

# DRIVE

CAR OF THE YEAR 2022

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## King Kia

Why the all-new Kia Sportage is Australia's best new car

PAGE 3



### 20 categories, 20 winners

From dual-cabs to electric vehicles, SUVs to sports cars



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buying your  
next car. You'll  
thank us.



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Glenn Butler

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The fifth new category, Best First Car, uses real-world evaluation and extensive data

gathering to identify the safest, most affordable and most capable new car for young drivers. Everything from resale prices to insurance costs and servicing fees is factored into the equation.

Cars must also meet stringent safety standards to be eligible, including a five-star ANCAP rating and fitment of autonomous emergency braking and blind-spot monitoring.

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## Kia Sportage takes out top prize

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The Kia Sportage also has a new centre front airbag which prevents front seat occupants' heads from crashing in a crash. This feature is already familiar to some luxury car

owners, but the Sportage is the only car in its class with one.

The Sportage's merits extend well beyond just safety.

For starters, the Kia Sportage has grown in size this time around. It's 175mm longer and rides on an 85mm longer wheelbase which means it has more useable space inside, particularly in the back seats and cargo bay.

The cabin is a very classy affair, and technology integration and effectiveness is markedly better than previous years. The Sportage is best-in-class in terms of visual impressiveness and ease of use.

Sure, the \$55,000 GT-Line has the most equipment, but even the Sportage S is generously equipped. It boasts a touchscreen entertainment system, wireless smartphone connectivity, LED headlights and taillights, alloy wheels and a full-size spare.

Judges tested all three of the Sportage range's mechanical

packages in the lead-up to, and during, Drive Car of the Year testing. The more potent 132kW 1.6-litre turbocharged petrol and 137kW 2.0-litre turbodiesel engines are both undeniably good, and they do take the spotlight away from the most affordable powertrain, the entry-level 115kW petrol four-cylinder, which is competent and economical.

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The Sportage's steering is light and well-weighted to balance higher-speed feedback with low-speed manoeuvring.

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### THE FINALISTS



#### Toyota Kluger

**What we like**

- Refinement, comfort and space
- Quality driving experience
- Strong equipment levels across the range

**What we don't**

- Base model doesn't get power tailgate
- Step up to Hybrid is expensive
- Doesn't match Kia's seven-year warranty

The new Kluger 7-seat SUV is now even more suited to family life. Comfortable, capable, priced affordably and packed with Toyota's usual sense of ruggedness, quality and reliability. There are few better ways to move a busy family.



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- Hugely spacious and user-oriented
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- Steering needs more weight at speed
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[hyundai.com/au/n-range](https://hyundai.com/au/n-range)

**HYUNDAI**

Nona N Premium, I30 N Premium with screen, I30 N with optional two-tone roof, I30 Sedan N with optional screen variants shown.

### The winners

**SUVs and Dual Cabs**

Best Light SUV	.....	Ford Puma
Best Small SUV	.....	Skoda Kamiq
Best Small Luxury SUV	.....	Volvo XC40
Best Medium SUV	.....	Kia Sportage
Best Medium Luxury SUV	.....	Jaguar F-Pace
Best Large SUV	.....	Toyota Kluger
Best Large Off-Road SUV	.....	Ford Everest
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Best Dual-Cab Ute	.....	Isuzu D-Max & Mazda BT-50
Best Off-Road Dual-Cab Ute	.....	Ford Ranger Raptor

**Passenger cars**

Best First Car	.....	Toyota Corolla SX
Best Value Car	.....	Kia Cerato S
Best Small Car	.....	Volkswagen Golf
Best Medium-to-Large Car	.....	Skoda Octavia
Best Medium Luxury Car	.....	BMW 3 Series
Best People Mover	.....	Kia Carnival
Best Hot Hatch	.....	Hyundai i30 N DCT
Best Sports Coupe	.....	Ford Mustang V8

**Electric Cars**

Best EV under \$100K	.....	Hyundai Ioniq 5
Best EV over \$100K	.....	Porsche Taycan

### Meet the judges

Ten men and women from Drive's editorial team, with more than 200 years of automotive industry experience between them, put every car under the microscope to find out which ones deserve recognition as the best in their class.

