

VOLVO 164 (1968-1975)



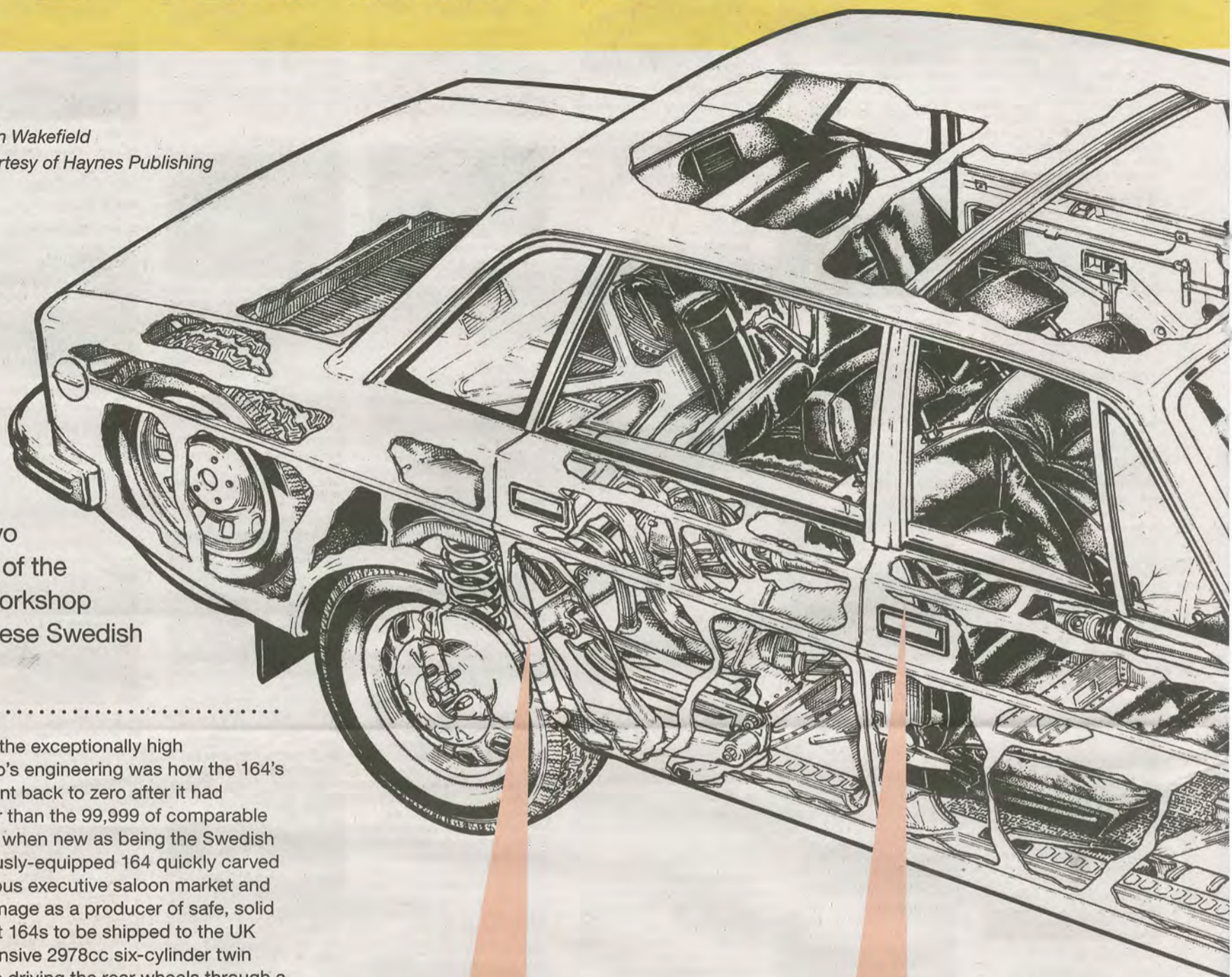
WORDS: Iain Wakefield

IMAGE: courtesy of Haynes Publishing



This week's classic cutaway by the talented illustrator Terry Davey is of the Volvo 164 from the cover of the Haynes Owner's Workshop Manual covering these Swedish thoroughbreds

