

Volvo Overseas Delivery Experience

This European vacation almost pays for itself
By: Teri Patterson

Fortuitous is a good way to describe the events that lead to our purchasing a Volvo through their Overseas Delivery Program.

Last summer, I had the opportunity to travel to Sweden with the University of North Florida. I traveled with a group of MBA students joining their study abroad in Sweden and Denmark experience for twelve days. The class, Business Process Management, was instructed by Dr. Dag Naslund, from Sweden. It was while we were on a charter bus traveling to one of our business meetings with Volvo Group that I first learned of Volvo's Overseas Delivery Program. By chance the timing was right; my husband and I were planning to purchase a new vehicle in the upcoming year. Before I left for Sweden my husband, Steve had mentioned that we should consider a Volvo. Once I learned about the overseas program, I wanted to know more.

Upon returning home I began researching the program. Volvo's website provided a wealth of information about the program and how it works. Under the Volvo Overseas Delivery Program they offered us a savings of 8% off the U.S. MSRP - free shipping - marine insurance - two round-trip airline tickets to Europe - the opportunity to drive our Volvo in Europe covered by their auto insurance, roadside assistance and registration - one night hotel in Gothenburg - and more. Honestly it sounds too good to be true. Any questions we had were promptly answered each time we called the toll free phone number to Volvo's OSD Customer Care Center.

I researched a little on the internet looking for articles about the program's customer satisfaction, etc. An article posted on *Edmunds Inside Line*, dated Nov. 2005, caught my attention. They stated that Volvo claims a 99 percent satisfaction rating for the program. Of the European automobile manufactures that offer an overseas delivery system, including BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Porsche, and Saab, Volvo has the largest share of the market. This paragraph from the article made me smile: *"What's driving the increasing popularity of this program? Is it the thought of saving 8 percent on the price of a new Volvo? Is it the included round-trip airfare, factory tour and one-night hotel stay at the SAS Radisson Hotel in Gothenburg? Is it the prospect of visiting a country where even the airport baggage handlers could pass for supermodels? The answer is "yes" to all of those, but the real beauty of the program comes from the extensive range of travel options offered by Volvo. Beyond the included airfare, hotel night, factory tour and premium delivery experience that every OSD customer gets, there are several travel options that can be purchased at extremely competitive rates."*

We made our decision to purchase a Volvo through the Overseas Delivery Program. Now we needed to find a Volvo dealership of our choice to process our OSD purchase. We visited a Volvo dealership which was closest to our home. The salesperson was very nice and helpful. We test drove several models with him. We were referred to the manager

since our interest was only in the OSD program. Unfortunately the manager was not as informed about the program as we had become.

On the day that we were ready to sign the contract we called this Volvo dealership first to make sure before we drove down there that we would be able to complete the contract there that day. Upon arriving we were directed to someone who we were told would help process our paperwork. This person seemed unenthusiastic that we were there to do an overseas delivery. He did not seem to enjoy working with that program. He did not have the information about the available vehicles on the lot in Sweden. We were asked to come back because the vehicle information and contract was not available. He told us he would call us. He has failed to call us back to this day.

After this experience we were a bit disillusioned. So, we called Volvo OSD directly seeking advice; they were able to give us the names of a couple of dealerships in our area that have previously processed OSD. Then we called O'Steen Volvo in Jacksonville. I was pleased that upon explaining our plight that the owner, Mr. O'Steen talked with me personally. He advised us that Joe van Bavel would be happy to help us and that he processes most of their OSD sales. Joe van Bavel contacted us right away.

At this time Volvo was offering an extra travel option called their Winter Travel Offer. For an additional \$695 total we added a trip to Rome for two. The Rome travel package included: three nights at a four-star hotel in Rome and one extra hotel night in Gothenburg including airfare with private round-trip transfers from the airport to the hotel.

Then just a few days before we signed the contract Volvo OSD added an incentive offer on Model Year 2008 In-Stock Packages. This offered us additional savings off options and accessories packages that were on their in-stock vehicles. The factory had in stock the vehicle that we were interested in with the added packages, so this in-stock offer added additional savings for our purchase. This extra discount more than covered the additional cost to add a trip to Rome.

The process of signing the contract at O'Steen Volvo turned out to be quick and simple. We are very pleased with the customer service we have received from both Joe van Bavel and O'Steen Volvo. We purchased a 2008 S60 2.5T, Titanium Grey Pearl with Light Taupe Leather, with the Premium Package and Climate Package.