 Emma Notarfrancesco: Caffeine-fueled, incisive and addicted to style	 Tom Frasen: Car fanatic turned photographer turned journalist.	 Josh Dowling: Our resident encyclopedia understands consumers.	 Sam Purcell: Our offroad expert and father of two, prizes versatile cars.	 Kez Casey: Panel shops, dealerships, publishing... he has seen it all
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# The Winners' Circle

Winning isn't easy but it is glorious, as our 20 victorious vehicles discovered, writes Glenn Butler.

From Ferraris to Fords, Havals to Hondas, Drive Car of the Year evaluates without fear or favour and with just one goal in mind: finding the best new cars to suit all Australian requirements and budgets.

Whether it's premium SUVs or practical people movers, eco-friendly electric vehicles or scintillating sports cars, we put every car through the same exhaustive and exacting test regime designed to highlight all strengths and weaknesses.

The outcomes of Australia's toughest testing regime are recommendations you can trust and winners that should be proud to call themselves Drive's Cars of the Year.

Winning one award is an amazing accomplishment. Winning four awards is incredible, as Ford did this year.

Ford's Mustang V8 led the way, snaring Best Sports Car, while the doughty and dependable Ford Everest won the Best Large Off-road SUV award in its inaugural year.

The diminutive but still impressive Ford Puma won Best Light SUV and at the other end of the

scale, the ruggedly rapid Ford Ranger Raptor won best Off-road Dual-Cab Ute.

Kia won our most prestigious award, the Drive Car of the Year Overall winner, for the second year in a row with the benchmark-setting Kia Sportage SUV.

The Sportage is not only a massive

**Head online for a full rundown on each category plus videos of the finalists being put through their paces. DRIVE.COM.AU**

step forward on its predecessor, it leapfrogged its Medium SUV

competition with class-leading safety and refinement, and a classy cabin that puts some luxury SUVs to shame.

Kia's extremely practical Carnival won Best People Mover for the third year running, a feat equalled by the BMW 3 Series in the Best Medium Luxury Sedan category.

The Skoda Kamiq backed up its 2021 win in the Best Small SUV category, as did the Volvo XC40 in

the Best Small Luxury SUV class.

Isuzu's tough and reliable D-Max won the Best Dual Cab Ute award for a second time, but this year it shares the award with the Mazda BT-50. Both vehicles were co-developed by Isuzu and Mazda, but pricing increases this year to the D-Max made it impossible for judges to split the two.

Other first-time winners include the Hyundai i30 N DCT hot hatch, which saw off a spirited challenge from its smaller brother, the i20 N and the properly rapid and refined Volkswagen Golf GTI.

The Volkswagen Golf did, however, take home the gold medal as Best Small Car, beating the strong-selling Toyota Corolla and Hyundai i30 hatchbacks with its high-tech interior and polished driving dynamics.

The Skoda Octavia used its space, value and versatility to good advantage to earn the judges' favour in a hard-fought battle with the Toyota Camry Hybrid and classy Hyundai Sonata.

Arguably the toughest win of Drive Car of the Year went to the Land Rover Defender. This reimagined icon of the offroad scene beat the bookies' favourite Toyota LandCruiser 300 and incumbent Nissan Patrol not just with its on-road chops but its incredible offroad prowess, proving it is the master of two very different worlds.



## BEST VALUE CAR Kia Cerato S



When chasing value, comparing features and equipment is only the start. The biggest cost is the initial purchase, then depreciation. Other factors include fuel costs, insurance, registration and routine maintenance. We analysed Australia's most

affordable new cars and found that the Best Value Car is the Kia Cerato S. It ticks the basic equipment and safety features box, and is the most affordable to buy, insure, refuel and service. Kia's seven year warranty adds peace of mind, too.

