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CARSGUIDE ANNOUNCES FIRST FIVE FINALISTS FOR 2008 CAR OF THE YEAR AWARDS

The editor of carsguide.com.au Karla Pincott today announced the first five finalists for the 2008 carsguide Car of the Year Awards.

The first five finalists are:

- Audi A4 1.8 with CVT;
- BMW 135i auto;
- Fiat 500 1.4;
- Jaguar XF Diesel and;
- Volkswagen Tiguan TDi.

Judged on criteria that cover styling, safety, innovation, value, functionality, build-quality and performance, finalists were tested in a variety of situations including a full day's close examination at Wakefield Park race track, in New South Wales' Goulburn.

Ms. Pincott said that the purpose of the Car of the Year Awards was to find Australia's best new cars for 2008.

"Now in its eleventh year, the carsguide Car of the Year Awards has proven to be an authoritative measure of the best new Australian car models.

"Automotive manufacturers are becoming more innovative each year making the selection process tighter than ever. We are pleased with the list of first five finalists and encourage the public to get behind this initiative by voting for the People's Choice Award."

The remaining five finalists will be announced next Friday, November 21.

From the 10 finalists, three winners will be chosen under the categories of:

- *Car of the Year*
- *Green Car of the Year*
- *People's Choice Award*

All winners will be announced on Friday, November 28.

The judges comprise of motoring editors and senior writers from Sydney's *The Daily Telegraph*, Melbourne's *Herald-Sun*, Brisbane's *Courier-Mail*, Adelaide's *Advertiser*, Hobart's *Mercury*, Perth's *Sunday Times* and carsguide.com.au.

Voting for the People's Choice Award commences on 21 November and runs until 27 November.

carsguide.com.au users can read appraisals, view large format photo galleries and watch videos of all the finalists shot on location at Wakefield Park to help with their decision.

To vote or for more information, visit <http://www.carsguide.com.au/COTY>.

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For more information or to arrange an interview with the Karla Pincott, editor of carsguide.com.au or Paul Gover motoring editor of the Herald Sun, contact Luke Dean or Vida Redoblado at News Digital Media:

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About the finalists:

Audi A4 1.8 with CVT

The all-new A4 is an obvious contender, but we went with the front-drive four-door sedan with the 1.8-litre low-pressure turbocharged engine. The German sedan is attractive, both inside and out, and surprisingly swift. The four-cylinder engine delivers decent outputs across a broad rev range, with 118kW between 4500 and 6200 revs and 250Nm from 1500 to 4500 revs. Driving the front wheels through a continuously-variable transmission helps make any trip a smooth, quiet and swift event that won't break the bank when it comes to filling up. Importantly, the ride quality of the new A4 is better sorted than its predecessors and the overall package is quality, confidence and competence.

Stuart Martin - Adelaide Advertiser

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http://carsguide.news.com.au/site/research/story/audi_a4_counts_on_steering_to_shine
http://carsguide.news.com.au/site/research/story/first_drive_audi_a4_avant

BMW 135i auto

More proof that great things come in small packages. The baby BMW's edgy styling won't win any beauty prizes and the two-door body is a pain, but think of V8 performance from a compact coupe and you get the picture. This is an indulgent driver's car with a Jekyll-and-Hyde personality: well mannered and almost docile when not pushed, but a master blaster when you ride the turbo-packed surge of power. The 135i Sport has brilliant performance, reassuring handling, ballsy brakes and razor-sharp steering which can be controlled by the throttle. The combination makes it pricey, potent and close to perfect.

Keith Didham - Hobart Mercury.

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http://carsguide.news.com.au/site/research/story/bmw_135i_baby_bmw_all_sports_class/
http://carsguide.news.com.au/site/research/story/bmw_1_series_coupe_pot_of_gold

Fiat 500 1.4

According to carsguide.com.au, the Fiat 500 would be at home in Rome, Paris or inner-metropolitan Australia. It is a "slick city, ideal for commuting in style" and a "tremendous revision of the original" 500*. There are a multitude of choices for buyers starting from the base Pop model and branching out to either the Sport or more luxury-oriented Lounge. There are also millions of different options when choosing exterior colours, trim colours, patterns and stripes. The 1.4 litre engine in the Sport also packs some punch.

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http://carsguide.news.com.au/site/research/story/fiat_500_baby_reborn
[Jaguar XF Diesel](#)

The Italian baby is a dinky little city car that is right at home in the centre of the action. But when you do hit the open road, you'll be pleasantly surprised. The 1.4-litre pumps out a respectable 74kW and it will happily maintain 110km/h in sixth gear, enough to keep pace with B-Doubles which dwarf the baby Fiat and can buffet it around. Tackling hills, though, requires liberal use of the sweet shifting gearbox to maintain momentum. Cabin ambience is a plus and most drivers will find an agreeable driving position. Luggage space behind the rear seats however is miniscule so pack lightly. The bonus around town, and even on the highway, is the car's excellent fuel economy. But you'll need it as the fuel tank only holds 35 litres.
Neil McDonald - Herald Sun

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http://carsguide.news.com.au/site/research/story/jaguar_xf_this_cat_is_a_cool_ride
http://carsguide.news.com.au/site/research/story/jaguar_xf_a_new_cat_on_the_prowl

Volkswagen Tiguan TDI

It may have a funny name _ made up, they say, from tiger and iguana _ but there is nothing silly about the Tiguan. This second cousin to a Golf is a delight to drive, belying the fact that it is a soft-roader. With few of the vices associated with many SUVs trying to be all things to all people, the Tiguan is a relaxed drive with high levels of noise, vibration and harshness exclusion. The well-proven 2-litre turbodiesel is suited to the car with ample performance from its 103kW and 320Nm available over a reasonable spread. Interior space is good with room and comfort guaranteed for four adults and space left over for a child in the rear seat. Boot space is sufficient for a small family weekend away but capable of being considerably increased by folding part or all of the rear seat.

Kevin Hepworth - Daily Telegraph

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http://carsguide.news.com.au/site/research/story/vw_tiguan_a_handsome_beast
http://carsguide.news.com.au/site/motoringnews/story/mmis_2008_tiguan_is_serious_business