 700 lb of sand and a heavier driver aboard. (We realize it would have been easier having four or five extra people hop in and out, but it's hard to find good help these days.) Our Engineering Editor even did some slaloming in loaded condition (the wagons, not he), but shifting sand—and a broken bag—put an end to that foolishness. What we learned through all this is artfully displayed in the accompanying

charts, tables and photos; what follows are capsule summaries of the three cars, listed alphabetically.

### *Audi 5000S Wagon*

**C**ALLED THE Avant back in the old country, Audi's entry isn't really a pure wagon; it's a hybrid wagon/hatchback whose state-of-the-art aerodynamics is its most stunning, not to say controversial, feature. Some of us thought it bulbous; others, space-age; but we all agreed that the Audi represents the height of aero fashion.

And this high fashion brings with it only a few minor compromises of wagon utility: The Audi's hatch opening, for example, is smallest of the trio. Its fast-

PHOTOS BY JEFFREY R. ZWART



Audi 5000S,  
Peugeot 505S  
& Volvo GLT:

**THREE  
SPORTING  
WAGONS**

*You needn't forsake fun for function*

back shape requires that tall loads be moved forward in the cargo area to close the hatch. On the other hand, its basic cargo volume proved extremely flexible, incorporating a lockable 5.0-cu-ft volume beneath the floor and another side cubby of 0.5 cu ft for tools and the like. Or everything back there can be covered by a retractable screen, though this does reduce the height a bit. Unique with our test trio, the Audi's rear seat folds in a 40/60 split to offer even more options for people and things; all in all, not a bad trade for such an innovative shape, though you will have to lash those 4 x 8s to the roof, we're afraid.

We didn't try it with any 4 x 8s but we can report that the Audi knows its

way down a twisty road very well and, in the most modern idiom (of which more anon), it's the sportiest of the three. Its excellent steering and front-wheel drivetrain combine to give the Audi a tossable feel that belies its apparent bulk. A slalom speed of 59.9 mph and skidpad result of 0.764g were best of the trio, for example. Driven briskly, the Audi's communication of the road surface was exemplary; just toddling from here to there, however, this same level of road noise got on a few nerves, sensitized, no doubt, by the car's extremely low wind noise. A familiar 2144-cc 5-cylinder puts out its equally familiar, somewhat harsh exhaust note and propels the 5000S from rest to 60 mph in a satisfy-

ing 11.2 seconds. In truth, this is more than a second off the pace of the turbo-charged Volvo's time, but, in defense of the Audi, the car's 14.8-sec loaded time to 60 was still quicker than the driver-only Peugeot's.

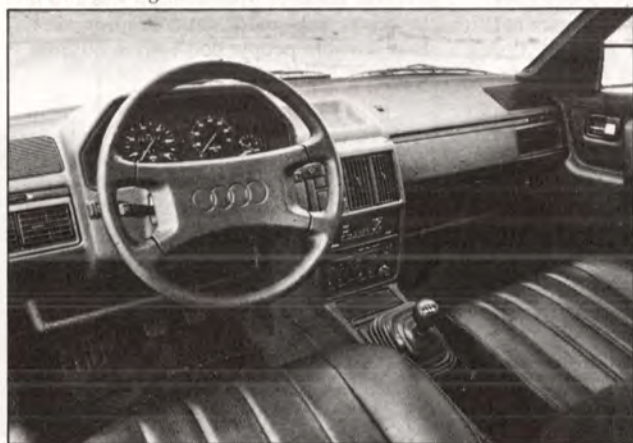
The Audi's brakes (featuring hydraulic rather than the more conventional vacuum assist) hauled it down from 60 mph in an average 160 ft with driver only aboard; this lengthened to 177 ft in loaded condition, though the brakes still displayed very good fore/aft balance and straightforward pedal modulation. The average distance from 80 mph was 279 ft in driver-only mode—and it's our view that sensible people don't drive 80 mph carrying 700 lb of sand back there.