Once we received our order conformation package in the mail I called their Corporate Travel Management Group and booked our travel arrangements. We departed out of Jacksonville on December 10th to Rome. We spent three nights in Rome, Italy. From Rome we chose to arrive in Stockholm, Sweden. We spent the weekend in Stockholm and took the train to Uppsala for a day. Uppsala is where some of my ancestors immigrated from and many had attended the Uppsala University. On Sunday, we took the high-speed train from Stockholm to Gothenburg.

Monday morning Volvo OSD picked us up from the hotel and took us to the Factory Delivery Center. First we had to complete some paper work which turned out to be pretty

quick. Then they presented our Volvo to us in their OSD showroom. Now we had an opportunity to drive our brand new Volvo. Suddenly we were a bit nervous about taking it for a drive on foreign roads. We were pleased when they pointed out their small test driving track. After gaining a little confidence we asked them to suggest a possible nearby scenic drive. They gave us driving directions to the archipelago town of Öckerö. This was a beautiful drive. We drove onto the ferry which transported us to the island town. This quiet little town was full of fishing boats that were stored for the winter. The weather was lovely and a few people were out riding bicycles. It was very picturesque. We drove back to the delivery center in time to enjoy the complementary Swedish meatball lunch followed by the factory tour.



Volvo S60
Volvo Factory Delivery Center

The factory tour was given by riding on a small train type vehicle. Headphones were provided so that we could all hear our guide as we rode through the factory. The taking of photographs during the tour was not allowed. We saw the entire vehicle assembly process while our guide explained each step along the way. It was truly fascinating and impressive. Witnessing this process certainly gave us a greater appreciation for the value of our Volvo. Volvo concentrates on safety - safety of their employees as well as the safety that is built into each vehicle. Their factory was clean and organized. I found it interesting during my prior visit to companies in Sweden as well as during this Volvo factory tour that American 80s music is very popular background music in the Swedish work place.

With the UNF group we had previously researched Volvo Group's history. Volvo was first incorporated in 1915 as a subsidiary of SKF, the Swedish ball bearing manufacturer. Volvo means "I roll" in Latin. In 1924 the two founders, Assar Gabrielsson and Gustaf Larson decided to manufacture Swedish cars. In April of 1927, the first Volvo car left the factory in Gothenburg. From the start demand in Sweden for a Swedish car was only modest. Already in development was the medium-duty truck. In 1928 the first Volvo truck left the factory in Gothenburg. The first truck was an immediate success. In the early years it was the successful truck sales that provided financial security for the company.

Volvo has become known for focusing on safety. Assar Gabrielsson's wife died in an auto accident. He vowed to produce the safest cars possible. A few of their safety innovations include: In 1944 Volvo was the first to install laminated front windshields, and also first to install the safety cage to help protect passengers - 1959 they introduced the three-point safety belt - 1972 they were first to introduce a rear facing child safety seat - 1991 they were first to introduce a side impact protection system - 1998 they were first to introduce side impact air bags - 1998 they introduced their unique whiplash protection system - 2002 they were first to introduce a roll stability control system with gyroscopic sensors.

Volvo cars are now sold in over 100 countries. Globally their market share is about 2%. In Sweden however roughly one in every five cars sold is a Volvo. In 1999, Volvo shareholders approved the sale of Volvo cars to the Ford Motor Company. Volvo car has three component plants located in Sweden. They have production and assembly plants in about seven additional countries.

We returned our Volvo back to the Factory Delivery Center on Tuesday afternoon for shipping. The shipping paper work was also simple and quick. Then we flew home on the 19th.

Everything that Volvo listed in their Overseas Delivery Offer turned out to be true. We received an excellent price on a new Volvo and enjoyed an incredible trip to Rome, Italy and Sweden. Our Volvo was ready for us to pick it up at O'Steen Volvo on February 8th. It was shiny clean, full of gas, and in perfect condition. O'Steen's was even kind enough to leave the front Swedish tag on our Volvo as I had requested. Our Florida tag was on the rear as required.

In summary, we are very pleased and satisfied with the Volvo OSD program. We did enjoy a vacation of a lifetime. I recommend this program to everyone. As long as Volvo keeps offering the OSD program, we will do this again.

Details of our trip ----

On December 10th, we flew out of Jacksonville, FL through Washington Dulles; from Washington to Copenhagen, Denmark, then Denmark to Rome, Italy. Volvo included in our package passes to the SAS business lounge. During our layover in Dulles, we enjoyed relaxing in their private lounge. We landed in Rome on December 11th around 12:20 pm.

