

All the winners of 2019/20 Cars.co.za Consumer Awards

The Cars.co.za Consumer Awards - powered by WesBank - celebrated its five-year landmark when the programme's 13 category winners and the recipient of the Brand of the Year title were announced during a gala event held at the Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit.



#CarsAwards was conceived to be South Africa's definitive automotive awards programme; the list of vehicles it recognises is meant to guide car buyers to make the best-informed purchasing decisions. Cars are judged directly against their peers in specific categories, each of which has distinct requirements. What's more, 50% of the final scores are based on brand-specific after-sales data that incorporate customer feedback from thousands of South African vehicle owners.

Since its debut in 2015/16, the #CarsAwards has grown into the largest and most influential awards event on the South African motoring calendar and, since 2017, the programme has been loyally supported by WesBank – the largest provider of vehicle finance in South Africa.

"As South Africa's largest vehicle and asset finance house, we want to align our brand with impactful industry initiatives, especially those that add value to consumers. Walking this journey alongside consumers continues to make these industry-recognised awards very effective, as their contribution plays a vital role in the final decision. We congratulate all the winners for this year's awards and look forward to seeing what the upcoming year brings," says Lebogang Gaoaketse, WesBank's Head of Marketing and Communication.

Seventeen brands were represented in the list of finalists. Volkswagen led the nominations with 7 derivatives, followed by BMW, Ford and Toyota (4 apiece), Mazda and Suzuki (3 apiece). The Chinese SUV brand, Haval, made its first appearance in the final stage of the #CarsAwards, while Jaguar and Land Rover returned to the list after failing to make the last round in 2018/19.

And the winners are...

- **Adventure SUV:** Toyota Fortuner 2.8 GD-6 4x4 Auto
- **Budget Car:** Suzuki Swift 1.2 GLX
- **Business Class:** Volkswagen Arteon 2.0TSI 4Motion R-Line
- **Compact Family Car:** Volkswagen T-Cross 1.0 TSI Highline R-Line
- **Compact Hatch:** Volkswagen Polo 1.0TSI Comfortline Auto
- **Crossover:** Audi Q3 35 TFSI S Line
- **Executive SUV:** BMW X3 xDrive20d M Sport
- **Family Car:** Mazda CX-5 2.0 Dynamic Auto
- **Fun Hatch:** Volkswagen Polo GTI
- **Leisure Double-Cab:** Volkswagen Amarok 3.0 V6 TDI Highline 4Motion
- **Performance Car:** Toyota GR Supra 3.0T
- **Premium Hatch:** Volkswagen Golf GTI
- **Premium SUV:** BMW X5 xDrive30d M-Sport

Impact of the Cars.co.za Ownership Satisfaction Survey

Fifty per cent of the final scores of the #CarsAwards category finalists were determined by the rankings the vehicles' respective brands achieved in the Cars.co.za Ownership Satisfaction Survey – in partnership with data specialists Lightstone Consumer. The data was based on owners' experiences of their vehicles (less than five years old and serviced through franchised outlets) and the survey made its presence felt: it determined the results in five categories.

The Toyota Fortuner (Adventure SUV), Volkswagen Amarok, Arteon and T-Cross (Leisure Double-Cab, Business Class and Compact Family Car) and BMW X3 (Executive SUV) did not score the highest marks from the panel of judges following evaluation, yet emerged victorious because consumers rated their brands' experiences higher than those of their competitors.

"The public interest and industry support for #CarsAwards shows that there is a need for an Awards programme that takes a more practical and usable approach to deciding the winners," says Hannes Oosthuizen, Cars.co.za's customer experience manager.

"Our Awards programme is meant to be used as a buying guide that reaches the entire population, not only those who follow motoring publications."

"With 50% of a vehicle's final score determined by a brand's performance in the survey, a car really only stands a very good chance of winning if it is a good product in the eyes of the judges and if the brand delivers solid after-sales service," he adds.

In four categories (Compact Hatch, Performance Car, Premium Hatch and Premium SUV), the winning derivatives received both the highest consumer category- and judges' scores. In three categories (Budget Car, Family Car and Fun Car), the winners received the highest judges' scores, but not the highest consumer category scores. In the Crossover

category, the winner received neither the highest consumer category - nor the judges' scores, but won on aggregate.

Brand of the Year

As opposed to the 13 category winners, which are decided by a combination of judges' scores and consumer data, the recipient of the #CarsAwards Brand of the Year title is determined entirely by market data and the findings of the survey (brands' respective sales and after-sales service ratings are particularly impactful). With a pair of Brand of the Year titles apiece, either Toyota or Suzuki was expected to break the deadlock in the fifth iteration of #CarsAward

However, Volkswagen – the only brand to have won at least one #CarsAwards category every year since the programme began in 2015/16 – walked away with the most prestigious accolade. Having won six of the 13 #CarsAwards categories in 2019/20, Volkswagen is comfortably the most prolific category winner (with 16 trophies) in the history of the #CarsAwards programme.

Now it has a big trophy! The Wolfsburg-based brand is a powerhouse in the South African new-vehicle market, but despite its extensive dealer network, its level of client service is clearly highly regarded.

The Cars.co.za Ownership Satisfaction Survey data showed that Volkswagen defeated Isuzu by a narrow margin, while Suzuki scored the final podium position. Delving deeper into the data, it is interesting to note significant improvement from, in particular, three brands when it comes to after-sales service – Renault, Ford and Isuzu all improved by more than 15% compared to last year.

“We think the Brand of the Year trophy is the ultimate accolade in the local automotive industry,” says Oosthuizen. “It represents validation from the people who matter most – actual car owners.”

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