## BEST FIRST CAR Toyota Corolla SX



The Toyota Corolla SX is our pick for the Best First Car award. The combination of low running costs, excellent resale value, and more accessible insurance premiums delivered the Toyota Corolla SX hatch the edge in this contest. The Toyota

Corolla SX is also stress-free to drive, feels secure on the road, is comfortable in the daily grind, has good visibility all around, and has most mod-cons covered. It's big on safety, making it a safe bet in an overcrowded market.

## BEST LARGE OFF-ROAD SUV

# Everest at the peak of all-terrain wagons

Rob Margitt

Ford's evergreen Everest was the surprise over a week of testing that encompassed plenty of highway running, back-road touring and off-road crawling.

The Everest's gutsy 2.0-litre twin-turbo diesel proved more than adequate in all situations, offering a relaxed, comfortable and quiet time behind the wheel.

Off-road, the Everest proved every bit as adept as its dual-cab ute Ranger sibling, remaining unfustered and capable no matter the challenges thrown at it. While others were arguably a smidgeon more capable off the beaten track, the Everest's blend of decent off-road chops and excellent on-road manners tipped it in the judges' favour.

As one judge said: "It feels like it is

in another league after driving the others back-to-back. And to think it's the oldest car here. Incredible".

Inside, the Everest does feel a little dated against newer rivals, but Ford has done enough in terms of technology to keep it contemporary and fresh. And with arguably better third-row comfort than its rivals, the Everest scores points too for its ability as an all-round family hauler.

Crucially, though, around town and highway dynamics are equally as important as off-road ability and where other vehicles ask for compromise, the Everest provides a near-perfect blend of on- and off-road performance.

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## THE FINALISTS

### ISUZU MU-X

#### What we like

- Well-designed interior
- Hefty 3500kg towing capacity
- Decent off-road

#### What we don't

- Not as accomplished on the road as it is off
- Engine not as refined as some in the class
- Jittery and fidgety ride on the blacktop

Off-road, the Isuzu MU-X is capable and willing to tackle rougher terrain with poise and purpose. Despite giving away power and torque to its rivals, the MU-X has enough grunt to overcome most obstacles. It's the most capable at hauling a caravan or trailer, its 3500kg towing capacity besting the field by 400kg. But when it came to all-round ability and refinement, the MU-X pulled up a fraction short of the winner.



### Toyota Fortuner

#### What we like

- Gutsy diesel powertrain
- Good off-road ability
- Spacious second and third rows

#### What we don't

- Inelegant third-row seating storage solution
- On-road manners... it feels like a ute
- Feeling its age

Out on the highway, the Fortuner works hard to disguise its ute origins, but it misses out on some of the refinement expected of vehicles in this class and evident in some of its rivals. The Fortuner remains a decent off-road-capable large SUV, and straddles the line between family hauler and off-road adventurer with some aplomb. But, as accomplished as it is off-road, it falls just a little short on the open road.

## BEST HOT HATCH

# Hyundai i30 N hits the right (exhaust) note

Joshua Dowling

While this may seem a surprising outcome given the arrival of the latest Volkswagen Golf GTI - a previous winner - and the highly regarded Hyundai i20 N, the updated Hyundai i30 N snuck up on us and its competitors.

The latest update brought new steering and suspension, more power, sticky Pirelli tyres and, crucially, a new fast-acting eight-speed twin-clutch auto that transforms the car's breadth of ability compared to earlier manual-only versions.

Seven out of eight judges voted in favour of the Hyundai i30 N DCT. It delivers next-level performance on and off the track, and yet is livable in the daily grind.

In many regards, the Hyundai i30 N sits neatly between stripped-out hardcore hot hatches and the plushness and refinement of the VW



Golf GTI - and this formula ticked all the right boxes for most judges.

The Hyundai i30 N was also the fastest hot hatch in this contest, stopping the clocks in a 0 to 100km/h test on our VBox timing equipment in 5.5 seconds (versus 6.1 to 6.3 seconds for the Golf GTI, and 6.6 seconds for the i20 N).

The Hyundai i30 N has true racetrack capability when you need it, but is not a chore to live with day-to-day. The exhaust note, while not

quite up there with a Mercedes-Benz A45 AMG, is the best of the trio tested - and delighted the senses whether on a racetrack or driving through a freeway tunnel.

