

a Cross Country so bogged down that their ace demo-driver couldn't extract it with a superior sneer while his hands flicked over a panel of selector switches for front differential lock, rear differential lock, 4WD and hi or lo. Any or all of those options are available on the run, too.

Volvo is rare in the field for making its own drive lines, along with all the other bits, and while they were at it they synchronized and vacuum powered everything but the wheel nuts. They also embraced the fail-safe syndrome in a manner to gladden an astronaut's heart.

Engage low, for instance, and you

*Note the flat, truck-like wheel position with ample selection of switches (wipers are separate circuits), and a panel for heaters and fans. Other features include the limited-slip locks on separate levers for front and rear, plus the 4WD button, all on a panel near the stub shift. Toggle on shift is reverse lockout.*

automatically get 4WD even if you hadn't pushed its own button previously. Step on the brakes when in hi-2WD and it goes into 4WD for anti-skid, max-effort short hauls. And just in case a differential lock fails out in the boonies, it always fails with the axles locked to be sure you get home from any sand trap.

One begins to get the idea that this 303 is somewhat over-engineered, if anything. It was developed nearly a decade ago for the Swedish forces, in fact, and now that the first 4600 have been built, Volvo get to musing over possible civilian sales. With a near-fifteen grand price they are aiming primarily at pipeline cruisers and airport fire teams—but anybody who wants the ultimate in traction, stability and plain old haulin' power could hardly do better. A three-axle is available too.

Tractive wonders come courtesy of that same bullish inline six which used to power their big sedans. Here it

feeds a near-flat torque curve through four-speed box, two-speed transfer case and 2:1 drop gears at the wheels.

The spur gear drop cases allow more axle clearance when combined with spiral bevel final drive. And the use of vacuum engaged differential locks means that you can flick either or both in and out together or individually while playing on the 4WD button alongside like an organ virtuoso. Those three finger switches and one (sic) stubby shift lever control all eight forward and two reverse ratios.

A toggle on the shift is the reverse latch, with its slot far-left and back. Thereafter you have one-through-four in the usual H-pattern, plus hi-lo to the right, past a moderate resistance. That puts lo right-forward alongside third and hi behind it, off-shore of fourth.

To grab lo-second, let's say, you shove the lever past the bump and as far right-forward as it will go, then

