

Two weeks ago, we published the results of tests conducted by ADAC, Germany's automobile association, showing that Xenon headlights are a huge safety improvement over conventional car headlamps, improving lighting by up to 71%.

The ADAC testers called for the mass introduction of Xenon for safety reasons, considering the better lights cost a reasonable €995 on the Skoda Superb.



Safer road with Xenon Light

We received three kinds of interesting feedback from our members following our publication of the results of these extensive tests.

The first feedback favours the status quo, and is along the lines of “Xenon light is a superior light, ok, but halogen light can be considered satisfactory as far as safety is concerned”. True, but satisfaction is merely a subjective feeling, depending on drivers’ knowledge and awareness, which might vary from country to country and changes with time. We are tempted to remind the claims of BAST TÜV and LRC surveys “Xenon light saves lives” and also the influence of age on drivers’ ability to cope with unforeseen obstacles by night drive (see “Dynamic Bending Light Put to Test”, DVN June 2009). At speeds of 50km/h, most drivers over 30 years won’t be able to avoid unexpected obstructions on a left curve with halogen light. Bending Headlight is helpful but only Xenon strong light output will give that population of drivers the necessary safety margin required by their braking security distance.

The second feedback agrees with the report, but relies entirely on drivers' rational choice to increase Xenon take rates: “These results should be given more public attention, it would help promoting good light at the end user level. It might help the buyer to make his choice for a better light and open his wallet”.

True, but the automotive lighting community cannot leave this choice entirely to the drivers’ whim. We have to make the better light also more appealing to drivers and increase its perceived value, especially through heart pleasing design.

As Audi Lighting General Manager Wolfgang Huhn’s honestly states in his DVN 100th Newsletter editorial:

“We have the responsibility for the life of our clients while they are driving at night. But the wallet

opens easier by the heart than the brain”.

The third feedback was “excellent, very interesting, but can we get more detailed information about those tests?” Yes, by simply clicking on the URL below.

These ADAC tests were probably the most extensive we know about, involving 5 different test car pairs. They were conducted both through static and night driving tests. The static tests took place in the Hella light tunnel in Lippstadt, and driving tests took place in Augsburg on an ADAC driving test ring. The test circuit included urban portions, country roads with hills and woods, and a freeway drive. Visibility of road signs and markings was evaluated, as well as discomfort and disability glare generated by the various headlamps. Test drivers were asked to quantify their safety feeling both with high and low beams, to evaluate the homogeneity of the different lights, and the light output. Their ability to avoid impediments was also measured. For full information, see http://www1.adac.de/Tests/fahrerassistenzsysteme/scheinwerfertest_2009/methodik/default.asp?ComponentID=272846&SourcePageID=273092