While the original Hyundai i30 N was close to the mark for many, the updated version has gone to finishing school, giving it a breadth of capability that's as much at home commuting as it is cutting racetrack laps in the hands of weekend warriors.

It is a worthy winner.

## THE FINALISTS

### Hyundai i20 N

#### What we love

- Fun and agile handling
- Epic brakes and tyres
- Personalised performance modes

#### What we don't

- Revs hang between gearchanges
- Tyre roar on Australian roads
- Muted exhaust needs to be more evocative

Hyundai i20 N is the closest to the original hot hatch formula: Pint-sized, affordable, fast and fun to drive. It also brings a level of adjustment and personalisation to the city-sized hot hatch class, but is less suited to the day-to-day than the others here.

### VW Golf GTI

#### What we love

- Performance in a luxury package
- Stopping power and tyre grip
- Upmarket interior, roomy cabin

#### What we don't

- Infotainment and AC controls via touch only
- Less suited to track days
- Muted exhaust

For many buyers, the Volkswagen Golf GTI is what a hot hatch should be: fast luxury. But others who prefer less pampering want more edginess. In the end, as much as the judges loved the VW Golf GTI, they could see it was outclassed by another all-rounder.

L-R: the winning Hyundai i30 N, Volkswagen Golf GTI, and Hyundai i20 N



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**BEST EV UNDER \$100,000**

# Hyundai Ioniq 5 deeply impressive

Kez Casey

Hyundai boldly showed newfound confidence when it unveiled the Ioniq 5 – a medium SUV with styling that references the brand's formative years when Hyundai was better known as a budget brand.

Be that as it may, the Ioniq 5 generated a heap of interest because of its distinctive design and its satisfying specifications. Not Hyundai's first EV by a long shot, but the first to make a real impact.

It's fresh and 'clean' inside, yet it pays attention to how you might use the car. The front seat relax mode is just the thing if you're fast-charging but don't care to wander through a shopping centre, or just want to stretch out and take a break during a long road trip. Interior packaging showcases the available space too. A flat floor and plenty of room between the two rows of seats mean that everyone gets room to move. Although not compact, the dimensions are used to tremendous effect inside.

On the road, the Ioniq 5 is swift, particularly the more powerful dual-motor model. More



**The winner**

**What we like**

- Huge interior space, with user-oriented inclusions
- Incredibly well equipped
- Flexibility to share charge with other devices

**What we don't**

- Steering could do with more substance at speed
- Big interior a little too large for shorter drivers
- Single spec means higher price

Importantly, it rides with comfort and balance – just the thing for choppy city streets and rough-shod rural roads. The light and easy steering makes parking a breeze – although Judges did feel it could do with a touch more 'weight' to keep things settled at freeway speeds.

While pricing isn't budget-minded, the Ioniq 5, from \$71,900 for the single motor (with a claimed 451km range) or \$75,900 for the dual-motor model (and its claimed 430km range) comes with an impressive list of standard features.

**THE FINALISTS**

**Volvo XC40 Recharge Pure Electric**

**What we like**

- Just-right city-sized packaging
- Useful driving range
- Plenty of performance in reserve

**What we don't**

- Infotainment feels a little under-specced
- Some packaging compromises
- Standing acceleration can feel tame

Despite the unassuming appearance, the XC40 Recharge packs a surprising 300kW of motoring excitement. But performance isn't the star; rather its slick Scandinavian design that put it on the front foot. With pricing from \$76,990 plus on-road costs, the XC40 Recharge Pure Electric offers incredible performance value.

Alongside similarly sized SUVs, even those within Hyundai's own range, the Ioniq 5 stacks up well, and certainly puts prestige brands on notice.