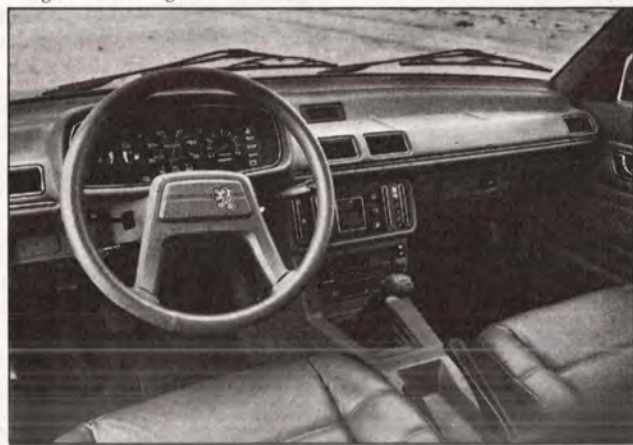
Leave the seat up, put people back there, and you'll hear few complaints from them. Head, leg and squirm room are more than adequate (as, indeed, was the case with the other two wagons as well). And, like the rest of the Audi's interior, the rear area is well finished, though most definitely of a starkly efficient Teutonic idiom in the Leatherette option of our test car.

Its base price of \$17,480 and as-tested \$17,925 bracket the Bavarian between its French and Swedish counterparts.

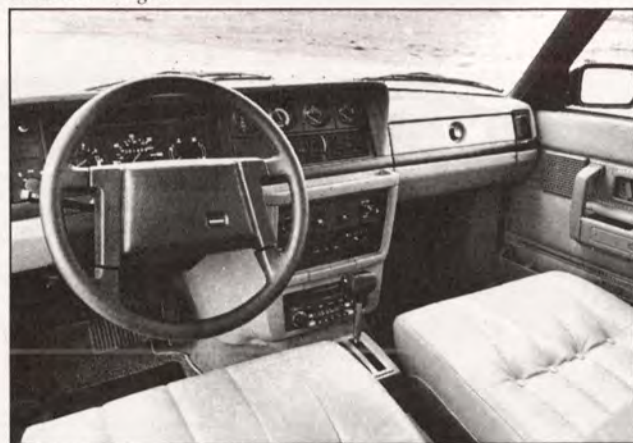
*Audi 5000S Wagon.*



*Peugeot 505S Wagon.*



*Volvo GLT Wagon.*



And, like them, our Audi came fully equipped, with such standard features as automatic temperature control, electric window lifts, electrically adjustable and heated mirrors, cruise control and central locking.

### *Peugeot 505S Wagon*

**L**IKE THE Volvo, the Peugeot is a classic wagon shape, and just as the Volvo embodies conservative Swedish virtues, the Peugeot is charmingly Gallic. Its interior, its ride, the operation of its con-

trols all have a softer feel than those of its competitors.

Not that the Peugeot wouldn't be up to proper wagon service, however: Its basic cargo volume is largest of the trio and, what's more, so is its hatch opening, at 31.0 in. high by 48.5 in. wide. And those who like fooling around with sheets of plywood will recognize the significance of this latter dimension—true, the plywood rides above the wheel wells and sticks out just a little; but it's better than using the roof rack. Unlike the



Audi arrangement, the Peugeot's rear seat cushion folds forward, allowing the seatback to lie completely flat. Indeed, the Volvo shares this feature, but only Peugeot is thoughtful enough to provide little bands that keep the seatbelts from getting lost in the shuffle. A nice touch.

The rest of the Peugeot's interior carries over this theme of thoughtful design, executed with a warmth that's less evident in the other two cars. Its heat/vent/air conditioning controls, for instance, have little multicolored ideograms iden-

tifying the functions. Other hardware, the gearshift lever, the directionals' stalk, even the door handles, show signs of artful intent combined with function. On the other hand, Peugeot's version of an economy gauge, the Econoscope, strikes us as all but worthless. It consists of three lights in the instrument cluster, green, orange and red, that appear to respond solely—and instantaneously—to throttle angle. Our occasional use of the Econoscope seemed limited to keeping its lights bouncing around in time to mu-

sic on long freeway stretches.

