

## 2023 South African Car of the Year winners announced

For the first time in the 37-year history of the South African Car of the Year (COTY) competition, a leisure double cab 4x4 bakkie has been crowned South Africa's Car of the Year for 2023: The Ford Ranger.



Image source: [QuickPic](#)

Mabuyane Mabuza, chairperson of the 2023 COTY competition, said that this remarkable achievement is a testament to the automotive industry's commitment to producing high-quality double cabs that offer unrivalled performance while seamlessly blending comfort, safety, and cutting-edge technology.

"Over the past decade, the popularity of SUVs and double cabs has skyrocketed at the expense of sedans. Double cab bakkies have become a common choice for everyday commuting, family adventures and various work applications, providing a popular solution for South Africans' mobility demands," says Mabuza.

This year's COTY competition had 21 finalists selected from a pool of 55 qualifying vehicles representing various categories.

The competition featured Budget, Compact, Compact Family, Midsize, Premium, Adventure SUV, 4x4 Double Cab, Luxury, Performance, and New Energy categories.

However, the Budget category had no contenders on this year's finalist list. Although the entrant in the Compact category was commendable, it did not meet the required percentage to secure a category win.

The category winners for this year's COTY competition are:

- Compact Family Category: Baic Beijing X55
- Midsize Category: Kia Sportage
- Premium Category: Kia Sorento
- Adventure SUV Category: Ford Everest
- Double Cab 4x4 Category: Ford Ranger
- Luxury Category: Mercedes Benz S-Class
- Performance Category: Audi RS 3
- New-energy Category: Volvo XC 40 P8 Recharge
- 2023 SA Car of the Year: Ford Ranger Double Cab 4x4

The Mercedes Benz S-Class also won the COTY Jurors Excellence Award, which recognises the unparalleled driving experience of an extraordinary vehicle and represents the jurors' raw scores, acknowledging exceptional vehicle quality and craftsmanship.

The absence of any finalists in the Budget category this year can be attributed to the product lifecycle timing of key competitors; however, the category remains an important entry point into the market. Mabuza urges the automotive industry to persist in its innovation efforts, aiming to create vehicles that cater to the diverse requirements of the South African public.

To this end, the competition also saw the first Chinese winner. The BAIC Beijing X55 won the hotly contested Compact Family category, a sign that automotive brands from China are taking the world by storm, as it is also evident on South African roads.



The next-gen Ford Ranger is here, packed with all the bells and whistles

Naresh Maharaj 19 Dec 2022



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The Chery Tiggo 8 Pro won the "Motor Enthusiasts Choice", voted for by the public via a social media campaign driven by Old Mutual Insure. This category was added three years ago to reflect how integral the public has become to the COTY scoring and voting process.

For those interested in the technical nature of the COTY competition, Mabuza said that the overall and category winners' evaluations included scoring criteria like design, technology, engineering, powertrain, handling, ingenuity and safety, but that the process is much more than just juror scoring.

The diverse group of jurors for this year's competition comprises esteemed South African Guild of Mobility Journalists (SAGMJ) members, with their peers choosing potential and trainee jurors based on specific requirements. Trainees undergo a two-year apprenticeship under the guidance of a juror mentor, ensuring a continuous supply of newly trained jurors ready to contribute to the jury team.

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