



TOUGH but comfortable . . . The Volvo 142 is one of the rally-bred Swedish cars which is most at home romping over unmade roads.

Volvo holds to its reputation

FOR many years the Swedish firm of Volvo has been producing cars with a reputation for ruggedness.

It was some time since I had driven any of the Volvo range so it was almost a new discovery this week to find these cars not only tough but extremely comfortable.

The test car was the Volvo 142, part of the 140 series introduced about two years ago but updated this year with a lift in engine power.

The 142 is a two-door, four-five seater sedan selling at \$3895.

It is powered by a four-cylinder motor which has been increased in capacity from 1780 c.c. to 1986 c.c.

This sturdy unit develops 118 b.h.p. at 5800 r.p.m. and 123 lb.ft. of torque at 3500 r.p.m.

FLOOR CHANGE

The test car had a four-speed manual transmission with floor change but versions with overdrive and automatic transmission are also available.

The automatic is powered by a 90 b.h.p. motor instead of the 118 b.h.p. unit.

With the Volvo's reputation for liking tough going in mind I left the usual test route and covered 800 miles of Southern Queensland's worst interior roads.

Not only did the 142 come back in one piece it also did the trip in very fast time, in complete comfort, and averaged 27 m.p.g.

It proved to be an ideal car for Queensland country conditions — in fact I have never driven anything more suited to out-back driving.

The 142 just didn't notice either gravel or broken bitumen surfaces being as easy to handle on these as on the smoothest highway.

COMFORTABLE

The suspension absorbs all but the worst bumps leaving the passengers comfortable and at ease.

Steering is a little high geared for town work making the car feel fairly heavy but again it is perfect for country cruising.

In the handling department the 142 was perfectly predictable and went where pointed without fussed.

Cornering at speed was a breeze no matter what the road conditions and at all times the 142 felt absolutely safe.

This feeling was aided by the quite magnificent braking system — self-adjusting discs on all

four wheels with power boosters.

For safety's sake the 142 has a dual braking system and a relief valve in each circuit prevents rear wheels from locking before the front wheels in emergency braking.

SAFETY

Volvo started building safety into their cars years before the current witch hunt by authorities started.

In their current models for example, the passenger compartment is a steel box supported by six bored steel pillars each of which can support twice the weight of the entire

At a Glance

TWO-DOOR, four-five seater with four-cylinder, 1986 c.c. motor developing 118 b.h.p. at 4800 r.p.m. and 123 lb. ft. torque at 3500 r.p.m. Compression ratio 9.5 to 1.

Manual four-speed transmission with floor change, all synchro.

PRICE: \$3895 (including tax). Petrol: 13½ gallon tank, 27 m.p.g. overall test. Turning circle 30ft. 4in.

PERFORMANCE. Acceleration, 0-30 m.p.h., 3.9 secs.; 0-40, 6.2 secs.; 0-50, 8.7 secs.; 0-60, 12.1 secs. Standing quarter-mile, 18.7 secs. Top speed 104 m.p.h.

car. Together they can support 15 tons.

Other built in safety features include energy absorbing front and rear panels, collapsible steering column, impact absorbing material in the interior and every door and recessed controls.

The interior of the 142 looks a little spartan at first glance, but everything is there that is needed.

The seats are quite simply the best in the business with the front buckets being perfectly contoured

for adequate all-round support — there is even a control to adjust the tension of the springs in the rear squabs for individual taste.

Standard equipment includes flow-through ventilation and a magnificent heater-demister system which has vents to demist even the back windscreen.

The instruments are well placed and comprehensive while thought has been given to all the small points of comfort and convenience.

There are hooks to hang seat belts on to keep them out of the way when not in use and quick release levers for when you want to get out of them.

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