

## 2018/19 Cars.co.za Consumer Awards finalists announced

Online vehicle retail portal Cars.co.za is proud to announce the 39 finalists of the 2018/19 Cars.co.za Consumer Awards, powered by WesBank.



The finalists (three in each of 13 respective categories) were selected out of 65 vehicles (semi-finalists) that Cars.co.za's extended editorial team agreed were the best derivatives available in the South African new passenger vehicle market on 1 September 2018.

Now in its 4th year, the #CarsAwards was conceived to be South Africa's definitive automotive awards programme and is backed, for the 3rd year running by the country's leading supplier of vehicle finance, WesBank. To determine the finalists, the extended editorial team trimmed the number of candidates per category from 5 to 3 by evaluating them against predetermined pillars of success.

### Volkswagen steals the march

No fewer than 18 vehicle brands are represented in the list of finalists, with Volkswagen leading the nominations with seven derivatives, followed by BMW and Ford (four apiece), and Audi, Mercedes-Benz and Volvo (three apiece). Significantly, Porsche and Isuzu make their first appearances in the final stage of the #CarsAwards programme, while Honda and Range Rover return to the list of 39 after failing to make the last round in 2017/18.

Because candidates were selected from the entire new passenger vehicle market, instead of only models launched during the past 12 months, it's unsurprising that there are as many as 17 returning finalists from last year's programme (including six of the eventual category winners). However, only the particular derivatives of the Audi A5 Sportback and Q5, Toyota Fortuner, Volkswagen Amarok and Volvo S90 are unchanged.

The next phase of the programme will take place on 1 and 2 November 2018, when all the vehicles that are listed as finalists will be judged back-to-back (against the rivals in their categories) during a two-day test session at Gerotek. The judging panel is diverse: it includes the experienced motoring journalists of the Cars.co.za extended editorial team, as well as 14 respected and influential guest judges, with a broad base of expertise.

## **The importance of after-sales service**

However, the findings of the 20 judges will only count for half of the finalists' total scores – the remaining 50% will be based on rankings that the respective vehicles' brands achieved in the Cars.co.za Ownership Satisfaction Survey, which is conducted in partnership with leading data specialists Lightstone Consumer. The data incorporates feedback from thousands of vehicle owners, based on their experiences of their own vehicles, which are less than five years old and serviced through franchised outlets.

In other words, the experiences and perceptions of South African vehicle owners have a significant impact on which 13 category winners will be announced early next year, and, importantly, their feedback will completely determine the 2018/19 Brand of the Year, won for the past two years by Suzuki.

Members of the public can follow developments of the Cars.co.za Consumer Awards – powered by WesBank on Cars.co.za and its social media channels (with related content bearing the now-ubiquitous #CarsAwards hashtag).

## **And the finalists are...**

The 2018/19 #CarsAwards finalists in their respective categories are:

### **Budget Car (under R200 000)**

Buying an affordable car should not necessitate compromises in terms of safety, technology and quality. The winner of this category represents as much good car as possible for the asking price. Value is very important, as are low running costs and all such "common sense" considerations. The price cap for this category is R200 000 (on 1 September 2018) and, as always, we've placed an emphasis on safety equipment: dual front airbags and ABS are required features in this category.

- Kia Picanto 1.2 Style
- Suzuki Swift 1.2 GL
- Volkswagen Polo Vivo 1.4 Comfortline

### **Compact Hatch (R200 000 – R300 000)**

In this extremely competitive category, we're looking for a balanced offering that is excellent across the board. Cars in this segment must appeal to a very wide audience – from the young professional or -family buying up from an entry-level car, to pensioners buying down from something larger and expensive. The winner of this award must truly reflect what is best about modern automotive design and engineering, but present it in a concentrated, reasonably affordable form.

- Ford Fiesta 1.0T Titanium

- Mazda2 1.5 Individual Plus Auto
- Volkswagen Polo 1.0 TSI Comfortline Auto

### **Adventure SUV (R550 000 – R700 000)**

We're looking for the ultimate recreational vehicle to transport a family and their holiday and lifestyle gear in comfort to almost any destination, on- or off-road. Off-road ability is emphasised, in combination with practicality, comfort and long-distance cruising.

- Ford Everest 3.2 4WD XLT
- Isuzu MU-X 3.0 4WD
- Toyota Fortuner 2.8 GD-6 4x4 Auto

### **Compact Family (R300 000 – R400 000)**

With household budgets stretched to breaking point, the reasonably affordable contemporary family car has to wear many hats – from compact traffic-dodger, to school-run taxi and even weekend getaway machine. Practicality and spaciousness are important considerations, but so are safety, technology, fuel efficiency and a modicum of lifestyle flexibility.

