

All the 2017/18 Cars.co.za Consumer Awards winners!

Suzuki South Africa once again walked away with the Brand of the Year title at the 2017/18 Cars.co.za Consumer Awards - powered by WesBank, which took place at The Galleria in Sandton, Johannesburg on 25 January 2018.



Highlights of this (third) iteration of the programme were:

- Suzuki defended its 2016/17 #CarsAwards Brand of the Year title and also repeated its victories in a pair of categories: Budget Car and Compact Family Car.
- Mazda tasted success for the first time in #CarsAwards history by winning two categories: Compact Hatch and Family Car.
- Mercedes-Benz and Toyota, which were recognised in the inaugural #CarsAwards but didn't win trophies in 2016/17, took the honours in three categories.
- The Volvo XC90 T8 Twin Engine and BMW M2 M-DCT were the only finalists to defend their category victories from 2016/17, although the Suzuki Vitara and Volkswagen Golf won their categories with different derivatives.
- To underline that the winners in each of the categories were based equally on the judges' scores and brands' ratings in the Cars.co.za Consumer Satisfaction Survey, all the finalists' totals were revealed during the awards ceremony.
- In no fewer than five out of the 13 categories the judges' favourites did *not* win, due to the impact of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey (more detail to follow).

A total of 20 car brands were represented in the 39 finalists that were in contention for category wins in 2017/18... The Volkswagen Group had 10 nominations (Audi and Volkswagen had five apiece), followed by the BMW Group (four), with Alfa Romeo, Kia, Mitsubishi, Peugeot and Subaru making their first respective appearances in the final.

Category winners

- **Budget Car:** Suzuki Ignis 1.2 GL
- **Compact Hatch:** Mazda2 1.5 Individual

- **Premium Hatch:** Volkswagen Golf 1.4 TSI Comfortline R-Line DSG
- **Compact Family Car:** Suzuki Vitara 1.6 GLX Auto
- **Family Car:** Mazda CX-5 2.5 Individual
- **Business Class:** BMW 420d Gran Coupe Sport Line Sports Auto
- **Executive Sedan:** Mercedes-Benz E350d Avantgarde
- **Leisure Double-Cab Bakkie:** Volkswagen Amarok 3.0 V6 TDI 4Motion Highline Plus
- **Adventure SUV:** Toyota Fortuner 2.8 GD-6 4x4 Auto
- **Executive SUV:** Mercedes-Benz GLC250d 4Matic AMG Line
- **Premium SUV:** Volvo XC90 T8 Twin Engine R-Design
- **Fun Car:** Mini John Cooper Works Sports Auto
- **Performance Car:** BMW M2 M-DCt

Impact of the [Cars.co.za](https://www.cars.co.za) Ownership Satisfaction Survey

The importance of after-sales service excellence was highlighted by the impact of the Cars.co.za Ownership Satisfaction Survey on the final scores.

“With 50% of a vehicle’s final score determined by a brand’s performance in the Consumer Satisfaction Survey, a car only really 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,” says Hannes Oosthuizen, Cars.co.za’s consumer experience manager.

“We think this is a crucial distinguishing feature of the #CarsAwards, because buying a car is ultimately about much more than just the product. Consumers buy into a brand and essentially enter into a relationship with that brand,” he explains.

This year the survey results impacted five categories in particular. The Toyota Fortuner (Adventure SUV), Suzuki Ignis (Budget Car), Mini JCW (Fun Car), Volkswagen Amarok (Leisure Double Cab) and BMW M2 (Performance Car) all emerged victorious because actual customers rated their brands higher than the competition.

Multifaceted judging process

The winners aren’t chosen exclusively by motoring journalists, who report on (and review) the latest new vehicles in the market.

Although the seven members of Cars.co.za’s editorial team chose the finalists, the combined judging panel (including 11 respected guest judges from various backgrounds and fields of expertise) only compiled the finalists’ individual scores once they’d evaluated the cars back-to-back during a thorough two-day test at the Gerotek facility at the end of 2017.

Combined judging panel

Anele Mdoda (947), Ashley Oldfield (Cars.co.za), Ciro de Siena (Cars.co.za), Claire Mawisa (Carte Blanche), David Taylor

(Cars.co.za), Eddie Kalili (freelance editor/writer), Ernest Page (SA Car Fan), Francisco Nwamba (The Motorist), Gero Lilleike (Cars.co.za), Jacob Moshokoa (947/EWN), Juliet McGuire (WOW), Khutso Theledi (YFM), Kojo Baffoe (Afropolitan), Mike Fourie (Cars.co.za), Nafisa Akabor (tech journalist), Phuti Mpyane (The Petrosexual), Wendy Knowler (Consumer Specialist) and Wezile Bonani (Bay FM).

All derivatives listed on the new vehicles price list on 1 September 2017 were eligible for selection and the public had just as much say in the outcome of 2017/18 #CarsAwards as the 18 judges did. Fifty percent of the final standings were based on rankings that the respective vehicle brands achieved in the Cars.co.za Ownership Satisfaction Survey, conducted in partnership with data specialists Lightstone Consumer. The data incorporated feedback from thousands of vehicle owners, based on their experiences of their vehicles (less than five years old and serviced through franchised outlets).

The most prestigious title awarded by #CarsAwards – Brand of the Year – was based solely on the findings of the Cars.co.za Ownership Satisfaction Survey.

Brand of the Year

Following its surprise win last year, Suzuki's good reputation received another boost from this year's #CarsAwards. The Japanese brand again emerged victorious in the Brand of the Year category, which is determined entirely by market and customer data, the latter from the aforementioned survey (sales and after-sales service in particular).

Suzuki narrowly defeated Mercedes-Benz by 1%, with Mazda scoring the final podium position. Also, note the rise of Kia (6th) and Mahindra into the top 10 list.

1. Suzuki	78.2%
2. Mercedes-Benz	77.2%
3. Mazda	74.7%
4. Volkswagen	74%
5. BMW/Mini	73.4%
6. Kia	72.8%
7. Audi	72%
8. Toyota/Lexus	72%
9. Nissan	71.4%
10. Mahindra	71.4%

"We think the Brand of the Year trophy is the ultimate accolade in the South African automotive industry," says Oosthuizen. "It represents validation from the people that matter most – actual car owners. Suzuki has managed to achieve impressive market share growth in the past 12 months *and* has maintained excellent service levels."

Visit <http://www.carsawards.co.za> for more information about #CarsAwards, including the category criteria, and to view images of the award recipients taken at the event.

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