Whether on freeway, twisty bits or just running around town, you're comfy as can be in the Peugeot. Its ride is an exemplary blend of suppleness and control. The Volvo offers the latter, true enough, but it can turn into a buckboard when the road surface deteriorates; the Audi feels supple, even floaty at times, but its sporty affinity with the road transmits extraneous input as well.

The tradeoff comes when the Peugeot is asked to make abrupt transitions:



Nothing scary happens, just a fair amount of understeering scrub or, if you're really pushing things, a predictable bit of lateral displacement. In quantitative terms, the Peugeot's 56.3-mph slalom speed and 0.710g skidpad performance were lowest of the three cars.

Its 1971-cc ohv inline-4 is smallest and least powerful of the trio and its test weight is the heaviest, so you have plenty of time to enjoy the Peugeot's other attributes during any attempts at acceleration. The car took a leisurely 16.2 sec to reach 60 mph from rest with driver only; this lengthened to a diesel-like 19.9 sec fully loaded. Our driver-only panic stops were hampered by rear lock sensitivity, with average stopping distances of 170 and 313 ft from 60 and 80

mph, respectively. The brakes exhibited better balance with a full load aboard, and this situation produced an average distance from 60 identical to the driver-only case.

No, the Peugeot's advantage lies in directions other than those purely straight and smooth. In the classic French tradition, it's an extremely comfortable high-average-speed car. During our trip, for example, the Peugeot driver of the hour rarely found himself lagging behind and always felt refreshed after his stint.

The Peugeot's price is refreshing as well, at \$16,095 for the well equipped 505S, the lowest base price of this particular comparison trio. In fairness to the competition, though, we should note that a normally aspirated (and also well

equipped) Volvo GL Wagon goes for \$15,550. But then you could opt for a 505GL Wagon from Peugeot with rather less frills at \$11,990 or, for that matter, keep loyal to Volvo with its DL Wagon at \$12,385. Confused yet? At any rate, our 505S came with a wealth of standard equipment, including air conditioning, electric window lifts, AM/FM stereo/cassette, central locking, electrically adjustable and heated mirrors, heated front seats, cruise control and roof rack. The only option our test car carried was leather upholstery, at \$635.

### Volvo GLT Wagon

WE NOTED early on that the Volvo Wagon is an old friend and, indeed, the car's basic elements can be

Audi 5000S.



Peugeot 505S.



Volvo GLT.