**Polestar 2**

**What we like**

- Punchy rolling acceleration
- Clean and spacious interior
- A break from the SUV norm

**What we don't**

- Pricing creeps up with options ...
- ... and standard equipment could be better
- Rear seat comfort

Polestar is a relatively new electric-only spin-off from Volvo. The Polestar 2 has the same 300kW dual-motor powertrain as the XC40, wrapped in a sleeker SUV-inspired five-door hatchback body. It has the legs and performance to be a real EV contender, but its premium positioning tempers its value equation somewhat.

In the end, the Hyundai Ioniq 5 took a convincing victory ahead of a stellar field, giving us a taste of just how revolutionary the Electric Vehicle revolution is going to be.

**BEST LIGHT SUV**

# Ford Puma a city-SUV class act

Tom Fraser

Every time we get behind the wheel of the Ford Puma we come away impressed not only at how good it is, but how much of a massive leap forward it is over its predecessor, the Ford EcoSport.

The Ford Puma does have one of the more expensive line-ups in the segment (the RRP ranges from \$29,990 to \$35,540 plus on-road costs), but Ford has equipped the Puma to a high standard that sees it compete convincingly with rivals. Not to mention the Ford Puma's entertaining drive characteristics are a cut above the rest.

Every Puma variant comes with satellite navigation, wireless phone charging, LED ambient interior lighting, DAB+ digital radio, rain-sensing wipers, and some nifty LED puddle lamps that display a puma cat.

The standard 1.0-litre turbocharged three-cylinder drivetrain punches above its weight with competitive 92kW/170Nm outputs, and the seven-speed dual-clutch automatic



**The winner**

**What we like**

- Engaging driving character
- Well-equipped from base specification
- Quiet and insulated cabin

**What we don't**

- Tight second row for taller occupants
- Must use 95-octane fuel as a minimum
- Pricier end of the segment

transmission behaves very well. The interior is modern and functional and utilises soft-touch materials on most touchpoints. Both driver and passengers are afforded a good amount of space considering the bodystyle's tight constraints, plus there are plenty of storage options and a roomy 410-litre boot.

On the road, the Puma has light and direct steering, a gutsy turbo powertrain, and a ride that judges praised for its absorbent nature and refined ambience.

**THE FINALISTS**

**Kia Stonic**

**What we like**

- Strong ownership value proposition
- Affordable pricing range
- Very comfortable seats

**What we don't**

- For an all-new model, the interior feels a bit old
- Car annoyingly starts in Eco mode
- Some sub-par materials in use

The Stonic might not boast the latest styling or features, but it is priced sharply to cut through the noise and snag buyers' attention, from \$21,490 to \$29,990 before on-road costs. The Stonic's interior is comfortable, it has plenty of safety features, and is extremely affordable to run. It's also backed by Kia's seven-year warranty.

Importantly, the Puma has earned a five-star ANCAP safety rating and has an impressive suite of active safety features, including autonomous emergency braking with pedestrian detection, lane-

**Toyota Yaris Cross**

**What we like**

- Funky interior materials and presentation
- Extensive list of safety equipment
- Runs on regular unleaded and is fuel-efficient

**What we don't**

- Cramped second row
- Long emergency braking distance for a light SUV
- Awkward door handle placement

This Yaris hatchback-based high-riding crossover brings new-generation Yaris styling with more interior space and enhanced ease of entry. The Yaris Cross range is one of the more expensive in the light SUV class, spanning \$26,990 to \$37,990 plus on-road costs, though Toyota offers a fuel-efficient hybrid powertrain as a strong point of difference.

departure warning, lane-keep assist and traffic sign recognition. All in all, the Ford Puma is a standout performer in the increasingly competitive light SUV field.

**BEST MEDIUM LUXURY SEDAN**

# Back-to-back wins for BMW 3 Series

Tom Fraser

The BMW 3 Series is unquestionably a segment mainstay focused on the dynamic side of motoring, but still manages a high level of comfort for its occupants and is adorned with quality materials and a high-tech cabin.

The BMW 3 Series is the kind of car that'll impress drivers and neighbours alike thanks to its enjoyable drive experience and upmarket presentation. While the latter is considered more of a subjective aspect, the BMW's driving dynamics are undoubtedly the benchmark of the segment.