We enjoyed our three nights at the Savoy Hotel in Rome which is located close to Spanish Steps. It's was within walking distance to everything we did while in Rome. The hotel is charmingly beautiful. The streets are hilly, narrow, and filled to capacity with moving and parked vehicles. The tiny Smart Cars were everywhere. The streets were bustling with people. I found it fascinating walking along window shopping and gazing in the windows of the numerous Italian restaurants. Needless to say we enjoyed our dining

experiences while in Rome. There was so much to see, do, and eat. Then add all that to the significance of their history it's simply overwhelming.



View of the Colosseum

The Trevi Fountain - It's was a Roman custom to build a fountain at the end point of an aqueduct which brought water to the city. In 1732 work began to dramatically improve the fountain. The fountain of today was erected for Clement XII. Trevi is the largest of the Baroque fountains of Rome - standing 85 feet high and 65 feet wide. Work was completed in 1762. Within this spectacular fountain are Neptune and a sea-chariot drawn by two Tritons. The fountain has so much going on within it along with the size of it that it left me with a sense of wonder.



Trevi Fountain

The Spanish Steps - The Church steps of Trinita dei Monti - The Piazza di Spagna – The piazza square is surrounded by narrow streets that are lined with designer boutiques and antique shops. The fountain, Fontana della Barcaccia, is in the center of the piazza. This fountain is shaped like a large boat that is spouting water while it sinks. The square was completed with the building of the Spanish Steps in 1725. The staircase ascends from the piazza and consists of 137 steps with twelve different flights. At the top of the

staircase is the Trinita Church that was built in the 16th century. The steps were designed as the solution for connecting the piazza to the church. The staircase is named after the Spanish Embassy. The view from the top of the steps was spectacular.



The Spanish Steps

The Piazza Navona - This piazza dates back to the 1st century. Originally it was a stadium where Romans came to watch the games. This is the home of three lavish fountains; Fountain of the Four Rivers, Fountain of the Moor, and Fountain of the Neptune.



Fountain of the Moor

The Victor Emanuel II Monument - This building is dedicated to the memory of Italy's first king. It is large white building that stands out boldly against its surrounding. Inside they have on display patriotic and military memorabilia. Construction on the building started in 1885 but was not completed until forty years later. The vast outdoor stairway in its center leads to the Altar of the Nation with the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier which contains remains of an unnamed Italian soldier whom died fighting for the country in WWI. Two sentinels keep guard over it. The building has a rooftop observation area with a coffee café. Steve and I ordered coffee and sat there in amazement of all that was to be

seen. The sky was clear blue with a brisk wind blowing. The view was just incredible. It provided us with an excellent overview of Ancient Rome. From this rooftop we could see the Forum and the Colosseum. There is an interesting contrast in the ruins dating back thousands of years which are now encompassed by the modern Rome of today.



Victor Emanuel II Monument
Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

The Roman Forum – From the birth of the empire under Augustus in 31BC, and for nearly the next five-hundred years, Rome ruled most of the civilized world. This area of five acres located in the center of Ancient Rome was the seat of government and where the administration of justice took place. It was the main marketplace, business district and town hall. It was only in the eighteenth century the Forum was rediscovered and the process of recovering these ancient ruins began, bringing one of the most important archaeological sites back to life.



View of the Forum

The Pantheon – This temple is one of the most important and most imposing of the Roman temples. It's also the best preserved. It was built by Marcus Agrippa, son-in-law

of Augustus, in 27 B.C., in honor of all the gods: hence the name. It was destroyed by a fire in 80 A.D.; it was rebuilt in the time of Hadrian (between 110 and 125 A.D.). In 609 the temple was consecrated as a Christian church by Pope Boniface IV, who dedicated it to the Virgin Mary and all the Martyr Saints.



The Pantheon

The Capitoline Museums - are a group of archeological and art museums in the Piazza del Campidoglio, located on top of the Capitoline Hill. The history of the museums has been traced back to 1471. The collection includes ancient Roman statues, inscriptions, artifacts, collections of medieval and Renaissance art, and other items. The Museo Capitolini is the oldest museum in the world that is open to the public. Within the museum is the bronze statue showing the twins Romulus and Remus being suckled by the she-wolf. Romulus and Remus are the traditional founders of Rome. Folklore tells that the twins were viewed as a threat to the Throne of Amulius. He ordered his twin nephews to be killed. The servant could not bring himself to kill the innocent twins. They were laid in a basket on the banks of the Tiber River. The river gently carried the basket with the twins downstream. They were rescued and nursed by a she-wolf.



