

CLASSIC DRIVER

[Keep your other half happy with Volvo's ultimate sleeping sports car](#)

Lead

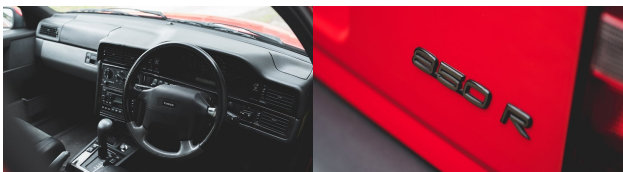
The best things in life often come from the unlikeliest of places: take the Volvo 850R, for example — a hot-blooded sleeper sports car in which you could, genuinely, take the family on holiday. Middle age has never looked so cool...

Sporty Scandinavian



The Swedes do it better. Unlike today, estates were never intended to be credible sports cars. No, estates were designed to lug around your family and belongings in safety and comfort, and Volvo built the best. Imagine the look of surprise on your neighbourhood watch warden's face, then, when Geoff at number 42 rumbled home in his brilliant red 850R one evening. Volvo even made [a handful with a manual 'box and a limited-slip differential](#). Up until that point, middle age had never been so cool.

Climbing into the ring



Whether it was Tom Walkinshaw's evocatively liveried Scandinavian wagons crushing curbs in the British Touring Car Championship or the emergence of the RS2 — the result of Audi and Porsche's brief love affair — Volvo took building the 850R seriously. It had self-levelling rear suspension, traction control, and anti-lock brakes...oh, and a turbocharged five-pot under the bonnet that developed 250bhp and hauled the car from 0 to 60mph in around six-and-a-half seconds. It's been twenty-one years since this fabulous example, which is [currently for sale with Classic Driver dealer Fast Classics](#), rolled out the factory, and it genuinely still feels as brisk (not to mention comfortable). Plus, that five-cylinder warble warms the heart like Volvo's Euro NCAP rating.

Photos: Jack Passy for Classic Driver © 2017

Gallery

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