

Auto Bild Sportscars

The Tuner Duel: AC Schnitzer versus Heico

The coffee-cream question: Will the striking brown shade replace innocent white as the next trend? And can BMW triumph over Volvo?

Heico XC 60 D5

AC Schnitzer X1 23d

Smaller is better

They're neither big nor thirsty. But surprisingly nippy. And at the moment, the height of fashion. Thanks to tuning, both these compact diesel SUV's are certainly quick enough

The Hummer H2 was an imposing car. An invaluable status symbol for debt collectors, lap dancing clubs and security services. Now the brand is practically dead. Not even the Chinese want them any more.

We accept that the era of the dinosaur is coming to an end. And intelligent beings are emerging in their place. But this change doesn't have to mean sacrifices. Because smaller can also be more beautiful – more delicate, more sophisticated, more graceful. Why take the stolid Gertrude if instead you can have a charming Geisha?

AC Schnitzer and Heico have made the new small formats into real delicacies. Both tuners are representative of the chic but modest style. Lowering, carefully arranged spoilers, striking exhaust – AC Schnitzer and Heico set tones which never leave the boundaries of sophisticated good taste. The Volvo looks neat and proper, the tuned BMW clearly less spindly than in the original outfit.

Both cars run on 20" wheels. Heico combines their own forged wheels with clearly visible tyres, but this loses aesthetic attraction against the extremely low profile tyres of the BMW. But there again, it doesn't have to steer well clear of kerbs.

In the interior, there are few surprises. Heico is satisfied with neat details such as door pins, aluminium pedals, sports gear knobs and illuminated sill trims. AC Schnitzer goes slightly further. The slightly flattened sports steering wheel of the tuner sits neatly in the hand - and feels more M3 than X1.

But it's not just here that the BMW is more car-like. The low seating position and pronounced lateral support of the (standard) seat with individually adjustable side supports does the rest.

The Volvo driving position is higher – and the comfortable, less contoured easy chair owes more to the old SUV school than its Munich opponent does.

The tuned Volvo proves incredibly agile

Even after just a few kilometres, this impression becomes relative. The Volvo is as agile as the compact dimensions suggest. Body roll is negligible. Only the light steering could be more communicative. So what gives the positive impression? Heico has installed a sports suspension, as the tuner wants to correct the manufacturer's fixation on maximum comfort.

Irrespective of this, the Volvo has met its master in the BMW. The latter merely has a set of lowering springs – the dynamic base vehicle needs nothing more. Compared with the XC60, the X1 comes out top in all areas: the steering is sharper, it's more stable around corners and can take higher cornering speeds. It only approaches the limit of adhesion considerably later, announced by a slight push over the front wheels. And the suspension comfort is nothing short of inspired. What at first glance appears an illusion given the virtually non-existent tyre side walls, actually occurs: the X1 avoids every

impression of brutal bone-shaking shock, and is communicative but not loudish. And rides smoothly with a steady road position even above 200 km/h.

241 versus 238 hp: The BMW is slightly stronger

The Volvo in contrast sometimes makes hard work of it. Successive bumps set up a bounce which, although not critical, is still unpleasant - especially at high speeds.

And such speeds are quickly reached. The XC60 delivers a proud 230 HP and applies 460 Newton-metres at the crank. The standard vehicle only offers 205 HP and 420 Nm. Heico extract the extra power from the vehicle with electronic optimisation.

AC Schnitzer takes similar measures. 241 HP and 480 Nm are the result, instead of the 204 HP and 400 Nm of the base car.

The X1 pulls just as powerfully. The automatic gearbox has the right drive stage ready all the time. The sound present throughout however sounds strangely raw and rough - unusual for BMW. So the Aachen tuners have merely fitted a decorative tail pipe.

The Volvo leaves slightly less impression at the end of the day, but also has a wealth of power which allows it to pull away from the lights quickly. It's sound is also less intrusive. When pressing the gas pedal fully, the driver enjoys a distant powerful growl - confidence-inspiring, soothing and not at all unpleasant.

The measurement values support the subjective impression: the Volvo has nothing in common with valium. The Heico XC60 takes 8.4 seconds to do 0 to 100 km/h. We couldn't find a true reference value: the D5 works car at Auto Bild was only available in automatic, and was relatively slow at 9.6 seconds. Which raises the question of whether the manual gearbox would actually achieve the reported 8.5 seconds.

Totally unimpressed by such complexities, the AC Schnitzer X1 just gets on with it. At 7.1 seconds, it's almost in sports car territory. And impressively pushes the BMW standard vehicle into the barriers: its measured value was 7.6 seconds.

But the Volvo doesn't give up against the German without a fight. When it comes to Vmax, it wins by a hair's breadth. Measured at 220 km/h, the tuned Swede does an impressive 10 km/h more than the works figure for the standard car. And is still 1 km/h faster than the BMW X1.

With its measured 219 km/h, it's is not just beaten by the Volvo but also by the basic car (measured 221 km/h). But AC Schnitzer's hands were tied. At top speed, the car from the factory is doing 4500 rpm - unusually high for a diesel. But as the maximum power comes in at 4400 rpm and can't be shifted further up the rev range - it's already close to the red zone - there is little scope for optimisation.

