

INDIA'S NO.1 CAR & BIKE MAGAZINE

OVERDRIVE

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MAHINDRA XYLO WINNER

UV OF THE YEAR

Network **18**

DUMMY

Dummy still black and blue all over, from pinching and slapping myself over the past month as manufacturer after manufacturer confirmed a dream list of cars for our track test. I think I slapped myself the hardest when Porsche confirmed the Panamera and the Cayenne - we've barely driven a Porsche on the street in India and now two were being trucked down to the racetrack complete with a spare set of tyres. By the time Mercedes called to confirm the AMG I'd convinced myself I was living in a dream - after all a 5000+ horsepower (not to mention Rs 16 crore) test has never been attempted in India.

Well, if you dream hard enough, they do come true and I write this after spending two days getting a proper tan and burning lots of rubber at the MMST race track. We've logged a set of hardcore numbers by Gaurav Gill, one of India's finest racers. We have awesome footage of all the hot laps from the Video VBOX data logger. We have some of the best tyre-smoking, opposite-lockery pictures you'll find anywhere and of course it's all backed up by our typically racy and evocative prose. And I'm sure you've already noticed that



UV & SUV OF THE YEAR

NOMINEES

Be it answering the call of the wild or ferrying the whole family, this segment had offerings to please everyone this year. The Mahindra Xylo is an ideal people mover, with loads of room and comfortable interiors while the Tata Xenon XT is an upmarket pick-up for adventure lovers. SUV aficionados rejoiced and splurged on the Toyota Fortuner in large numbers while the year also saw the entry level mini SUV Rio, which marks Premier's re-entry into the passenger car arena.



Mahindra Xylo



Premier Rio



Tata Xenon XT



Toyota Fortuner

MAHINDRA XYLO - WINNER, UV OF THE YEAR

The CNBC-TV18 Overdrive Awards rate vehicles on a variety of parameters including style, design, ergonomics, ride, handling, performance, fuel efficiency, value for money and above all else relevance to India. It is on all these fronts that the Mahindra Xylo scores extremely well, impressing the jury for the OVERDRIVE awards by being a perfectly executed vehicle for India and highly relevant to the needs of our country.

The Xylo combines the space of an MUV with the ease of driving of a sedan making it practical for both cities and long distance commuting. The interiors are spacious and it's available in either 7-seat or 8-seat option. The front seats offer

adjustable lumbar support while the driver seat is height adjustable as well. Three rows of forward facing seats are offered in the base variant while the higher variants get captain seats for the middle row, these seats can also be reconfigured. Also on offer are folding trays that integrate into the back of the front seats. The air-conditioner in the Xylo is powerful and with vents in the rear does a good job of keeping passengers cool. The Xylo also features a multi-function display which includes a digital compass, gear indicator, fuel tank range, instantaneous fuel consumption and relative humidity. These features are not available in any other vehicle in this segment. Also on offer are keyless entry and rear parking sensors.

The suspension set-up offers great ride quality and straight line stability on rough roads making it perfectly

suited to Indian roads and conditions without compromising on handling.

The powertrain is excellent and suits Indian conditions offering great power and torque output of 113PS and 235Nm respectively. The gear ratios have also been selected keeping in mind Indian conditions and thus make it perfect to drive on long journeys as well as in city.

Fuel efficiency is excellent in the city as well as the highway returning an overall range of about 670km. The Xylo prices starts at Rs 6,14,300 ex showroom Mumbai, making it extremely good value-for-money. All these factors make the Xylo a true winner and has resulted in it claiming the prestigious CNBC-TV18 OVERDRIVE UV of the Year Award for the year 2010.

The competing vehicle for the UV of the Year award for 2010 was the Tata Xenon XT.



Vanity fare

Can the Mahindra Xylo pip the Toyota Innova to the post in the luxury van derby?

