

BBC

HATCHBACK SHOWDOWN: HYUNDAI i20 vs FABIA

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Top Gear

CAR OF THE YEAR AWARDS



FEATURING
AUDI A4
FIAT LINEA
HYUNDAI i20
MARUTI A-STAR
YAMAHA YZF-R15*

ALSO INSIDE
THE BEST
AUTO DUELS
EVER



+ WE DRIVE THE NEW MAHINDRA XYLO



*YES WE KNOW IT'S A BIKE BUT WE GIVE IT AN AWARD ANYWAYS

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Edited by Girish Karkera

Drives

Issue 42

THIS MONTH: Mahindra Xylo p50/Merc S65 p52/Merc CLS p52/Nissan 370Z p54/BMW 730D p56/Merc SL63 p60/Merc C230 p60

KEY



MAHINDRA XYLO

'At first glance the overall shape might remind you of the Innova. But that's because most MPVs around the world tend to look the same. Their similarity ends there.'



Mahindra Xylo

Move, people!

COMPETITION DOESN'T SPARE ANYONE. NOT EVEN THE PEOPLE-MOVING SEGMENT. MAHINDRA'S ALL-NEW XYLO TAKES ITS JOB VERY SERIOUSLY. SAYS **GIRISH KARKERA**

NUCLEAR FAMILIES, THEY say, are fast gaining popularity these days. Especially as cities grow more crowded and bigger houses become a luxury. Nevertheless, there are enough of those who still strive to get their extended family together and pack them and their neighbours and probably even their pet dog into one vehicle, luggage, dinner bowl et al. So cars that can accommodate more are always welcome.

Probably one reason why, nearly two decades later, ubiquitous vans like the Maruti Omni still continue to sell. Strangely, not many manufacturers have toyed with the idea since. Yes Toyota has a van,

ahem MPV, the Innova. And though it's supremely expensive, it still finds a lot of takers. So does the Tavera and even the little known Qualis-look-alike, the Rhino.

Mahindra's the latest to jump on the bandwagon... again. That's right, again. Go back a few years and you'll probably recall the Voyager, sold by Mahindra in collaboration with Mitsubishi. That, again, was expensive and never really took off.

Well, things have changed. Riding high on the success of its indigenously developed Scorpio, Mahindra has finally revealed its first in-house MPV. Project Ingenio, now called the Xylo, is a much bigger

departure from the norm for Mahindra as compared to when it made the Scorpio. While the latter was familiar SUV territory, the Xylo now marks Mahindra's entry into the Innova territory (at least in India).

Project Ingenio, as it was called when it began over two years ago, was a bid to enter the space left vacant by the popular Qualis. While Toyota moved the game onto a more 'personal MPV' level with the Innova, it left a void that made for lucrative business sense. Enter, the competition.

Spy pictures that have recently flooded the Internet and a handful of publications don't really do justice to this vehicle's looks. At first glance, the overall shape might remind you of the Innova. But that's only because most MPVs around the world tend to look the same. This one looks much taller though, as it has higher ground clearance and a generally taller bodyshell – a move especially made to free up more interior space. The front grille, inspired by the Scorpio's, looks grotesque on the base version with its black bumpers. But on the higher variants, like the one

we drove, it's much more acceptable.

Though, what's definitely more acceptable is what's on the inside. The Xylo's interiors are super spacious both in the leg and headroom departments. There's also the option of two captain seats for the middle row. And all seats are front facing. The third row is quite usable too, even for the average-sized, adult Indian – one of the big pluses of the Xylo vis-à-vis its rivals. Interestingly though, Mahindra is not offering facing bench seats for the third row, which is normally a big hit with people-moving taxis. Obviously then, Mahindra's strategically left its Bolero/Commander variants to cater to that segment even as it positions the Xylo as a personal people-moving carrier.

Interior trims come in black and grey or beige and brown with restrictions based on the vehicle colour. For example, the alien green, sorry, Mint Green Xylo we have here will come only with two-tone black insides. And having seen both, we can assure you that the insides look tastefully done in either shade. Seat fabric too, looks and feels nice. But

PHOTOGRAPHY: PARAG PARELWAR

Three rows of aircon, vents and comfy seats make it a pleasure cruise





Smart new interiors... certainly the best we've seen in a Mahindra



First the mHawk, now the mEagle, I guess the mKite is next in line



That's one menacingly upswept brow



it's the plastic portions that look hard and cheap. Take the grey portions of the steering wheel, for instance.

With the Xylo, Mahindra has definitely moved forward in the game to make a more driver-friendly car. The steering isn't too big and feels nice and chunky. However, though this is an all-new vehicle, actual steering isn't that precise and almost immediately reminds you of the Scorpio. The 2.5-litre mEagle engine, like the mHawk unit launched early last year, is derived from the Scorpio's tried and tested 2.6-litre CRDe powertrain. Transmission is the same although the lower gear ratios are different. This probably explains the instant Scorpio connection you make as soon as the vehicle starts moving.

In the first production models we drove, cabin noise levels were acceptable for an MPV. But while engine and transmission sounds have been sorted, wind noise seems to filter in easily, which is pretty irritating. Road holding in a straight line isn't too bad. Neither is the ride, with the independent coil spring up front and the multi-link at the rear

working well in tandem.

It does require some courage to aim for a slot between two vehicles ahead and thunder through. Although thunder otherwise you can, thanks to the sheer height of the vehicle. You'll get a commanding view of the road around you and you'll look down at almost all drivers this side of a double-decker bus.

Meanwhile, the rest of the passengers can keep fiddling with the numerous switches, pulleys and cubby holes. There are even air con vent controls for everyone (except for the middle passengers on the second and third row seats). You also have electric everything – power windows, central locking and even an electric fuel lid opener! The rear door, unlike the Innova and like the Scorpio, is hinged and doesn't open like a hatch.

The Xylo will be available in four variants, right from the base E2 to the top-of-the-line E8, with prices ranging from 6.25 to 7.7 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi). For a big-sized MPV, that puts it in a 'seriously affordable' bracket. Something Mahindra must pat its R&D team on the back for. ☺



Purple inserts for better visibility!



Mahindra Xylo E8



We say: Reasonably affordable yet fully loaded MPV. Good for large families. Perfect if they have a driver.

Price: Rs. 76 lakh (estimated)
Performance: 0-100kph in 14s
 Max speed 150kph
Tech: 2498cc, 2WD
 112hp, 235Nm, 1760kg

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