Headlined by a strong and willing 2.0-litre powerplant, the 3 Series outputs a driving experience that wouldn't feel out of place in more expensive performance variants such as the M340i xDrive.

It's a beautifully tight and connected handling experience backed up by a powerful turbocharged engine and slick gearbox. It would humble some lighter and more nimble hot hatchbacks on a set of twisty roads.



**The winner**

**What we like**

- Sports sedan driving experience
- Excellent driver-centric cabin
- Tech-laden interior

**What we don't**

- Firmer ride quality than most
- Stingy three-year warranty
- Limited storage

In that same breath, the 3 Series' duality of character means it can operate as a quiet and comfortable daily driver with an ergonomic and well-appointed cabin. The iDrive infotainment system is still one of the greats of all cars on sale.

BMW's Connected telematics system makes it simple to stay in tune with the car when you're away, while items such as keyless entry and push-button start make it easy to jump in and go. There's

**THE FINALISTS**

**Volvo S60**

**What we like**

- Modern, left-field interior layout
- Roomy cabin
- High quality materials used throughout

**What we don't**

- Gear selector is a pain
- Picks up little road imperfections
- Mild-hybrid integration not the smoothest

Where the BMW is a driver-focused offering in the segment, the Volvo S60 trades on its luxurious nature and feature-packed cabin. It's unashamedly different from the rest of the segment, blending an enjoyable and refined drive experience with a classy and contemporary cabin.

decent room for second-row passengers and ergonomics are typically well sorted. There's even a good-size 480-litre boot with ski-chute access.

**Genesis G70**

**What we like**

- Striking cabin presentation
- Serene ride quality and handling
- Quality buying experience

**What we don't**

- Cramped second row
- Parts sharing with Hyundai
- Shooting Brake limited to meek engine

South Korea's challenger truly deserves its place on the podium. It's refreshing to see a newcomer's take on what luxury should be, and it's obvious the amount of effort that Hyundai's luxury brand has put into engineering a genuine alternative – both in the driving experience and interior presentation.

The BMW 3 Series is proof you don't have to spend over \$100,000 to get an engaging and luxurious sports sedan that will reward you every time you drive it.

**BEST MEDIUM LUXURY SUV**

# Continual refinement pays off for Jaguar F-Pace

James Ward

The Jaguar now answers all the crucial questions asked of it in this segment and offers comfort and practicality, sporting performance, impressive technology and even solid value for buyers.

Having the 'Jaaag' naming rights in the carpark can't be discounted either. The leaping cat's aspirational status is as strong as ever, and now the refreshed F-Pace offers a level of quality and refinement to support that classic Jaguar passion.

We tested the entry-level F-Pace S, with a 184kW / 365Nm 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder petrol engine (there are six and eight-cylinder options up the range if you want even more leap from your cat), and found performance adequate for urban running and fun enough when exploring the Dynamic drive mode settings.

It is, after all, the dynamic ability of this car which remains a high point.

The F-Pace feels wonderfully dialled-in and engaging on the open road, just like a proper Jaguar should. It's balanced and direct, while still offering a



**The Winner**

**What we love**

- Excellent infotainment system with remote connectivity
- Sporting, yet comfortable to drive
- Stylish inside and out with impressive fit and finish

**What we don't**

- Stop/Start system can be a little intrusive
- Transmission can feel a little eager at low speeds
- A couple of usability niggles

comfortable and luxurious feel. Inside, the Jaguar's cabin feels equally special, with a revised layout, high-quality switchgear and premium touchpoints. It's all very slick, but it's the new Pivi Pro

11.4-inch infotainment system that makes the biggest difference. From the classy and intuitive interface design to the breadth of features, which includes mobile-app connectivity for vehicle monitoring, the system finally feels as polished as the rest of the car.

Standard equipment levels are good, with driver assistance tech standard across the range. While our test car is a rather conservative specification, you can go to town when creating your own, because the options are seemingly limitless.

In summary, the F-Pace has an answer for every question. It's stylish, practical, and delightful to drive. That it now delivers better value and a class-leading infotainment system is simply icing on the cake.