- Ford EcoSport 1.0T Titanium Auto
- Hyundai Creta 1.6 Executive Turbodiesel Auto
- Nissan Qashqai 1.2T Acenta Auto

### **Family Car (R400 000 – R500 000)**

The typical family car fulfils a wide variety of duties and needs to be a practical, safe all-rounder. The winner of this category should be ideal not only for the morning school run, but also school-holiday trips to distant locations. In judging this category, we've placed particular emphasis on interior flexibility, comfort and safety.

- Mazda CX-5 2.0 Individual
- Peugeot 3008 2.0 HDI Allure
- Volkswagen Tiguan Allspace 1.4 TSI Trendline

### **Leisure Double Cab (R500 000 – R800 000)**

In this immensely popular and fiercely contested category of the market, the search is on for the ultimate all-rounder. A leisure double-cab is required to be as many as 5 different vehicles (depending on which task it is required to perform): a luxurious tourer, hardcore off-roader, capable carry-all, family do-all and lifestyle activity machine. This type of bakkie can no longer afford to be too utilitarian and rough around the edges; it's expected to be a highly sophisticated offering.

- Ford Ranger 3.2 4x4 Wildtrak Auto
- Toyota Hilux 2.8 GD-6 4x4 Raider Auto
- Volkswagen Amarok 3.0 V6 TDI Highline Plus 4Motion Auto

### **Business Class (R600 000 – R800 000)**

In this category, you will find the type of cars that (realistic) dreams are made off. We're looking for an aspirational vehicle that will appeal to the image-conscious driver who places a priority on performance, dynamics, technology and design. The target customers have achieved success and want a car that isn't only a personal reward, but the automotive embodiment of their achievements.

- Audi A5 Sportback 2.0TFSI quattro Sport S Line sports

- Mercedes-Benz C300 AMG Line
- Volkswagen Arteon 2.0TSI 4Motion R-Design

### **Executive SUV (R700 000 – R900 000)**

An Executive SUV is increasingly regarded as the status symbol to have, therefore most premium brands now offer road-biased SUVs that combine prestige and practicality in a package that is characterised by superior refinement. Drivetrain performance and refined road manners are priorities, as is a cabin that features upmarket materials and the most up-to-date technology.

- Audi Q5 2.0 TDI quattro Sport S-Line sports
- BMW X3 xDrive20d M Sport auto
- Volvo XC60 D5 R-Design

### **Premium Compact (R450 000 – R600 000)**

This category replaces the previous "Premium Hatchback" segment. Buyers of traditional upmarket hatchbacks are increasingly also considering fashionable crossovers, so it only makes sense to group them together into 1 category. Stylish and sophisticated, yet practical enough for most motoring needs, these are the cars for upwardly mobile go-getters. The winner in this category must not only offer outstanding quality, refinement, performance and the latest technologies, but also broadcast a message of success and ambition.

- Mercedes-Benz A200 AMG-Line
- Volkswagen Golf GTI
- Volvo XC40 T3 R-Design

### **Hot Hatch (under R700 000)**

With very few compact fun cars currently available in South Africa, our focus falls on the traditional hot hatch, which offers sportscar-humbling performance, while retaining an admirable measure of practicality. In this new category, we're looking for a total package that is not outlandishly priced. This is one for the petrolheads – a car that must leave die-hard enthusiast smiling after every drive, in the way it looks, handles, sounds and, yes, performs.

- BMW M140i sports-auto
- Honda Civic Type R
- Renault Megane R.S. 280 Lux

### **Performance Car (under R1 million)**

While supercars and other "exotics" are mere fantasies for most, there are cars priced below the magical R1-million mark that offer near-supercar thrills and performance. In this category, we are not only looking for sizzling performance, but also driver engagement, whether driven on track or road.

- Audi TT RS
- BMW M2 Competition (manual)
- Porsche 718 Cayman S

### **Premium SUV (R1 million – R1.3 million)**

Luxurious SUVs may appeal for irrational and emotional reasons such as kerb appeal and status, but at their core, they are some of the most sophisticated and capable vehicles on the market. Blending spaciousness with high-tech off-road equipment, powerful engines, as well as luxuriously trimmed cabins, the prestige-badged premium SUV we are looking for

in this category should be tailor-made for image- and practicality-obsessed buyers.

- Porsche Cayenne S
- Range Rover Velar D300 R-Dynamic SE
- Volkswagen Touareg V6 TDI Luxury R-Line

#### **Executive Sedan (R800 000 – R1 million)**

These technological masterpieces represent an enviable blend of first-class luxury and comfort, and business-class technology and dynamic appeal. Prestige is usually a given in this segment, but we're also looking for significant technological advancement, yet without compromising the level of comfort and quiet style that these sedans are renowned for.

- BMW 520d M Sport
- Mercedes-Benz E220 d Avantgarde
- Volvo S90 D5 AWD R-Design

To participate in the Cars.co.za Ownership Satisfaction Survey or access more information about the programme (including categories, judges and finalists) visit <http://www.carsawards.co.za>

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>