VW's Eos is a touring convertible for all seasons

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for manual shifting. Because of the turbo, premium unleaded fuel is recommended.

The weight of the new model has been trimmed 25 kg to 1,595 kg, which should give it added get-up-and-go. The previous model did the 0-100 km/h run in about 7.9 seconds so the new one should be in the same range. Fuel economy ratings are 9.5L/100 km city and 6.7L/100 km highway.

The Eos comes in two trim levels, Comfortline ($39,075) and Highline ($43,775).

The Comfortline gets 17-inch alloy wheels, eight-way manually adjustable heated front seats, leather wrapped steering wheel, shift knob and parking brake lever, rear park distance control, electronic stability control, Halogen projector headlamps, tire pressure monitoring system and an eight-speaker AM/FM/CD sound system with single CD player (MP3 readable, iPod connectivity, Bluetooth mobile phone connectivity, climatic climate control and cruise control.

Step up to the Highline model and standard fare includes 18-inch alloy wheels, leather seating surfaces with 12-way power adjustable front seats, auto-dimming mirror, bi-xenon headlights with LED technology and adaptive front light system, dual zone electronic climate control, digital compass, keyless access with start/stop button, leather wrapped multi-function steering wheel with DSG paddle shifters, premium eight-speaker audio system with six-disc CD changer, sport seats, sport suspension, ski bag and rain sensor wipers.

The Volkswagen Eos has an upscale interior with high-grade materials and comfortable seats.

You can also order both models with the Technology Package, which includes a touch screen navigation system, Dynaudio 600-watt digital sound system with 10 speakers and Sirius satellite radio. With the Comfortline, you can add the Sport Package, which includes 18-inch alloy wheels, bi-xenon headlights and sport suspension.

The Eos is well outfitted on the safety front. Standard are front airbags, side curtain and side thorax airbags, electronic stability control, traction control, anti-lock brakes with electronic brake force distribution and hill hold assist.

As I mentioned at the start, why the Eos is sometimes forgotten among convertible buyers is puzzling. The cabin has an upscale look with great fit and finish and high-end materials. The Eos is also unique in the market with the power sunroof and the peppy engine is just right for a midsize car.

Design wise, the Eos doesn't have the curves of its beautiful stable mate, the Passat CC, but with the top down it is a very attractive car.

With the top up, it tends to blend into the woodwork at bit and that may turn some buyers off.

The rear quarters carry a high beltline, but not to the extent of some of the other retractable hardtops on the market.

While there is seating for four, the back seat is best used for small children or as an overflow cargo hold. Adults wouldn't want to ride for long in the back seat. However, front seat room is spacious enough. With the top up, trunk capacity is 297 litres (10.5 cu ft.) but with the top down it shrinks to 186 litres (6.6 cu ft).

On a recent trip up north to cottage country, we made great use of the back seat to carry our bags and groceries for the weekend. It's amazing how much you can pack into the car, even with such a small trunk.

With the top up on the highway, the Eos is surprisingly quiet with few shakes and rattles that sometimes accompany a retractable hardtop.

Top down, minor cowl shake is evident on bumpy roads, but not so that it is alarming or irritating. And speaking of the top, it is a marvel of German precision with so many moving parts, that it often draws a crowd during the 25 seconds it takes to raise or lower it.

The Eos is more of a touring car than a sports car— a pleasant place to spend a sunny, summer day on the road.

If you want a bit more spirited driving, opt for the sport suspension, which tightens things up a bit and cuts down on the body roll in the corners.

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