

# Two share SA Car of the Year title

By [Henrie Geysers](#)

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For the first time in the 26-year history of the South African Car of the Year competition, two cars, the VW Polo and the BMW 530d, tied for the top honours.

The joint title-winners beat off eight other finalists for the coveted title, with the final results being:

BMW 530d and VW Polo 1.6 TDI 77 kW Comfortline (91 points each); Ford Figo 1.4 Ambiente (77 points); Hyundai Sonata 2.4 GLS Exec (76 points); Kia Sportage 2.0 VGT AWD AT (63 points); Citroen DS3 THP 150 Sport (59 points); Hyundai ix35 2.0 CRDI GLS AWD AT (48 points); Opel Astra 1.4T Enjoy Plus (39 points); Honda CR-Z 1.5i V-Tec (21 points) and VW Amarok 2.0 BiTDI 4x2 Double Cab (10 points).



Winner: BMW 530d. BMW has won the award on five previous occasions.

The announcement was made by the South African Guild of Motoring Journalists (SAGMJ) at a gala banquet, attended by the who's who of the South African motoring industry, at Gallagher Convention Centre, Midrand, last night (Tuesday 8 March).

## Not the first time...

VW has won the title twice before and BMW has won it on five previous occasions.

This year the format of the competition was changed completely to bring it into line with the more modern and completely transparent European Car of the Year (COTY) scoring system.

As in the past, the winner still emerges after a stringent process of voting and physical testing of eligible cars and leisure vehicles (which now include double cab bakkies) that were launched in the SA market during 2010.

## Extensive evaluation

All the testing took place at the world renowned Gerotek vehicle test facility outside Pretoria which makes the South African COTY competition unique because of the extensive evaluation opportunity given to a panel of jurors made up of the country's top fulltime motoring journalists.

This year's competition was different because instead of making use of a complex and undisclosed judging and scoring system, the SAGMJ jury members were given 25 points in total to allocate to no more than five of the finalists and no less than three, as is done in Europe.

With all the scores and the judge's comments being open for scrutiny from the moment the winners were announced, and with no more than 10 points at a time being allowed to be allocated to any one vehicle by a judge, it was always going to be a close race for the coveted title, as shown by the final results.



Winner: VW Polo 1.6 TDI 77 kW Comfortline.



VW has won the title twice before.



The BMW under evaluation.



The Polo's engine getting a going-over.

## All about excellence

The WesBank / SAGMJ Car of the Year competition is about automotive excellence and the winning vehicle must score highly in its own class, not against each other as is often thought, across a variety of categories including value for money, safety, dynamics, technology and aesthetics, to name but a few.

And this year's competition winners have proved just that, as both vehicles, although separated by price tags of more than R400 000, were clearly well ahead of their

peers in their relevant market sections.

Footnote: Bizcommunity.com motoring editor Henrie Geyser is one of the judges of the South African Car of the Year award. To read how he and the other jury members voted and what they had to say about the finalists go to [www.sagmj.org.za](http://www.sagmj.org.za).

The SAGMJ has run the South African Car of the Year competition since 1986 and previous winners have been:

- 1986 - Toyota Corolla Twin Cam
- 1987 - Mercedes Benz 260
- 1988 - BMW
- 1989 - Toyota Corolla GLi Executive
- 1990 - BMW 525i
- 1991 - Opel Monza 160 GSi
- 1992 - Nissan Maxima 300 SE
- 1993 - BMW 316i
- 1994 - Opel Kadett 140
- 1995 - Opel Astra 160iS
- 1996 - Audi A4 1.8
- 1997 - BMW 528i
- 1998 - Ford Fiesta Fun
- 1999 - Alfa Romeo 156 T-Spark
- 2000 - Renault Clio 1.4 RT
- 2001- BMW 320d
- 2002 - Audi A4 1.9 TDI
- 2003 - VW Polo TDI
- 2004 - Renault Megane 1.9 dCi
- 2005 - Volvo S40 2.4i
- 2006 - Audi A3 Sportback 2.0T
- 2007 - Honda Civic 1.8VXi Sedan
- 2008 - Mazda2 1.5 Individual
- 2009 - Honda Accord 2.4 Executive
- 2010 - VW Golf 6 1.4 TSI

## ABOUT HENRIE GEYSER

Henrie Geyser joined the online publishing industry through iafrica.com, where he worked for five years as news editor and editor. He now freelances for a variety of print and online publications, on the subjects of cars, food, and travel, among others; and is a member of the South African Guild of Motoring Journalists. [henrieg@iafrica.com](mailto:henrieg@iafrica.com)

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