

## USED CAR FEATURE - 150 mph Estate Cars

**T**wenty years ago if you suggested to a car manufacturer that they produce an estate car capable of 150mph, they would have looked at you as if you'd gone mad. Then, in 1995, Volvo unleashed the 850 T5 on a bemused world and the rest is history. Nowadays BMW, Mercedes and Audi all make estate cars with over 500bhp under the bonnet and, just to show you how things have moved on in the last 15 years, two of my choices are powered by diesel engines!

### **Volvo V70R (155 mph)**

Volvo's bonkers estate car has moved on since the introduction of the T5. Now with 4 wheel drive and a modest 300bhp to play around with, this is a seriously fast car that still retains all the traditional Volvo virtues. It is solid as a rock, spacious, (especially in the boot) refined and it doesn't scare you half to death every time you put your foot down. The V70R is a bit of a rare beast but, if you can find one, £13k should get you a 4 year old with reasonable mileage.

**For:** Performance, handling, space, comfort

**Against:** Slightly staid image these days

### **BMW 530D Estate (152 mph)**

I've long had reservations about the latest generation 5 series, mainly regarding the looks, but the estate version is less painful on the eye than the saloon. BMW's excellent 3.0 V6 diesel kicks out 235bhp and masses of torque, though it doesn't endow the car with any kind of sporty pretensions. The handling, driving dynamics, build quality and comfort are all what you would expect from BMW. On the downside, the interior is barely any better looking than the outside and the boot is too small for any serious load lugging. £13k gets you a 3 year old with 70,000 on the clock.

**For:** Driving experience, build quality, handling.

**Against:** Looks, small load area



### **Audi A6 Avant 3.0TDi (150 mph)**

The estate version of the Audi A6 is an excellent car in almost every way. Sleek and stylish, capacious, comfortable and well equipped, it is crafted with loving Germanic precision. Throw in the superb 3.0 V6 diesel with standard 4 wheel drive, automatic gearbox and goodies such as leather and satnav and it gets that much closer to perfection. Only the overly firm ride lets it down. You'll need fourteen grand to get a four year old with reasonable mileage.

**For:** Looks, space, build quality, equipment, handling...the list goes on

**Against:** Getting a bit ubiquitous

### **Saab 9-5 Aero Estate (152 mph)**

The introduction of the 9-5 was a big step forward for Saab; unfortunately they took that step 12 years ago. Even so, the Aero Estate has quite a bit going for it. It is huge inside, extremely comfortable, very well equipped and still has some of those strange eccentricities beloved of Saab aficionados. The turbo engine delivers bags of grunt, far more than the front wheel drive chassis can handle in fact, so the handling ranges from lousy to terrifying. Perhaps the greatest appeal for a second hand buyer lies in its value – ten grand will get you a three year old with a scant 30,000 miles on it.

**For:** Space, comfort, value, entertaining engine

**Against:** Terrible handling, old fashioned, bankrupt parent company

**Kit Johnson**