Words **Bertrand D'souza** Photography by **Gaurav Tombare**



MEAGLE FLIGHT

This engine is not the second generation CRDe Mahindra utilised in the mHawk but the revised and highly refined first generation common-rail mill. Lessons have been learnt, incorporated and the improvements are so good that the Scorpio, Xylo export and future Mahindra offerings will sport this engine. It's the closest Mahindra has come to utilising a single component platform for both the Xylo and Scorpio. Even the wholly revised global Scorpio could be powered by this engine.



SPECIFICATION

ROAD TEST NO.	Mahindra Xylo E8	Toyota Innova VX
736-737	★★★★★	★★★★★
SHOOT-OUT SPECIFICATIONS # Star ratings apply to this comparison only		
ENGINE		
TYPE	Inline-4, turbo-charged, diesel, (mEagle CRDe)	Inline-4, turbo-charged, diesel, CRDi
ENGINE CAPACITY	2498cc	2494cc
MAX POWER	113PS@3800rpm	102PS@3600rpm
MAX TORQUE	235Nm@1800-3000rpm	200Nm@1400-3400rpm
POWER/WEIGHT	61.74PS/ton	64.2PS/ton
UNDERPININGS		
SUSPENSION (F)	Independent coil springs, double wish bone type, with anti-roll bar	Independent coil springs, double wish bone with stabiliser
SUSPENSION (R)	Multi-link, coil springs	4-link coil spring with gas filled shock absorbers
BRAKES FRONT/REAR	298mm ventilated discs/282mm drums	281mm ventilated discs/254mm drums
TYRES	215/75 R15	205/65 R15
PERFORMANCE		
0-60KMPH	6.5s	6.66s
0-100KMPH	15.95s	17.69s
0-400 METRES	20.1s@112.03kmph	20.51s@107.6kmph
0-1000 METRES	36.87s@142.73kmph	38.09s@134.3kmph
TOP SPEED	159.4kmph	150.5kmph
BRAKING (100KMPH-0)	53.06m/3.9s	43.26m/3.19s
FUEL EFFICIENCY		
HIGHWAY	16.1kmpl	16.2kmpl
CITY	10.9kmpl	9.8kmpl
OVERALL	12.2kmpl	11.8kmpl
GENERAL DATA		
LXWXH (MM)	4520x1850x1895	4580x1770x1755
WHEELBASE (MM)	2760	2750
TRACK (F/R) (MM)	1500/1500	1510/1510
KERB WEIGHT (KG)	1830	1655
LEG ROOM (F) MAX/MIN	1260/1050mm	1170/970mm
KNEE ROOM (R) MAX/MIN	910/700mm	950/615mm
KNEE ROOM (3RD ROW)	760mm fixed	750/620mm
SHOULDER SPACE	1500mm	1430mm
HEAD ROOM F/R	985/970mm	980/940mm
PRICE (Ex-showroom Mumbai)	Rs 7.82 lakh (E8)	Rs 11.45 lakh (VX)

When the Mahindra Xylo vroomed into the luxury people-mover arena, the Toyota Innova was the vehicle to beat.

DESIGN & STYLING

The Xylo's traditional MUV design includes a stubby snout, large headlamps, tall roofline, high shoulder lines, almost vertical contours, side swinging tailgate and small glass surfaces. It is shorter, wider and taller than the Innova but the wheelbase is longer and the track is narrower. The Xylo is more spacious with more leg, knee, shoulder and head room. The Xylo interiors are dark while the Innova's are more subtle. Both vehicles have features galore with multiple seating arrangements. The multi-information displays provide the lowdown on direction, fuel range and temperature. The Xylo's gear speed indicator hints at an automatic in the near future. It also sports an audio system with USB, ipod, SD card and AUX compatibility, cup and bottle holders galore and seatback mounted flip-up tables.

RIDE AND HANDLING

Dynamically, the Xylo is miles ahead of the Scorpio. Mahindra has raised the game to match the Innova benchmark. The Xylo's chassis and suspension developed in-house works brilliantly. Both vehicles sport

body-on-frame layouts and independent suspensions at the front but the Xylo has shed the rear leaf spring suspension.