### GENERAL DATA

	Audi 5000S Wagon	Peugeot 505S Wagon	Volvo GLT Wagon
Base price	\$17,480	\$16,095	\$17,795
Price as tested <sup>1</sup>	\$17,925	\$16,730	\$19,057
Layout	front engine/fwd	front engine/rwd	front engine/rwd
Engine type	sohc inline-5	ohv inline-4	turbo sohc inline-4
Bore x stroke, mm	79.5 x 86.4	88.0 x 81.0	92.0 x 80.0
Displacement, cc	2144	1971	2127
Compression ratio	8.2:1	8.4:1	7.5:1
Bhp @ rpm, SAE net	100 @ 5100	97 @ 5000	162 @ 5100
Torque @ rpm, lb-ft	112 @ 3000	116 @ 3500	181 @ 3900
Fuel injection	Bosch K-Jetronic	Bosch K-Jetronic	Bosch K-Jetronic
Transmission	5-sp manual	5-sp manual	4-sp automatic
Gear ratios, :1	3.60/2.12/1.36/ 0.97/0.73	3.59/2.09/1.37/ 1.00/0.82	2.45/1.45/ 1.00/0.69
Final drive ratio, :1	4.11	3.88	3.91
Engine revs/mi	2480	2750	2480
Steering type	rack & pinion, power assisted	rack & pinion, power assisted	rack & pinion, power assisted
Brake system, f/r	10.2-in. vented discs/9.1 x 1.7-in. drums	10.7-in. discs/ 10.0 x 2.3-in. drums	10.3-in. vented discs/11.1-in. discs
Wheels	cast alloy, 14 x 6J	cast alloy, 14 x 5 1/2J	cast alloy, 15 x 6
Tires	Goodyear, Grand Prix S70, 185/70SR-14	Michelin XZX, 185SR-14	Pirelli P6, 195/60R-15
Suspension, f/r	MacPherson struts, lower lateral links, anti-roll bar, coil springs, tube shocks/ beam axle with integral anti-roll bar on trailing arms and Panhard rod, coil springs, tube shocks	MacPherson struts, lower A-arms, coil springs, tube shocks, anti-roll bar/live axle with torque tube, semi-trailing links and Panhard rod, coil springs, tube shocks	MacPherson struts, coil springs, tube shocks, anti-roll bar/ live axle on trailing arms, Panhard rod and wishbone link, coil springs, tube shocks, anti-roll bar

<sup>1</sup>Price as tested includes: For the Audi, std equip. (auto. temp control, cruise control, elect. window lifts, elect. adj./heated mirrors, central locking, radio prep kit & pwr antenna), AM/FM stereo/cassette (\$360), Leatherette upholstery (\$85); for the Peugeot, std equip. S pkg (air cond, cruise control, elect. window lifts, central locking, AM/FM stereo/cassette, elect. adj./heated mirrors, elect. heated front seats, roof rack), leather upholstery (\$635); for the Volvo, std equip. (air cond, elect. window lifts, central locking, elect. adj. mirrors, elect. heated driver seat), intercooler retrofit (\$595), AM/FM stereo/cassette (\$324), roof rack (\$130), misc options (\$213)

traced to the 245 model introduced in 1975. Not that Volvo engineers have merely been sitting around chugging aquavits in the meantime, however. A turbo version of the trusty 2127-cc sohc inline-4 arrived in 1981 and, new this year, it's now intercooled as well. (See "Keep Cool With Volvo," January 1984, for full details.)

