

Semi-finalists announced for WesBank/SAGMJ Car of the Year 2012

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The semi-finalists for the 2012 WesBank/South African Guild of Motoring Journalist's Car of the Year competition have been announced. The massive field that saw over 320 new model derivatives bidding for a place, has been whittled down to only 26 hopefuls by the members of the South African Guild of Motoring Journalists (SAGMJ), who cast their votes from the pool of vehicles introduced between 1 October 2010 and 31 August 2011.

According to George Nyabadza, General Manager: Marketing at WesBank, this is the first time that the semi-finalists have been announced publicly since the company initiated its sponsorship of the award over 27 years ago. "The announcement of the semi-finalists not only adds more transparency to the judging process, but also serves to add extra excitement among manufacturers and South African car enthusiasts alike.

"We would like to congratulate all the manufacturers who have being acknowledged as best in their individual categories. We wish them all of the best as the judging continues and culminates in the announcement of the overall winner early next year," says Nyabadza.

The next step in the process will see the Car of the Year jury members voting on the vehicles they feel should be finalists. That will be followed by the judging days at Gerotek in February 2012. The announcement of the winner will only come after this stringent voting process and the physical testing of the eligible cars is completed.

Once again, and for the second year running, there is no undisclosed judging and scoring in the competition. The SAGMJ jury members will be given 25 points in total to allocate to no more than five of the finalists and no less than three. With all the scores and the judges' comments being open for scrutiny from the moment the winner is announced, it is going to be another close but open race to see who comes out tops this year.

The finalists will be revealed at the Johannesburg International Motor Show on 6 October 2011 and the vehicles will remain on display for the duration of the show.

The semi-finalists in the 2012 Car of the Year competition are:

Kia Picanto 1.2 EX, Nissan Micra 1.2 Visia+, Alfa Romeo Giulietta 1.4 125 kW MultiAir Distinctive, Audi A1 1.4 TFSI Attraction S Tronic, Citroën DS4 THP 200 Sport, Ford Focus 2.0 GDI Sport Hatch, Kia Cerato Hatch 2.0 SX Manual, Suzuki Swift 1.4i GLS Manual, Audi A6 3.0 TDI Quattro S tronic, Ford Focus 2.0 TDCI Trend Sedan Powershift, Honda Ballade 1.5 Elegance, Honda Insight 1.3 Litre Hybrid, Hyundai Elantra 1.8 GLS, Renault Fluence 2.0 16v Privilege, Suzuki Kizashi 2.4 SDLX Manual, Volkswagen Jetta 1.4 TSI 118 kW Highline, Audi A7 3.0 T FSI Quattro S tronic, Mercedes Benz SLK 350 BlueEFFICIENCY, Mercedes Benz C Class Coupe 250 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY, Volvo V60 T5 Powershift, Chevrolet Orlando 1.8 LT, Peugeot 5008 2.0 HDi Active Manual, BMW X3 xDrive35i, Porsche Cayenne Diesel, Toyota FJ Cruiser 4.0 V6 4x4 and Volkswagen Touareg 3.0 V6 TDI BlueMotion Technology.

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