The Xylo is stable in a straight line, composed around corners and despite its tall stance, does not buck and dive under hard braking. Body roll is subdued to a large extent but it does understeer.

The Innova has minimal body roll, precise steering and better dynamics. The Xylo has a more plush ride while the Innova feels stiffly sprung and is prone to swerve off line over potholes or bumps. The Xylo feels stable at high speeds with higher and wider profile tyres. High speed pitch is kept in check to a large extent.

The Xylo sports larger discs and drums than the Innova. The top end variant, the E8 comes with optional ABS and front airbags. Mahindra has got the servo assist right and the Xylo never felt unsafe during hard braking. From 100kmph to standstill the Innova took 43.26 metres and 3.19 seconds while the Xylo does the same in 53.06 metres and 3.9 seconds.

PERFORMANCE AND EFFICIENCY

Mahindra has actually developed a better engine than Toyota. Both turbocharged common-rail diesel engines displace 2.5 litres. The Toyota sports an oversquare bore stroke configuration, while the Mahindra's

undersquare layout provides the Xylo with better torque characteristics (35Nm more) and also more power (11PS). While peak power in the Xylo is generated at 3800rpm, peak torque is available much lower at 3000rpm. Thanks to the long stroke this engine also revs to a 6500rpm redline. The Xylo turbine spools up a bit earlier ensuring quicker response to throttle inputs. The mEagle engine also feels more refined and quiet.

The Innova transmission is superior but the Xylo gearbox is more in tune with the engine and matched to its power curve.

Performance wise the Xylo is quicker and reaches a higher top speed of nearly 160kmph despite a lower power-to-weight ratio. It is quicker in the roll-on acceleration runs in every gear.

The Xylo provides an overall fuel efficiency of 12.2kmpl compared to the Innova's 11.4kmpl and a slightly better range.

VERDICT

The Xylo is well engineered, comfortable, frugal, powerful and more spacious. Except for the styling and the Xylo is clearly perched higher than the Innova. The fully loaded Xylo is nearly Rs 2 lakh cheaper than the closest Innova variant (GX). As an alternative to the Innova, buyers will pick the Xylo without doubt. **C**

Beyond the sunset

From the west to the east of India in a frantic Xylo drive

Words & Photography **Karanbir Singh Bedi**



In the winter of 1961, tensions between India and China reached flashpoint. India's eastern-most state Arunachal Pradesh was the battleground as the courageous but woefully ill-equipped Indian army jawans faced the Chinese onslaught. Fast forward five decades. Here we are, in a Mahindra Xylo, storming up the mountain passes in almost as single-minded a pursuit as those jawans. Our mission is to set a new Limca record for the fastest drive from the western-most to the eastern-most tip of India.

My first task was to sign up co-drivers and I called up Harinder Sidhu who had driven the backup Scorpio Getaway when we set the South-North record on two-wheelers last year. Bhalinder Singh Sangha, a rally driver of renown,

took up the third seat in the Xylo, his experience running an auto garage proving to be a boon. So why did we pick the Mahindra Xylo? Well, it was not supercar like performance we were in need of but rather a vehicle that was comfortable and easy to maintain a steady average speed in. To set a record-breaking time, it would be crucial to maintain a constant speed and avert fatigue. Poor road conditions also made it imperative that our record setting vehicle be endowed with sturdy suspension and good ground clearance - the Xylo fit the bill on all counts.

Apollo Tyres shod our Xylo with 215/75 15R Hawk tyres that we trust since our Airtel Rally.

First twenty four hours - 1469km

Koteshwar in Bhuj was our

starting point, the eastern most point of India. We set off at 8am getting our log book stamped at the first of the 25 checkpoints specified and as stipulated by the Limca Book of Records (LBR). Sangha started off the drive and the plan was to drive non-stop for a day and a half, then catch some sleep before taking on the final leg. We decided on six-hour driving stints, so one of us could grab some shut-eye, while a co-driver would keep the driver company.