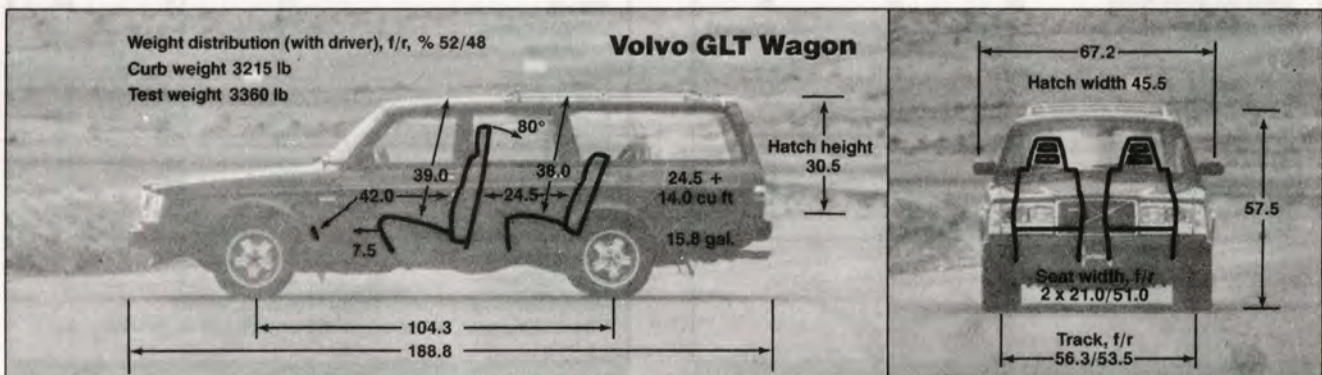
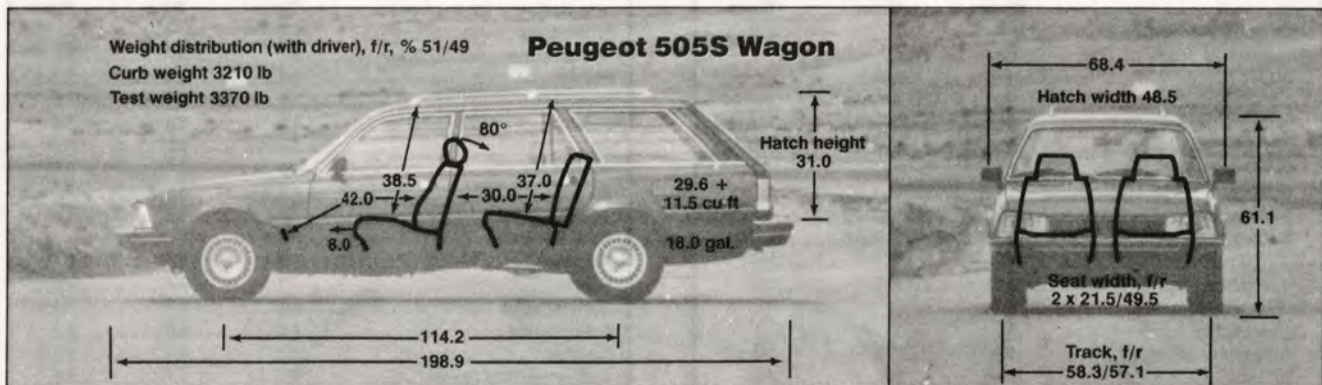
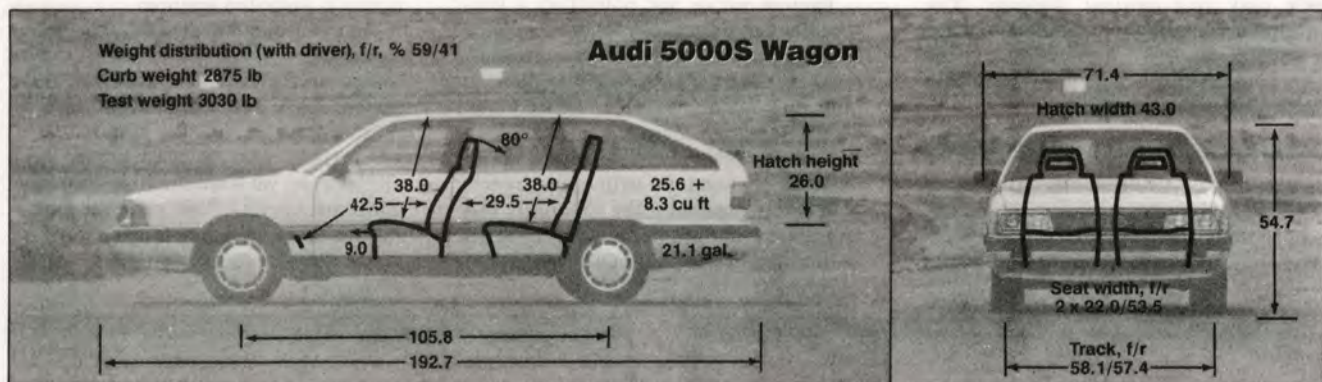
Though the Volvo's weight is almost spot-on with the Peugeot's, its 162 bhp (65 bhp more than the latter's) gives it acceleration that does credit to a good sporty car, let alone a functional wagon. We recorded a 0-60 mph time of 10.1 sec with driver only, and the Volvo whistled its sandy way to 60 in 13.3 sec fully loaded. (Yes, it was the slaloming Volvo in which the bag broke.) Be aware, too,

that the particular GLT available for our test was equipped with an automatic transmission, Volvo's 4-speed with switch-actuated overdrive lockout. Obviously a 4-speed + OD manual would shave these times even more; we know that an intercooled/turbo GLT 2-door so equipped runs to 60 in the mid-8s, and we'd guess a manual-equipped wagon would be solidly in the 9-sec range.