One of the clues to the exceptionally high standards of Volvo's engineering was how the 164's odometer only went back to zero after it had registered 999,999, rather than the 99,999 of comparable models. Often referred to when new as being the Swedish 'Rolls-Royce', the luxuriously-equipped 164 quickly carved itself a niche in the spacious executive saloon market and helped promote Volvo's image as a producer of safe, solid and reliable cars. The first 164s to be shipped to the UK were powered by a responsive 2978cc six-cylinder twin carburettor-fuelled engine driving the rear wheels through a four-speed gearbox, fitted with overdrive on top gear. Popular options on early 164s were an automatic three-speed gearbox and power steering, and from the 1970 model year a number of improvements included better ventilation, front headrests and leather seat facings (cloth was now on the options list). Power steering was included as standard on the 164 from 1971 and later in the year fuel injection became available on the revamped 175bhp 164E. The following year flush exterior door handles were fitted across the range. To satisfy US Federal collision regulations, larger bumpers were fitted to all 164s from 1973 along with a shorter front grille and revised rear light clusters. The top of the range 164TE was only offered in 1974 and 1975 – the final two years of the 164's production – and these well-equipped later cars are now very desirable among Volvo enthusiasts. Volvo never officially offered a 164 estate and although this prestige saloon was regarded as a well-built car when it was launched, there are only 43 survivors currently registered with the DVLA (there will inevitably be more on SORN). Locating a good example will be a challenge and the best source for anyone considering one of these interesting cars would be to contact either the Volvo Enthusiasts' Club (www.volvoenthusiastsclub.co.uk) or the Volvo Owners' Club (www.volvoclub.org.uk).



Terry Davey

SUSPENSION, STEERING & BRAKES

Although there are no grease points on any of the 164's steering or suspension components, it's important to check the condition of all ball joints and the rubber gaskets:

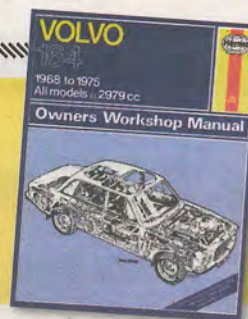
- Check the security of the steering rack mountings, column joints and the condition of rubber boots
- Inspect the shock absorbers and springs – renew any leaking or worn units
- Check the security of the suspension mounting points, paying particular attention to the condition of any rubber bushes
- Carefully examine brake lines and flexible hoses for fluid leaks, corrosion and chaffing
- Examine the condition of the front and rear callipers/discs/pads for seizing/scoring/wear and replace if necessary
- Check the handbrake mechanism for seized pivots, frayed cables and worn pads

BODYWORK & CHASSIS

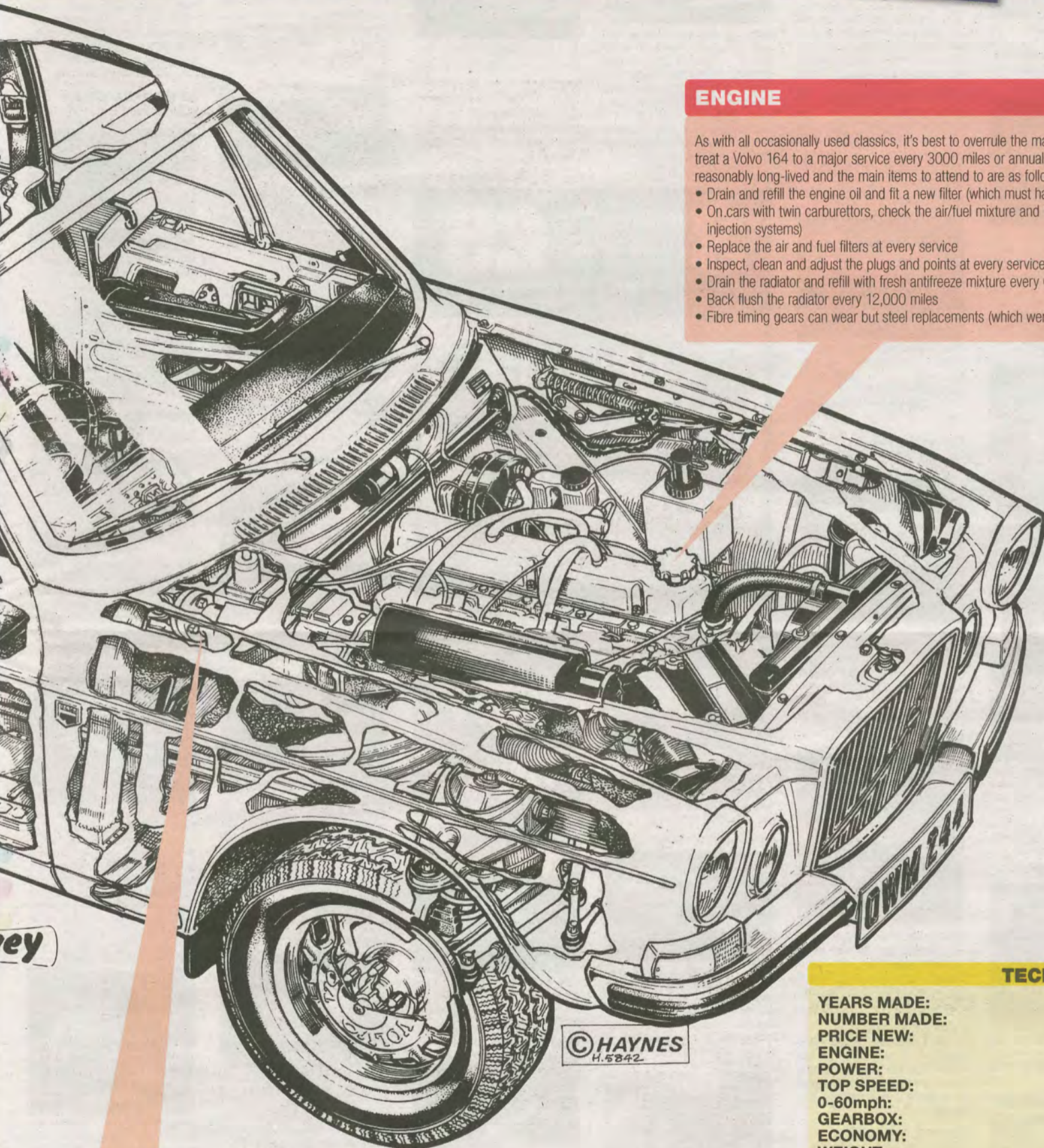
Rust isn't a major problem with well looked after 164s as the factory applied a generous amount of corrosion inhibitor during these cars' construction. Many new panels are still available and the main places to check for signs of corrosion or accident damage are as follows:

- Front wings around the headlights, tops and seams with the inner wings
- Light/grille panel around the sidelight fittings (check the seam with the wing hasn't been filled in)
- Radiator crossmember behind the front valance
- The corners of the front bulkhead
- Front scuttle and under screen rubber (front and back)
- Boot floor and the spare wheelwell
- Front and rear wheelarches
- The leading edge of the bonnet
- Edge of the sunshine roof and gutters (check the drains are clear)

The Haynes Owner's Workshop Manual covering all versions of the Volvo 164 is currently out of print. Paperback reprints for a good range of classics are available from: www.haynes.co.uk priced £25



UNDER THE SKIN



ENGINE

As with all occasionally used classics, it's best to overrule the manufacturer's maintenance schedules and treat a Volvo 164 to a major service every 3000 miles or annually, whichever comes soonest. Engines are reasonably long-lived and the main items to attend to are as follows:

- Drain and refill the engine oil and fit a new filter (which must have a non-return valve) at every service
- On cars with twin carburettors, check the air/fuel mixture and idle speed (seek specialist advice for fuel injection systems)
- Replace the air and fuel filters at every service
- Inspect, clean and adjust the plugs and points at every service. Renew every 12,000 miles
- Drain the radiator and refill with fresh antifreeze mixture every 6000 miles
- Back flush the radiator every 12,000 miles
- Fibre timing gears can wear but steel replacements (which were standard on the TE models) are available

TECH SPEC

YEARS MADE:	1968-1975
NUMBER MADE:	144,179
PRICE NEW:	£1986 (in 1969)
ENGINE:	2979cc 6-cyl
POWER:	145bhp (1296cc)
TOP SPEED:	110mph
0-60mph:	9.5 secs
GEARBOX:	4-spd man
ECONOMY:	21mpg
WEIGHT:	966kg

GEARBOX & DRIVETRAIN

Manual gearboxes seem to go on forever without giving any trouble but it's vital to use the correct grade of oil in 'boxes fitted with overdrive. The main service items are as follows:

- Check the gearbox and differential oil at every 3000-mile service
- Drain and refill the gearbox and differential every 12,000 miles
- Check the auto gearbox fluid levels every 3000 miles. Drain and refill every 30,000 miles
- Inspect the rear axle and gearbox for leaks at every service
- Carefully check the condition of the centre bearing on the propshaft and check for play in the universal joints
- Check the security of the engine and gearbox mounts at every 3000-mile service

HOW MUCH?

Low mileage Volvo 164s in mint condition are rare survivors and are priced accordingly. Our sister website (www.carandclassic.co.uk) currently has a 1971 164 with only 42,500 miles under its belt on sale for a wallet-busting £8500. It's a lot of money for a 'Seventies saloon but right-hand drive versions of these Swedish beauties are few and far between. A really nice example would probably be picked up for around £5000 at auction and prices for a Condition 1 Volvo 164 start at just over £2000. Projects costing £500 are reserved for the adventurous and around £1500 is a fair price to pay for a usable example requiring a bit of work to bring it up to scratch.

Next week: ALFA ROMEO ALFETTA