Statue of she-wolf with Romulus and Remus

Our second full day in Rome we spent exploring the Vatican City and St. Peter's.

Words absolutely fail to describe the detail, the glory and magnitude of this spiritual historical place. After visiting, I am now amazed at how inadequate photographic images and even a live broadcast on television fail to completely capture its splendor.

Vatican City - is the world's smallest state. The city is just 0.2 square miles. The Pope is the head of state. Security is provided by Swiss Guards. This corps was founded in 1506, and numbers less than 100 at present. Their uniforms were supposedly designed by Michelangelo. The guards are all Swiss and they offer their services to the Vatican for brief periods of time. While we were there their presence was well known. We found ourselves awestruck by the structures within the Vatican.



Vatican City

The Basilica of St. Peter - is the most prominent building inside the Vatican City. Its dome is a prominent feature in the skyline of Rome. The building covers an area of 5.7 acres and has a capacity of over 60,000 people. It is known to be the burial site of one of the twelve apostles of Jesus, Saint Peter. Catholic tradition holds that his tomb is below the baldachin and altar. Starting with the first Pope many have been buried inside the basilica. The current basilica is located over the old Constantinian basilica. Construction began in 1506 and was completed in 1626. St. Peter's Basilica is known as one of the holiest sites.



Inside St. Peter's Basilica – The Nave

After St. Peter's we walked to the entrance of the Sistine Chapel. We were disappointed to learn that they had closed for the day. We did not have enough time before our flight the next day to return to the Sistine Chapel.

December 14th – We flew from Rome back through Copenhagen then to Stockholm, Sweden. From the airport we took a short train ride to the Central Train Station in Stockholm. We stayed two nights at the Nordic Sea Hotel which is located near the station. Sweden was in bloom during my previous visit in August and the weather was nearly perfect. The sun was bright during the day. Now in December there was a gray dull tone to the sunshine and the sun stayed low on the horizon. The days were short with daybreak around 8:40 am then by 2:45 in the afternoon the sky darkened for the long night. In contrast sunrise in August was around 5 am with sunset around 8:40 pm. It was cold in December. However because we dressed for it, we found the weather to be surprisingly comfortable.

I was looking forward to visiting Sweden during Christmastime. The shops were filled with Tomtes, straw Julbocks, star lamps, candles, ornaments and other Christmas decorations. Some of the Saint Lucia items were still available. Swedish homes and businesses were a glow with clear Christmas lights. Lights of color were not common. Nearly every window was adorned with the Swedish electric candelabras and wooden star lamps. In Stockholm many of the narrow historic streets are lined with shops and restaurants. This area was busy with shoppers. We purchased many items.

Stockholm – The city is built on fourteen islands, where the lake Mälaren opens up into the Baltic Sea. Stockholm is the largest city and capitol of Sweden. It is renowned for its natural beauty.



Uppsala Cathedral

The town of Uppsala is located 40 miles north-northwest of Stockholm. [Until ca1910, Uppsala was spelled with one p: Upsala universitet and Upsala stad.] Uppsala University was founded in 1477 and it is the oldest university in Scandinavia. The Cathedral of Uppsala is located within the university area. Construction of the cathedral began in 1287. It took more than a century to complete. The cathedral was dedicated to Saint Lawrence, Saint Eric, and Saint Olaf. The cathedral was the coronation church for many of Sweden's kings and queens. It housed coronations from the middle ages up until the

end of the 17th century. A number of Swedish kings and famous public figures lie buried inside. Gustav Vasa, 16th century, King of Sweden, is buried with his three wives; however only two of them are depicted on his sarcophagus. Others buried inside include: Carolus Linnaeus, 18th century, world renowned botanist, Olof Rudbeck, famous Swedish polymath and one of the discoverers of the lymphatic system, Eric the Saint, 12th century, King and national saint, Laurentius Petri Sweden's first Lutheran archbishop. The cathedral has undergone many changes during the course of the centuries. The basic architecture and actual space is exactly the same now as when it was first dedicated. The Chancel of the cathedral has retained its original medieval form. 13,993 square feet of wall and ceiling paintings were newly painted at the close of the 19th century. During our visit inside the cathedral, we enjoyed the sounds of Swedish Christmas hymns being sung by a small choral group as they practiced. Their music helped make our experience inside this sacred place even more beautiful.



The crypt of King Gustav Vasa

We visited the Museum Gustavianum - Uppsala University Museum which is across the street from the cathedral. The museum is housed in the oldest of the university buildings. This building is named after King Gustavus Adolphus, who donated the land and funding for the building of a new University Hall. We walked up the steep hill to the grounds of the Uppsala Castle. From there we found a scenic overview of the university and surrounding town.



