

Hooked on Volvo and Overseas Delivery



BY MICHAEL KRAUSS

Our first Volvo, and our best vacation ever, happened at the same time and serendipitously.

It was August 2021. We had just promised our 11-year-old Subaru Outback to our daughter, and had just sold our eight-year old Mercedes diesel to someone who was betting that the price of diesel would soon fall below that of gasoline. (How did that turn out?)

We were searching for an AWD station wagon to replace the Subie—we are huge wagon fans—and my research took me to the V60 Cross Country. I'll be frank—we were mesmerized by the beautiful lines of the V60, and thought its price reasonable. But “reasonable” became “a screaming bargain” when I researched Volvo’s Overseas Delivery Program (OSD).

In brief, OSD gives you the following:

- We were able to configure our V60 exactly as we wished. (No small feat during the COVID era when dealers take what they are given.)
- Seven (7) percent off the MSRP.
- Two premium economy tickets from our ▷

Above—A sheep comes to visit during a rest stop in Hovet, a beautiful small mountain village in the middle of Norway, between Bergen and Oslo.

Right—The Flåm zipline is Scandinavia’s longest with a span of 1,381 meters. The location is spectacular and offers a breathtaking view of the Flåm Valley. It is only accessible by train to Vatnahalsen station.



home city (Greenville, South Carolina) to Gothenburg.

- One night in an ultra-luxury hotel, a gourmet meal that first evening, a factory tour, and a luncheon before being introduced to our new Volvo.
- A full tank of gas, two weeks' insurance, and tolls paid in Sweden, such as the Gothenburg congestion tax.
- Last but certainly not least, the OSD travel agency organized a detailed driving itinerary based on our answers to a series of questions.

In May 2022, we flew to Sweden and picked up our Thunder Grey V60 Cross Country. Festooned with every option, the V60 was as gorgeous in person as it had appeared in the online pictures. We love those massaging seats!

We spent five days in Sweden and nine in Norway, avoiding all superhighways (easy to do in Norway, where there aren't any!) and exploring the sportiest roads, lakes and fjords. Thanks to the OSD travel folks, we stayed in gorgeous boutique hotels, which we never would have found by ourselves.

Our driving was adventurous in the extreme. We successfully negotiated awesome snow-covered roads (in May!) that put Tail of the Dragon to shame. We drove through countless Norwegian tunnels that appeared to be insufficiently wide to accommodate the

Kayaking in Geirangerfjord, Norway. It is known for its spectacular waterfalls and deserted farms high up on the steep cliffsides. Geirangerfjord is considered one of the most beautiful fjords in the world and is included on the UNESCO World Heritage list together with Nærøyfjord.



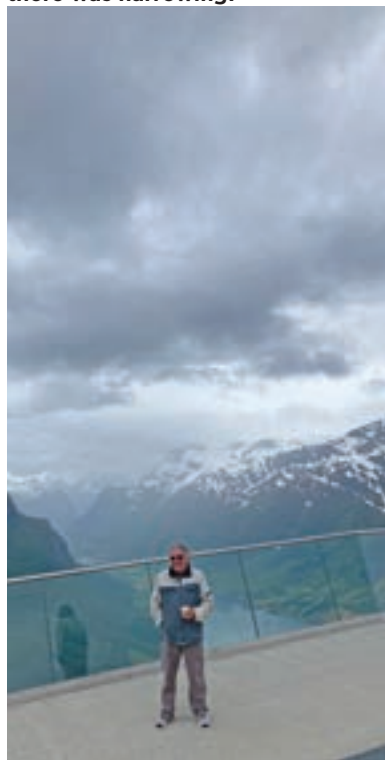
Gula Villan (The Yellow House), built in 1897 and now part of Strandflickornas Hotel (The Beach Girls' Hotel), is where we stayed in Lysekil, Sweden.

tractor-trailers we met head-on. We parked in a 10-story parking garage in Oslo that gave about one inch clearance on each side of the V60 as we searched for our spot (thank goodness for the 360-degree camera!). We kayaked in gorgeous and ice-cold fjords. We bicycled in tiny mountain villages and gorgeous Oslo in the rain. We ate brown cheese in villages totally cut off from road traffic. We hiked exten-

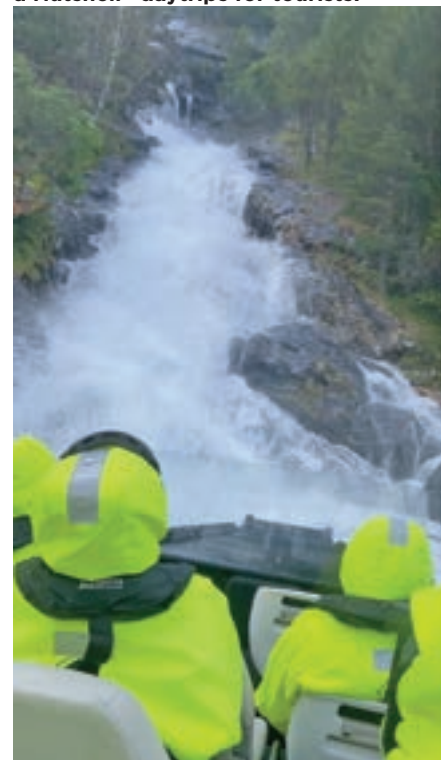
sively and took trains to tiny inns not reachable any other way. And we didn't put a scratch on our V60, which performed perfectly and got a respectable 31 mpg over 1,200 miles.

On June 21, we dropped off the V60 in Gothenburg and flew home. Then came the hard part—the 72-day wait until our car arrived at our dealership (Hunter Volvo, just across the North Carolina line in Hendersonville).

At the Norwegian Glacier Museum in Fjaerland, Norway. The drive there was harrowing!



Rafting in Naeroyfjord. The narrow fjord is a branch of the large Sognefjord and is featured on the "Norway in a Nutshell" daytrips for tourists.





Undredal is considered the brown cheese capital of Norway. Brown cheese, *brunost* in Norwegian or *mesost* in Swedish, is a tan-colored ‘whey cheese’ with a distinctive caramel flavor. Technically it isn’t even cheese. The water from the whey of goat’s milk is boiled down, which caramelizes the sugars. The resulting glop is left to cool and you’ve got brown cheese. It’s set into small blocks, wrapped, and can be eaten immediately.



They were kind enough to put our detailed car in their showroom with a bow on it for our pickup day.

Would we do it again? In a heartbeat, although we’ve learned that the seven percent discount from MSRP has been discontinued. We are well-traveled and active senior citizens,

and we’ve visited Europe well over a dozen times, but we think this vacation was the best we have ever taken, the \$9.50/gallon gasoline notwithstanding. ■

Michael Krauss lives in Six Mile, S.C. and can be reached at kraussmichaeli@gmail.com.

The Norwegian Home Front Museum, located at Akershus Fortress in Oslo, focuses on the Norwegian Resistance during the occupation of Norway by Nazi Germany from 1940 to 1945. On display are equipment, photos and documents from the war years. This statue is dedicated to the Resistance fighters.



The folks at Hunter Volvo in Hendersonville, just across the North Carolina state line from us, put a bow on our V60 and placed it in the showroom when it arrived back home. We kept the Swedish red export plate in the front.