Other aspects of our GLT's performance were equally admirable. In our panic stops, for instance, the Volvo posted the best distances of the trio, with driver-only averages of 149 and 265 ft from 60 and 80 mph, respectively, and loaded stops from 60 averaged 163 ft. Its 58.7-mph slalom and 0.737g skidpad bracketed the Volvo between the more

agile Audi and plushy Peugeot.

The word "old-fashioned" cropped up fairly often, though, in describing its behavior, not surprising when you consider that the basic package is in its ninth year. Whereas the Audi feels like a modern fwd sports coupe, albeit a large one, the Volvo's ride and handling evoke an earlier memory. "In contrast to the other two, this one reminds me of a Sixties sports car in a wagon suit," noted one driver. Other words, "solid," not to say "stolid," also come to mind in describing the Volvo. The feel of its controls, the latching of its doors and hatch, its road manners, even its interior and exterior styling fit the terms. "The Volvo is designed around its components," observed one of our staff estheticians. "It's



not styled in the sense of Pininfarina's work with the Peugeot."

The Volvo is a practical hauler, though not quite as commodious as its French competitor. Like the Peugeot, its rear seat cushion folds forward to give a completely flat surface. And its 45.5-in. hatch width tempts you to angle those plywood sheets in. (They'll fit, but it's easier to use the roof rack.)

At a base price of \$17,795 and an as-tested \$19,057, the automatic-equipped GLT was the most expensive of our trio. We've already noted, though, that Volvo wagons with lesser performance and trim levels are available for some \$5000-\$6000 less. Standard equipment for our GLT included such niceties as air conditioning, electric window lifts, electrically adjustable mirrors, a heated driver's seat and central locking. The intercooler of our early 1984 car carried a \$95 tariff; GLTs fitted with it at the factory are expected to have their base prices adjusted accordingly.

### Winning Hearts, Souls & Minds

WHEN WE totaled our points, reviewed our data and searched our souls, three distinct patterns emerged. The Peugeot's style, comfort and charm

won everyone's heart, and our points game as well. The Audi's sportiness and agility made it the soulful favorite; it was the one drivers enjoyed the most through the twisty bits. And the Volvo's reputation for robustness captured more than a few minds; "This is the one I'd plunk down real money for," as one staff member put it. So which is the best?


For a change, let's argue the opposite side: Why *not* make your next car an Audi, Peugeot or Volvo wagon?

Taking each in turn, you may not admire the Audi's aerodynamic styling; nor is it a pure wagon in the most functional sense. And, in our January 1983 Owner Survey of the previous 5000, we found that Audi folks generally fared no better than average in their long-term experience with the car.

Though we've not published a Peugeot Owner Survey, our reader feedback suggests an even more mixed state of affairs: Peugeot mechanicals appear to hold up very well indeed even in harsh use (witness the marque's popularity in Africa, for example). Yet niggly problems seem to crop up with other aspects of the car, especially the luxurious bits and pieces that are more typically fitted in our market than out in the veldt. And

we're led to suspect that Peugeot's sales and service network is hardly the strongest of the imports. Besides, even if your favorite brother-in-law were a super Peugeot dealer, you may just think the Peugeot is too underpowered for your driving style.

So does this leave everyone in Volvo GLTs? Not necessarily. To continue on our unorthodox note of negativism, a Volvo may be just too dated and stodgy for your taste, even in turbo form. Also (speaking of dated), our August 1978 Owner Survey of the GLT's forebearers, the 240 series Volvos, showed them to be more reliable than average, but less anvil-like than legend would have it. And, besides, if reliability is uppermost in your mind, a turbo car—any turbo car—is inherently less reliable than its normally aspirated brethren.

