

Opel Astra wins 2017 WesBank South African Car Of The Year

The Opel Astra is the Wesbank South African Guild of Motoring Journalists' 2017 Car of the Year, on the back of a multitude of awards both in South Africa and abroad for the 11th-generation Astra.



The most significant of these is the European Car of the Year for 2016, widely considered the most prestigious and important prize in the world of motoring.

It also picked up the 2015 SAFETYBEST Award and the 2015 Golden Steering Wheel Award.

The Astra's all-round excellence has not gone unnoticed on the local front either and since its April 2016 launch Opel's C-segment hatchback has received accolades including being voted Independent Newspapers' Best of the Best for 2016.

Key strengths

Two of its key strengths are exceptional efficiency in terms of packaging, aerodynamics, weight-reduction and drivetrains, but also the way it has democratised technology. It is packed with segment leading safety, infotainment and driver aids usually reserved for luxury vehicles.

"The last time Opel won a South African Car of the Year Award was in the 1990s when we won three awards with the Opel Monza 160 GSi (1991), Opel Kadett 140 (1994) and Opel Astra 160iS (1995). I am very excited that the Opel Astra - which was the 2016 European Car of the Year - is now also a Wesbank South African Car of the Year," said Ian Nicholls, president and managing director General Motors sub-Saharan Africa.

The COTY judges, all members of the SAGMJ, recognised the Astra's overall excellence but specifically praised its build quality and dynamic ability - its safety-boosting road-holding and handling characteristics were singled out. Other categories which the judges applied their minds to before allocating points to the Astra and other finalists included Exterior Design and Styling; Interior Use of Materials; Interior Layout; Technology; Engine Performance; Gearbox & Transmission; Engineering Integrity & Build Quality; Ride Quality & Refinement; Steering & Handling; Affordability; Value for Money; and Overall Excellence.

Opel sales in South Africa

In the last three years, Opel sales in South Africa increased by 9.5% in a market that has declined by 15.5%. Opel nameplates such as Adam and Corsa have also had their share of the limelight, with COTY finalist status and independent awards.

Speaking at the awards, Nicholls said, "As a company, Opel has always been at the forefront of innovation, embracing new challenges by offering unique solutions to the motoring needs of a diverse customer base."

He further said that the brand is about to embark on a new journey this year which has the potential to make it a major player in Europe and other key markets around the world. "Opel owners can be assured that all our customers will continue to experience the same level of service and after sales support they have become accustomed to."

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