**THE FINALIST**

**Volvo XC60**

**What we love**

- Luxurious cabin with excellent fit and finish
- Practical space and family-friendly second row
- Style holding up well!

**What we don't**

- Mild-hybrid helps with stop/start – but no real impact on efficiency
- Gets expensive when you tick boxes
- No Apple CarPlay

Last year's Best Medium Luxury SUV winner has been given a few tweaks and the range now offers a 48-volt mild-hybrid system in every model. Judges praised its fit and finish in a truly luxurious cabin, as well as an expansive array of technology.

**Porsche Macan**

**What we love**

- Fun to drive with proper performance
- Mild styling tweaks keep it looking good
- Blue seat belts!

**What we don't**

- Entry price not indicative of real-world. Options are expensive
- Not as much room as others
- Infotainment a bit tricky to navigate

The Porsche Macan underscores the 'Sport' in SUV. Its styling has been updated and the value proposition adjusted. The update includes some chassis changes and a mild power increase but also a price rise, which held it back in the competition.

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**The winner**

**What we like**

- Huge interior space, with user-oriented inclusions
- Incredibly well equipped
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**What we don't**

- Steering could do with more substance at speed
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**What we like**

- Just-right city-sized packaging
- Useful driving range
- Plenty of performance in reserve

**What we don't**

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**What we like**

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**The winner**

**What we like**

- Engaging driving character
- Well-equipped from base specification
- Quiet and insulated cabin

**What we don't**

- Tight second row for taller occupants
- Must use 95-octane fuel as a minimum
- Pricier end of the segment

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On the road, the Puma has light and direct steering, a gutsy turbo powertrain, and a ride that judges praised for its absorbent nature and refined ambience.

**THE FINALISTS**

**Kia Stonic**

**What we like**

- Strong ownership value proposition
- Affordable pricing range
- Very comfortable seats

**What we don't**

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**Toyota Yaris Cross**

**What we like**

- Funky interior materials and presentation
- Extensive list of safety equipment
- Runs on regular unleaded and is fuel-efficient

**What we don't**

- Cramped second row
- Long emergency braking distance for a light SUV
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It's a beautifully tight and connected handling experience backed up by a powerful turbocharged engine and slick gearbox. It would humble some lighter and more nimble hot hatchbacks on a set of twisty roads.



**The winner**

**What we like**

- Sports sedan driving experience
- Excellent driver-centric cabin
- Tech-laden interior

**What we don't**

- Firmer ride quality than most
- Stingy three-year warranty
- Limited storage

In that same breath, the 3 Series' duality of character means it can operate as a quiet and comfortable daily driver with an ergonomic and well-appointed cabin. The iDrive infotainment system is still one of the greats of all cars on sale.

BMW's Connected telematics system makes it simple to stay in tune with the car when you're away, while items such as keyless entry and push-button start make it easy to jump in and go. There's

**THE FINALISTS**

**Volvo S60**

**What we like**

- Modern, left-field interior layout
- Roomy cabin
- High quality materials used throughout

**What we don't**

- Gear selector is a pain
- Picks up little road imperfections
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Where the BMW is a driver-focused offering in the segment, the Volvo S60 trades on its luxurious nature and feature-packed cabin. It's unashamedly different from the rest of the segment, blending an enjoyable and refined drive experience with a classy and contemporary cabin.

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**The Winner**

**What we love**

- Excellent infotainment system with remote connectivity
- Sporting, yet comfortable to drive
- Stylish inside and out with impressive fit and finish

**What we don't**

- Stop/Start system can be a little intrusive
- Transmission can feel a little eager at low speeds
- A couple of usability niggles

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In summary, the F-Pace has an answer for every question.

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**THE FINALIST**

**Volvo XC60**

**What we love**

- Luxurious cabin with excellent fit and finish
- Practical space and family-friendly second row
- Style holding up well!

**What we don't**

- Mild-hybrid helps with stop/start – but no real impact on efficiency
- Gets expensive when you tick boxes
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**Porsche Macan**

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