

New award for vehicles, judged by owners

The People's Wheels Awards was officially launched late last week, as a partnership between Absa, Avusa Media, TNS South Africa and the Future Group, to provide an alternative approach to the current motor vehicle survey landscape.

While one of its aims is to determine by popular vote the country's most admired vehicles in 26 categories, the project is underpinned by an independent, objective, vehicle ownership survey, reportedly one of the first of its kind to be undertaken in South Africa.

The award is about choice of vehicle brand, specification, suitability and ownership qualities. South Africans will be in a position to cast their votes for the vehicles they think stand above the rest in a survey concept that introduces a new perspective in rewarding automotive excellence.

Industry insights from consumers

According to Sydney Soundy, managing executive of Absa Vehicle and Asset Finance, the project is a sound proposition for the industry and consumers in general.

"We will be providing consumers with the opportunity to have a say in the selection of what they believe is the best or preferred car in various categories and to also determine an overall winner - the People's Choice."

He believes that this will provide insight into the world of the car consumer with regard to behaviour, choices and preferences. "Such insights will be available and useful for the industry."

Enver Groenewald, GM: advertising revenue and strategic communications at Avusa Media, says, "We believe the time is right for the consumer's voice to be heard in celebrating vehicle brands that have gone the extra mile in responding adequately and innovatively to the demands of a more informed buyer market."

Results in hardcover annual

The results of the People's Wheels survey, processed by TNS South Africa, will be incorporated in the Absa *Auto Annual 2012*, a hardcover, multi-faceted, 352-page review of the country's automotive industry. The annual, described as the first South African hardcover review of the local auto industry, due for publication by the Future Group., is scheduled to be in newsagents from January 2012.

The results will also appear in a special supplement to be published from 29 January 2012 in Avusa Media's titles, following an awards function to be held in the week before the supplements' publication.

Designed as a comprehensive reference for the automotive industry to which both professionals and consumers can turn the annual aims to highlight much more than just the history of the local automotive industry.

Features include

- A to Z guide to all passenger cars and light commercial vehicles available in South Africa with specifications of all models and in-depth analysis of selected derivatives
- overviews of the original equipment, component and aftermarket industries
- greening in the automotive industry
- coverage of the country's major automotive shows, including the Johannesburg International Motor Show and Automechanika SA, which was held in March this year
- directories listing dealerships, service agents and repairers

Brand profiles have been designed to highlight developments within the local automotive industry, including new players, expansion projects, anniversaries, social responsibility and investment news, while the rise of hybrid technology and new forms of vehicle propulsion are spotlighted, too.

Says Soundy, "This publication will serve as a comprehensive annual motor industry information guide to which industry professionals and consumers can refer. The publication contributes to the industry knowledge base on all aspects of the South African motor industry including consumer behaviour, trends and perspectives.

The survey is available at www.autoannual.co.za/survey.

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