

# Which? Car Awards 2007

In a year of some surprises, we name the car industry's winners and losers for 2007

**T**his year, we've assessed 226 model ranges in eight different categories to see how the top makers have performed across the board. We've considered reliability, your views about the cars themselves – how much you love them or loath them – and about dealer sales and service. And we've added in our own expert appraisals – for road tests, safety and design innovation.

When the dust settled from all our testing and analysis, we selected the winners from the also-rans to present our awards for 2007.

## BEST MANUFACTURER

For the first time, we've decided to honour the year's best manufacturer, taking into account innovation, test performance, safety, reliability and ownership.

### 1 Toyota

Toyota wins this most coveted of awards. It has cars in seven of our eight classes, three Best Buys and two Worth Considering models (see p12 onwards). Toyota is 'the' industry benchmark for build quality, consistently featuring in the reliability top-scorers. It was just squeezed into second place (see p33) as this year's most reliable manufacturer, overall.

One of the main reasons for choosing Toyota is that the company encourages innovation across the car industry. It leads the field in delivering hybrid technology and also drives safety standards, as the first to introduce driver knee-protection airbags. It now offers them as standard on the newly launched Auris medium hatchback – another first for this class.



Its models may not always excite, but Toyota is the industry benchmark for build quality

On the road, Toyotas tend to be competent all-rounders – they aren't always the most involving to drive, but they tend to be comfortable and easy to use. None of its models shows any major weakness in our road tests.

Finally, through Lexus, its luxury arm, Toyota has perfected the art of pleasing customers, with fine dealer service. But this isn't reserved for wealthy buyers, with Toyota's own dealers doing well in this respect, too. Perhaps this explains why almost eight in ten Toyota owners would recommend that their friends buy one.

### 2 BMW

Close on Toyota's tail comes BMW, a specialist when it comes to building

## Toyota encourages innovation across the car industry

engaging cars. It's also emerging as an innovator, with some good value pre-pay servicing packages and the recently introduced regenerative braking system on the 1 Series (see the 'Green award', opposite). BMW's average brand reliability and narrow market coverage prevent it from claiming top spot.

### 3 Honda

Third-placed Honda may claim the reliability crown this year, but the latest Civic's early stumbles (see p31) have given us slight cause for concern.

Honda is near the top, too, for owner recommendation. In terms of innovation, its hybrid Civic is a good attempt, but it doesn't quite match Toyota's Prius.