We halted for lunch at a roadside dhaba after 400km and then I took over. The soft suspension allied to the high profile tyres soaks in most of the potholes and no matter what speed the Xylo remains stable. We didn't notice it so much on Gujarat's smooth roads but we were thankful when we hit

Madhya Pradesh and Bihar where a normal car would have broken down.

Driving out of colourful Kutch, the Xylo's mile-munching attributes came to the fore on the good roads, its tall gear ratios and torquey nature spelling minimal gear changes. Past Godhra Sidhu took over while Sangha slipped on the eye mask and dozed off. In the space of a few kilometres, from leaving Gujarat and entering Madhya Pradesh, the road conditions went from smooth to terrible. But thanks to the good ride Sangha could sleep on as we headed for Indore. I took over at 5am and resorted to some improvised calisthenics to keep awake and alert and drove for the next two hours into Bhopal before Sangha took over.

WEST TO EAST



Elephants and cattle fill the roads



Waiting for chai, we take a power nap in Madhya Pradesh



In Guwahati we collected our innerline permits for Arunachal Pradesh



Koteshwar, the western-most tip of our expedition

Hours twenty-four to forty-eight - 1000km

At Jabalpur it was slow going given the bad condition of the roads. Mahindra vehicles are big here and our new Xylo created quite a buzz. We shed our shirts, gorged on mangoes and the Xylo air conditioning was turned to max to beat the 47-degree scorch.

Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar is not a drive I was looking forward to. To make it worse, the road situation in UP is lawless and a marriage procession stalled us for half an hour.

A brief section of the G-quad later we entered Bihar. The roads to Patna proved to be the best we had encountered so far. No traffic and arrow straight.

After Patna traffic increased considerably and the national

highway was a sea of humans and animals. This was also a fabulously picturesque stretch as we crossed the Ganga. Our mission was to make up for lost time and the Xylo's handling was tested to the limit. It's no sports car but it is safe and can be pushed to its limits with confidence.

Hours forty-eight to seventy-two - 910km

The East-West corridor slowed us down with its traffic jams. West Bengal came as a welcome relief but these parts are also densely populated and we even came upon red flag brandishing protesters blocking roads.

The section from Siliguri to Guwahati proved to be the hardest. The road to Guwahati is being widened to a dual carriageway and there is an alternate route but the

SOUTH TO NORTH



Despite the road conditions crossing Madhya Pradesh was the highlight



In Guwahati we collected our innerline permits for Arunachal Pradesh



Stuck in traffic at Hyderabad



The absolute top speed

LBR would only recognise our record if we stuck to this route. There were diversions every 500 metres, most of which are not marked. I took over as co-driver keeping my eyes peeled to ensure Sangha did not miss any diversions. Unfortunately he did miss one and had we been a little faster you wouldn't be reading about this drive. Our driving stints were now reduced to 4-5 hours from the initial 7-8 hour ones and I took over from Sangha 100km before Guwahati which was under tight security. In Guwahati we picked up our inner line permits for Arunachal Pradesh.

Hours seventy-two to eighty-four - 513km

The Xylo takes some getting used to around corners but the wide tyres provide a large enough contact patch and on tightly

winding hilly roads it proved to be a handful.

Assam is driving heaven with forests, tea gardens and bright flowering shrubs. My last stint was from Jorhat in Assam as we headed towards the Lohit river, the biggest tributary of the Brahmaputra. The road was excellent. We had to catch the ferry to cross the Lohit.

Assam's roads are like those in the upper Himalayas. Arunachal Pradesh, the eastern-most point of our country feels like the final bastion. It is most pristine, bypassed by mainland tourists. The Lohit Valley is heavenly and Arunachal is like a paradise on earth. We reached the army headquarters in Tezu at 9pm, in a record breaking time of 84 hours and 53 minutes. And we had set a new Limca Book record. **C**