In the end the BMW wins. But the Volvo performs respectably. And both roundly beat the Hummer H2.

AC Schnitzer X1 23d

A really good idea: The original i-Drive aluminium Cover at 258 Euro

Good design: The sports steering wheel from the tuner is comfortable to hold

Successful: The Type IV design by AC Schnitzer is still impressive. But you have to give kerbstones a wide berth with this wheel

Lift the lid: The strut brace and enhanced engine cover remove all traces of boredom from the engine bay

Lowered, the X1 finally bears little resemblance to the conventional SUV

Heico XC60 D5

We really liked the rear view with curved lights on the Volvo

Welcome the Vikings: Comfortable sports gear knob with Heico logo

This is what a bare 230 HP looks like: The engine bay is just dull

Super cool Swedish chic: Modern, well-finished Volvo cockpit. Heico merely sets reserved accents with its own pedal set

Costly pleasure: The forged wheels are nice but expensive (complete wheel set 7600 Euro). Tyres have a higher cross section than on the BMW

Just ahead: When it comes to top speed, the Volvo is ahead, with 220 over 219 km/h. But the BMW wins in the acceleration fight

Source of noise: The BMW is surprisingly loud, and not that pleasant

Comfortable noise: The Volvo sounds powerful without being too loud

Technical data	AC Schnitzer X1 23d	Heico XC60 DS
Engine	R4 biturbo	R5 biturbo
Mounted	Front longitudinal	Front transverse
Valves/camshaft	4 per cylinder / 2	4 per cylinder / 2
Capacity	1995 cm ³	2400 cm ³
Bore x stroke	84.0 x 90.0 mm	31.0 x 93.2 mm
Compression	16.5: 1	16.5:1
kW (hp) at rpm	177(241)/4400	169(230)/2900
Power to capacity ratio	121 HP/litre	96 HP/litre
Nm at rpm	480/2200	460/1500-3250
Drive	All wheel drive	All wheel drive
Transmission	6-stage automatic	6-speed manual
Front brakes	330 mm/internally vented	328 mm/internally vented
Rear brakes	3300 mm/internally vented	302 mm
Wheel size front rear	9 x 20 – 10 x 20	9 x 20
Tyre size front rear	245/30 R 20-295/25 R 20	265/45 R 20
Tyre type	ContiSportContrat 3	Pirelli P Zero Rosso M0
Length / width / height	4454/1798/1515 mm	4628/1891/1683 mm
Wheel base	2760 mm	2774 mm
Weight to power ratio	7.3 kg/HP	8.5 kg/HP
Load capacity	402 kg	560 kg
Tank volume	611	701
Measurement values	AC Schnitzer X1 23d	Heico XC60 DS
Acceleration		
0-50 km/h	2.2s	3.0s
0-80 km/h	5.0s	6.0s
0-100 km/h	7.1s	8.4s
0-130 km/h	12.0s	14.1s
0-160 km/h	19.1s	21.9s
0-200 km/h	37.5s	44.8s
Quarter mile		
0-402.34 m	15.25s	16.25s
Flexibility		
60-100 km/h in 4 th gear	4.3s (intermediate spurt)	6.0s
80-120 km/h in 5 th gear	5.2s (intermediate spurt)	8.6s
80-120 km/h in 6 th gear	5.2s Intermediate spurt)	10.8s
Braking distance (deceleration)		
100-0 km/h cold	35.5 m (-10.9 m/s ²)	39.3 m (-9.8 m/s ²)
100-0 km/h hot	36.0 m (-10.7 m/s ²)	36.9 m (-10.5 m/s ²)
Test consumption		

Average / 100 km/h	8.6l diesel	9.9l diesel
Range	710 km	710 km
Unladen weight	1758 kg	1945 kg

Top speed	AC Schnitzer 23d	Heico XC60 D5
GPS measurement	219 km/h	220 km/h
Prices (euro inc. VAT)		
Standard vehicle without extras	39100 Euro	38050 Euro
Tuning		
Performance upgrade	2822 (inc. engine styling package)	1968 (inc. sports air filter)
Wheel set	5757	7600
Lowering	504 (springs)	1640 (sports suspension)
Exhaust	399 (trim)	See attachments (silencer)
Attachments	3250	3883 (inc. exhaust)
Interior	2452	730
Price of test car	54284 Euro	53871 Euro

Summary

Test score	AC Schnitzer 23d	Heico XC60 D5
Longitudinal dynamics	****	***
Transverse dynamics	*****	***
Everyday driving	****	*****
Price / performance	***	***
Emotion	***	***
Total	****	***

- ***** Dream figures
- **** Does its job
- *** Acceptable
- ** Could be better
- * Boring

Nothing equals the combination of BMW and AC Schnitzer. Even a premium tuner such as Heico can't compete with the rounded but sporty X1. The XC60 is a good car, which runs faster and sounds better than its competitor. And viewed in isolation, it doesn't have any weaknesses.