

Volvo 780

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Considering Purchasing a Volvo 780?

[Tips from Fitzgerald/Paul Demeo]

All the sheet metal on the 780 is custom for only that car. With only 4,000 to 5,000 vehicles imported to the US, they are scarce, but I do know of a few scattered around in salvage yards across the country. I have a pair of 780s, one with the B280F (PRV-6), and the other with the B230FT (turbo-4). The 4-cylinder engine is easier to work on and has a higher peak-horsepower, but the 6-cylinder engine has better low end torque. The PRV-6 is unique, with its own problems, and finding someone knowledgeable enough to work on it can be a challenge.

Headlights, tail lamp assemblies, corner markers, grill, airdam, various other parts etc, are all custom to the 780 and therefore either not available or very expensive. The car chassis and suspension is exactly the same as a 760 GLE for their respective model years (imported to the US from '87 to '91). They only come in automatics, and the interior is hand stitched Italian leather. The interior dash and door trim panels are real birch wood (not fake plastic), and the sound system is second to none for its era. If you want to add a CD changer to the factory radio system without any major work, you can swap out the radio head unit (keeping the EQ and amps the same) with a later Volvo CR-814 that they started using in the '91 and up Volvos. The CR-814 is compatible with Alpine's M-Bus system and thus allows for you to add a CD changer in the trunk. (FYI, much of Volvo's audio equipment came from Alpine and bears the respective tags.) While the 780 is a very unique car (and the last 2-door coupe of the RWD Volvos), many of the design features that the Italians used were copied by Volvo in their 960 series. Comparing a 780 to a 960 side by side, you will find many similarities, especially in interior layout and door height design (both of which have low cut door sills and provide a great arm rest while driving and lots of visibility). By the time you get through reading the following website, you'll probably be thinking really hard about trying to talk the dealer down on the 780. -and besides, a car that cost \$40K 15 years ago typically has lead a sheltered & pampered life. If you consider owning

one of these cars for awhile, consider also buying a wrecked one just to have parts on hand if you get in a fender-bender.

When negotiating a price with the seller for your 780, look closely at:

- the air dam assembly and the rear side windows (at the base). The air dam on these cars is VERY expensive and is easily damaged by parking barriers because it is so low. My '88 is missing about 25% of it's air dam, and the '89 is missing the whole thing. I know someone who just recently had his air dam replaced on his '91 780 and had it painted to match for about \$3,200.
- broken interior trim, cracking dash, de-laminating wood panels, broken headlights/taillights/turnsignals outside. Check to see if all the doo-dads like trunk poppers (there's two), power seats/mirror/sunroof all work.
- the hand-stitched leather on the seats is softer than typical Volvo leather and is prone to splitting if not cared for with regular leather treatments. You can re-cover the front seats with donor upholstery from a 760, but you must reuse the original seats to retain the function of the folding seat to allow access to the rear seat (the 780 is a 2-door coupe for those not familiar with it).
- rear side glass. This is probably the only significant [rust spot](#) on the car to worry about, but when it rusts, it rusts badly. There are some concealed drains and tubing to remove the water from the base of the window glass, and if these become clogged it can turn disasterous very quickly. If any evidence of rust is showing at the window base, ask the dealer if you can pull the interior rear panel for futher inspection. What you will find will either convince you to look elsewhere or give you a big bargaining chip in price negotiation.

Source for 780 Trim Parts.

[Tip from Steve Seekins]

If anyone is looking, you can contact them directly. I know that some of these are now difficult to get.

VOLVO 780 (39K) Bertone. The original stainless steel trims for:

- A-pillar left and right,
- Roof left and right
- C-pillar left and right

H. Bauer Kfz. has purchased the entire stock of the manufacturer at prices of 1 piece DM 100.- or 1 set (6 pieces) DM 500.- If you have interest, please contact :

Mail:

H. Bauer Kfz.

Lindenstr. 6

78662 Bösing

Phone:

Deutschland 0049 Telefon: (0)7404 / 910165

E-Mail:

H.Bauercars@t-online.de

Rust Warning.

[Tip from Patrick]

In the process of fixing up my 780, I have found what could be a characteristic problem - rust around the rear windows. When I bought mine, there was a little surface rust around the rear window trim. I found that this is evidence of serious rusting beneath. There is a drain system for the rear side windows. If you pull the rear inside panel, you will see this drain and also any rust problems. There are several plastic hoses that run from the window frame to the bottom of the car. The rust occurs when the hoses become clogged so that the window doesn't drain. The window assembly comes out as a unit. Mine was so eaten up with rust that if we tried to disassemble it to sandblast it, it would have fallen completely apart. I encourage you all to at least blow air through the drain system to keep it clear. If you are really industrious, pull the inside panel and take a look. You might even pull the window and check it out completely. Especially if you are keeping the car long term.

To remove the interior panels to gain access to the rear window: If yours has never been apart it is quite possible to break something. Treat them gently; these pieces dry out over time and become brittle. The back seat has to come out first. Then the insert has to be gently pried out of the handle and two screws removed. There is a screw where the panel attaches to the floor under the seat, a screw under the little cap on the door threshold and an allen or torx screw just toward the rear from that one. Then you can pop the panel off - GENTLY - because all that should be left are the pop in retaining clips. Some of those will probably stay with the car. There are a lot of them.

Once you get the panel off, the rust should be evident - if you have it. There is a piece with three screws in it that runs across under the window. If it is real rusty, you should probably pull the window. To do that, you will have to pull the rear shelf and the trim panels around the window. After you remove the trim around the window there are about 12 screws that screw into the window frame all around. Remove them and you should be able to pull the window out. After you get it out you will see the holes to the drain system. Blow some air through these to clean them out.

Removing Wood Dash Trim.

[Tip from Olle Holmstrom]

Remove the instrument cluster, the panel under the steering wheel, the glove compartment and the ECC controls. Then you can remove the small nuts that hold the wood trim to the dash.

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