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VOLVO

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and open the other. They even offer rheostat lighting for the clear, no-noise dial.

Sweden has been described—probably by a Finn—as a land where they have twelve months of winter, except that three of them are a little warmer. It is no surprise, then, to find two full heater systems, each with two-stage fans. The driver and presumably the non-coon up front get 40 kW, the troops make do with 30 kW output.

A very large hump between the front seats and extending into the body houses the engine and makes this a clamber-over rather than a walk-through. On the other hand, putting it there means you can remove two lids in a jiffy and do engine repairs inside, out of the Arctic blast. Noise is surprisingly low for the agricultural layout, aided by perforated panels all over, their sole concession to glamor in the basic machine.

Vision is right up there with the best cab-overs but Swedish law decrees steel cabs so it's safer than it seems, and the front passenger even gets a knee pad. Thanks to 45° approach and departure angles, you can tackle any bank you can see over, damn near, and the load distribution of 36.3/43.3 empty or 48/32 loaded, all between the axles, keeps weight on the tires. Fully loaded, the Cross Country only exerts about twice the pounds per square inch of the contact patch of a heavy man.

Fording ability is given at fifteen inches with dry feet and they are playing with an amphibian variant, though not for civilian consumption just yet. If you want to dream even further—the world's fifth-largest builder of heavy trucks was also one of the first to turbocharge standard truck engines in 1954 and they now make a nice inline diesel six with blower.

Quite obviously this latest Volvo on the public stage will not suit every occasional off-roader but it gives anybody a pretty fair idea of the parameters if you want to four wheel over the tough ones.

Somehow, making civilian plans for this 303, with the potential it carries, seems a little like giving one of Attila's best brigade commanders GI Bill rights at a girl's school.

No off road region, however chill and/or remote, can hope to remain virgin territory much longer. □