Wait a second! Whatever happened to enthusiasm, romance, an affinity with things mechanical? Yes, we agree completely. Like any other cars, each of these wagons has its own peculiar set of advantages and disadvantages. And don't forget, we were the ones bombing along the Angeles Crest with this practical trio, so we're happy to conclude you needn't forsake fun for function. 

	Audi 5000S Wagon	Peugeot 505S Wagon	Volvo GLT Wagon
<b>Acceleration, driver only/loaded<sup>1</sup>:</b>			
Time to distance, sec:			
0-100 ft	3.5/4.3	3.9/4.6	3.4/4.4
0-500 ft	9.7/11.1	10.8/11.9	9.3/10.9
0-1320 ft (1/4 mi)	18.0/20.1	20.3/22.0	17.5/19.6
Speed at end of 1/4 mi, mph	76.5/71.5	67.0/63.0	77.0/73.0
Time to speed, sec:			
0-30 mph	3.5/5.3	4.5/5.7	3.1/4.8
0-60 mph	11.2/14.8	16.2/19.9	10.1/13.3
0-80 mph	20.2/26.6	34.5/39.6	19.2/24.4
Top speed, mph	114	97	108
Trip fuel economy, mpg	20.5	18.5	18.0
<b>Brakes:</b>			
Stopping distance, ft, from:			
60 mph, driver only/loaded <sup>1</sup>	160/177	170/170	149/163
80 mph	279	313	265
Pedal effort for 0.5g stop, lb	26	18	17
Fade, % increase in effort, 6 stops from 60 mph @ 0.5g	42	nil	35
Overall brake rating	very good	good	very good
<b>Handling:</b>			
Lateral acceleration, g	0.764	0.710	0.737
Slalom speed, mph	59.9	56.3	58.7
<b>Interior noise, dBA:</b>			
Idle in neutral	52	54	50
Maximum 1st gear	76	79	86
Constant 30 mph	65	64	64
50 mph	68	69	68
70 mph	73	73	74

<sup>1</sup>Loaded: 785 lb more than driver-only condition

	Audi 5000S Wagon	Peugeot 505S Wagon	Volvo GLT Wagon
<b>Performance:</b>			
Engine	6.7	6.0	8.3
Gearbox	6.0	8.3	8.0
Steering	8.3	7.7	6.7
Brakes	8.3	8.0	7.3
Ride	7.0	9.0	5.3
Handling	8.0	7.7	6.0
Body structure	7.3	8.3	7.0
Averages	7.4	7.9	7.0
<b>Comfort/Controls:</b>			
Driving position	8.0	9.0	6.7
Controls	7.3	7.7	7.7
Instrumentation	8.3	7.7	8.0
Outward vision	8.0	9.0	8.3
Quietness	6.3	8.3	5.7
Heat/vent/air conditioning	6.7	7.7	8.0
Ingress/egress	8.7	8.7	6.3
Front seats	7.7	9.0	5.0
Rear seat	7.0	8.0	8.0
Luggage & loading	7.3	8.7	7.3
Averages	7.5	8.4	7.1
<b>Design/Styling:</b>			
Exterior styling	7.3	8.0	6.7
Exterior finish	8.3	8.0	8.0
Interior styling	8.0	9.0	7.0
Interior finish	8.3	8.3	7.0
Averages	8.0	8.3	7.4
<b>Overall Averages</b>			
	7.6	8.2	7.1
<b>Staff Members' Preferences<sup>2</sup>:</b>			
Price-independent	5	9	4
Price-dependent	4	8	6

<sup>1</sup>Average ratings per category on a scale of 1 (worst) to 10 (best)  
<sup>2</sup>Three staff members; 1st choice, 3 points; 2nd choice, 2 points; 3rd choice, 1 point