

2019/20 Cars.co.za Consumer Awards finalists announced

The 39 finalists (3 in each of 13 categories) of the 2019/20 Cars.co.za Consumer Awards - powered by WesBank have been announced. They were selected out of 65 vehicles 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 2019.



Image supplied by motorpress.co.za

The #CarsAwards – now in its 5th year – was conceived to be South Africa's definitive automotive awards programme and it has steadily grown in stature, reach and influence with the support of WesBank, a vehicle finance provider. The 13 category winners and Brand of the Year recipient will be announced in February 2020.

“Initiatives such as this offer credible opinions on the types of cars and features available in the market, and help consumers make informed decisions when choosing a new vehicle,” says Ghana Msibi, executive head of sales and marketing at WesBank.

Volkswagen leads the pack, Haval makes an appearance

To determine the finalists, Cars.co.za's extended editorial team trimmed the list of semi-finalists from five to three contenders per category by scoring each of them against specific pillars of success.

As a result, 17 brands are represented in the list of finalists, with Volkswagen leading the nominations with seven derivatives, followed by BMW, Ford and Toyota (four apiece), Mazda and Suzuki (three apiece).

Significantly, fledgeling Chinese SUV brand Haval makes its first appearances in the final stage of the #CarsAwards, while Jaguar and Land Rover returns to the list after failing to make the last round in 2018/19.

Because candidates were selected from the entire new passenger-vehicle market (as opposed to only models launched during the past 12 months), there are eight defending category winners among the finalists, including the Mercedes-Benz A-Class, Toyota Fortuner, Volvo XC60, Volkswagen Polo, Amarok and Arteon, Range Rover Velar and Suzuki Swift, although in the case of the latter two, in different derivatives to last year.

A total of 16 finalists from last year's programme will return for another round of judging in the 2019/20 programme, including the BMW X3 xDrive20d M-Sport, Mercedes-Benz C300 AMG Line and Volkswagen Golf GTI. There also different (or updated) versions of the BMW M2, Ford Everest and Fiesta, Mazda2, Volkswagen Polo Vivo and Volvo XC40.

The 2019/20 #CarsAwards finalists in their respective categories are:

Budget Car

- Kia Picanto 1.2 Style
- Suzuki Swift 1.2 GLX
- Volkswagen Polo Vivo Trendline

Compact Hatch

- Ford Fiesta 1.0 Trend Auto
- Mazda2 1.5 Individual Auto
- Volkswagen Polo 1.0 TSI Comfortline Auto

Premium Hatch

- Mazda3 2.0 Astina
- Mercedes-Benz A200 AMG-Line
- Volkswagen Golf GTI

Executive SUV

- BMW X3 xDrive20d M-Sport
- Range Rover Evoque D180 R-Dynamic SE
- Volvo XC60 D5 R-Design

Compact Family Car

- Renault Duster 1.5 dCi Prestige
- Suzuki Vitara 1.4T GLX Auto
- Volkswagen T-Cross 1.0 TSI 85kW Highline R-Line

Family Car

- Mazda CX-5 2.0 Dynamic Auto
- Peugeot 3008 2.0 HDI Allure
- Toyota RAV4 2.0 GX Auto

Adventure SUV

- Ford Everest 2.0 Bi-Turbo 4WD Limited
- Haval H9 Luxury
- Toyota Fortuner 2.8GD-6 4x4 Auto

Premium SUV

- Audi Q8 55 TFSI Quattro
- BMW X5 xDrive30d M-Sport
- Range Rover Velar D300 R-Dynamic HSE

Crossover

- Audi Q3 35 TFSI S Line
- Jaguar E-Pace D180 AWD R-Dynamic
- Volvo XC40 D4 R-Design

Leisure Double Cab

- Ford Ranger 2.0 BiTDi Wildtrak 4x4 Auto
- Toyota Hilux 2.8 GD-6 Legend 50 4x4 Auto
- Volkswagen Amarok 3.0 V6 TDI Highline 4Motion

Business Class

- BMW 320d Sport Line
- Mercedes-Benz C300 AMG Line
- Volkswagen Arteon 2.0 TSI 4Motion R-Line

Fun Hatch

- Mini Cooper S Sports-Auto
- Suzuki Swift Sport 1.4T
- Volkswagen Polo GTI

Performance Car

- BMW M2 Competition M-DCT
- Ford Mustang GT 5.0
- Toyota Supra 3.0T

Next stop: Gerotek!

The next phase of the programme will take place on 31 October and 1 November, 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 by a diverse judging panel, which includes the experienced motoring journalists of Cars.co.za's extended editorial team, plus 14 respected and influential guest judges with a broad base of expertise.

Customer feedback

However, the findings of the 21 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.

"The #CarsAwards is designed to be a guide for all new passenger vehicle buyers, not only those who follow motoring publications," says Cars.co.za consumer experience manager, Hannes Oosthuizen.

"With 50% of the final scores determined by brands' rating in the survey, a vehicle only really stands a very good chance of winning if it is a good product in the eyes of the judges and if its brand delivers solid after-sales service.

In the 2018/19 programme, the experiences and perceptions of South African vehicle owners determined the final outcomes of 5 of the 13 #CarsAwards categories. And, importantly, their feedback will completely determine the 2019/20 Brand of the Year, which has been won by Toyota and Suzuki before (each of which has won it twice).

For more, go to www.carsawards.co.za