

## The company history of Schiltrac

<https://www.schiltrac.ch/>



The origins of the Schiltrac story lie in the Schilter company, which was run for decades with its off-road tractors and above all with its green vans, a flourishing plant in this Nidwalden machine industry biotope. At times, up to 1000 vehicles a year were built in Stans and many of them were exported to Scandinavia. But in 1993, Josef Barmettler, together with Karl Heer and Markus Krebsler, bought the patent for the twin chassis and began to continue the history of vehicle construction.

### **It's not easy to sell Swiss machinery**

However, despite the high quality and attention to detail, it became increasingly difficult to sell the vehicles to Swiss farmers in the face of greater competition and the low euro exchange rate.

But the little green all-rounders were popular and still are. Peter Barmettler, the current owner and son of Josef Barmettler, runs the company together with Managing Director Urs Baumgartner and Christian Buholzer.

When Schiltrac presented the new Schiltrac Eurotrans in 2012, neither farmers nor competitors could believe their eyes. The new Schiltrac was much bigger than any other transporter. Nine tonnes payload, 14 tonnes total weight, with over a third more capacity than its biggest competitors. And it was designed in such a way that it still fits under two and a half metres of cab height for the barn entrances.

What does such a monster want in small-scale mountain farming? There was a lot of scepticism at first, but it proved the opposite.

Although more and more farms in mountainous areas are disappearing, the land is not. A Schiltrac Swiss/Eurotrans loads 33 to 39 cubic metres of hay where other transporters only carry 18 to 28 cubic metres. With the ever-increasing distances travelled in the rapidly changing mountain farming sector, this saves entire working days and many empty journeys, as well as fuel, compared to smaller vehicles.

### **The 18 employees always think in terms of five**

The 18 employees, who also carry out service work and trade in agricultural machinery, aircraft tractors and municipal machinery, always think in terms of five: Five chassis, five gearboxes, five engines, five cabins, five wiring harnesses. The individual wires are laid out differently for each version on long strips of paper in exactly the right length, tied together and each wire is neatly labelled so that everything is in the right place during installation and no cable is too long and, above all, not too short.

The vertical range of manufacture at Schiltrac is extremely high. Not only cable harnesses are made here, but also chassis, cabs and even gearboxes. In Buochs NW, it is 'gearbox season' twice a year. Then the specialists stand at the round assembly table with the gearbox clamped on. They assemble cogwheel after cogwheel exactly according to the assembly instructions - like on a circular assembly line - but extremely customised. This is because practically every Schiltrac is built exactly to the customer's specifications and even the software comes from the company's own programmers. There are good reasons for the high level of vertical integration. The twin chassis of the Schiltrac does not consist of a central tubular frame as in other vans - but of two chassis frames connected by a swivel joint. The engine is located in the front frame, the gearbox in the rear frame. The gearbox is not only assembled by the driver, but was also designed in-house - in such a way that the centre of gravity of the gearbox is clearly below the chassis pivot point.

### **Most of the employees have already completed an apprenticeship at the company**

The Schiltrac is the sum of experience in mountain farming designed for extremely steep terrain, combined with perfectionism and many unconventional ideas. The majority of the employees have already completed their apprenticeship at the company and helped to develop the vehicles that they now build themselves. Around 900 manufacturing hours with Swiss wages go into a Schiltrac, and more and more municipal companies are now also driving a Schiltrac. The costing is tight and nobody is getting rich from it. This is another reason why the high price seems quite modest.