View of Uppsala Cathedral

We enjoyed the best Swedish coffee and pastries in a little café, Marten Trotzig, located just outside the university grounds. The atmosphere in the café was absolutely charming. I was in pure Swedish heaven sipping coffee enjoying lingonberry cake while watching

and listening to the ambience. Steve enjoyed coffee with pepparkakor (ginger cookies). These homemade cookies were perfectly thin and crispy.

Absolut Ice Bar – During my summer visit to Sweden our group also spent a little time in the Ice Bar. I was excited to share this experience with Steve. It is located at the Nordic Sea Hotel. Before entering the staff provides you with a hooded parka poncho and ski gloves. The interior of the Ice Bar is kept at -5°C year round. Everything inside the bar is made of pure ice including the glasses. The Ice Bar is small only allowing up to 30 guests at one time and you can stay inside for only about 30 minutes. They offer several specialty drinks all made with Absolut Vodka, and non-alcoholic drinks are available. For some crazy reason going into a freezing cold room with everything in there made of ice and drinking a little vodka is a lot of fun. Steve enjoyed this unique experience however as soon as he finished his drink he asked me how long we had to stay in there. He was a little cold.



Royal Palace changing of the Royal Guards

Stockholm Royal Palace - We took a self-guided tour of the palace which is the largest palace in the world that is still used by the head of state, King Carl XVI Gustav. The palace has 608 rooms. It was built on top of the foundations of a previous medieval castle, Tre Kronor (Three Crowns) dating back to the mid 13th century, which was ravaged by fire in 1697. The construction of the new palace lasted 57 years, from 1697 to 1754. We observed the Changing of the Royal Guards. There have been Royal Guards at the Royal Palace in Stockholm since 1523. The soldiers in the Royal Guards are full time active duty soldiers in the Swedish military. They are not a special unit only doing Royal Guard duty. The ceremony lasted about forty minutes. Their performance was filled with precise marching, band music including beats to the drums, and commands given in a loud military yet musical voice.



Royal Guards

Sunday we traveled by train from Stockholm to Gothenburg. Sweden has a highly efficient rail network covering the whole country. The Swedish high-speed train X 2000 travels at up to 125 mph. We purchased tickets in the first class section which was amazingly comfortable. Our travel time from Stockholm to Gothenburg was about three hours. The ride was surprisingly smooth and relaxing.

Gothenburg – Göteborg is Sweden's second largest city. Mostly due to its location so close to the sea the city has been a trading and industrial city since its beginning. It's the home of multinational companies like Volvo, SKF and Ericsson. The city's central area is compact. You can reach most things by foot or by using their tram services. This area is modern and trendy with numerous shopping spots including Nordstan's mall.

In Gothenburg the central rail station is located directly in front of the hotel Radisson SAS. The hotel is elegantly modern in design. It's located in the heart of the city. The hotel is walking distance to attractions, landmarks, shopping and dining. All of our hotel stays included a full breakfast each morning. The Radisson's restaurant offered a very large tasty traditional Swedish breakfast. I do wish that we had a Swedish restaurant near our home. I would so much enjoy their traditional breakfast along with coffee on frequent occasions. The breads, cheeses, cold cuts, pickles, cookies, and coffee just can't be beat in my opinion.

We enjoyed many excellent meals while in Sweden. Reindeer meatballs with fresh lingonberry sauce were one of our favorites. In Stockholm and in Gothenburg we dined at Jensen's Bøfhus. Both times we ended up there because they did not have a long wait to get in although very popular. Jensen must have spent time in the States because they specialized in the American BBQ and burgers with fries. They were also Americanized just a little with faster service compared to the traditional Swedish dining experience. During our first drive in our Volvo we stopped at a store called Maxi ICA Stormarknad. This was similar to our Wal-Mart. While we were in the checkout line, the lady in front of us was purchasing many Christmas smorgasbord items including lutefisk. I wished I could follow her home to observe and enjoy this unique Swedish tradition.

We found the people of Sweden to be friendly. English is widely spoken. When we did not understand their Swedish, just as soon as we spoke English to them, they immediately spoke to us in English. This is most impressive to find such a wide scale of their population to be at least bilingual. During our visit we felt welcomed and safe.

We departed for home on December 19th – We flew from Gothenburg to Stockholm, from Stockholm to Chicago O’Hare then to Jacksonville, FL.



O’Steen Volvo Jacksonville, FL
Joe van Bavel with Steve & Teri Patterson