

**Auto
EXPRESS**

**NEW CAR
AWARDS
2013**

SEAT WINS NEW CAR AWARDS

Car of the Year SEAT Leon

"...any model capable of putting the combined might of BMW's 1 Series, Skoda's Octavia and VW's Golf in the shade was always going to be in with a good shout when it came to the big one"



PLUS SEATS ROLL OF HONOUR

AWARD WINNER
SEAT Leon
Car of the Year
2013

AWARD WINNER
SEAT Leon
Best Compact
Family Car 2013

AWARD WINNER
SEAT Alhambra
Best MPV
2013

**FIND
OUT WHY
INSIDE**



"...it combines all the best bits of its rivals. Desirable looks? Check. Practical interior? Check. Low running costs? Of course. Fun? Oh yes.

Britain's Best New Cars 2013

Best Compact Family Car

SEAT
Leon



Why it won...

WELL done, SEAT. Last year's winner, the BMW 1 Series, hasn't even made our commended list, as a raft of new models have upped the ante – and none more so than the new Leon.

We knew the SEAT would look the part, but we weren't prepared for the depth of its talents – it combines all the

best bits of its rivals. Desirable looks? Check. Practical interior? Check. Low running costs? Of course. Fun? Oh yes.

That's right: the new Leon has kept its key selling point as the most stylish car in the class, while improving elsewhere. There's a sporty three-door version for the first time (an ST estate

will follow later this year) and the same strong engine line-up as the VW Golf.

In fact, the VW Group has secured a lock-out, with its three mainstream brands fighting for victory. The Golf is the all-rounder and the Skoda Octavia is the sensible bet, so what does the SEAT have that's missing from its

rivals? With head-turning looks and engaging handling, plus hi-tech touches, it gives up little to its rivals in the way of prestige or practicality. So why wouldn't you choose the SEAT?

It does everything the competition can, but with added fun and style – a rare commodity in this crowded class.

OUR CHOICE: 1.6 TDI SE (£18,490)

The Leon comes with a range of impressive petrol and diesel engines, but the 1.6-litre TDI is very hard to beat, thanks to potential fuel economy of 74.3mpg. The SE specification level includes the most important standard equipment you'll need.



Commended

Skoda Octavia

SKODA knows all about winning trophies at our New Car Awards, and the latest Octavia came close to another. If you want a spacious and practical family car, this is it. Conservative design and uninspiring handling cost it victory.

Volkswagen Golf

THE Golf continues to evolve, and the latest is the best yet. It has all bases covered, from the frugal BlueMotion to the hot GTI. The only problem is that some of its rivals offer a similar package at more attractive prices.

Best MPV SEAT Alhambra

Britain's Best New Cars 2013



Why it won...

BIG is beautiful with full-size MPVs, and the Alhambra's interior is just that. With lots of legroom, flexible seating and a decent boot, the SEAT takes some beating – this is the third year running it has won the award.

What makes the boxy people mover such an unbeatable proposition? Well,

it's not the most stylish MPV around, but if you rank practicality above all else, look no further. It's also great value, as it undercuts the near identical VW Sharan's price and comes with the same excellent engines and interior.

With cars this big, sliding rear doors are a must, and the SEAT duly obliges,

unlike its Ford Galaxy and S-MAX rivals. The doors make it easy for your family to climb in and out, even in tight car parking spaces, and all Alhambras come with standard parking sensors.

If you think this sounds too sensible, don't be put off. The Alhambra drives remarkably well, so you won't feel like

a bus driver at the wheel. Its tall body and raised driving position give you a great view of the road, taking the stress out of tricky urban commutes and long motorway drives. In short, if you're buying an MPV, don't put pen to paper until you've tried the SEAT – chances are, it'll fit the bill perfectly.

OUR CHOICE: 2.0 TDI SE 140 (£26,915)

All engines in the Alhambra range are impressive, but the efficient 2.0-litre TDI 140 diesel is the pick of the bunch. When it comes to value for money, mid-range SE specification is the one to go for – it gives you everything you need and nothing you don't.



Commended

Ford S-MAX

BETTER to drive and more stylish than the SEAT, but not as practical. The Ford is the class leader for driver appeal, but a lack of sliding rear doors hinders you in tight spaces, while the third row of seats is a little cramped compared to the SEAT.

Renault Grand Scenic

FEW car makers can claim to have invented an entire class, but Renault has been an MPV pioneer for over three decades. The Grand Scenic is smart, practical and good to drive. We think it's the best compact seven-seater around.

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Car of the Year SEAT Leon

Why it won...

AFTER years of watching its Volkswagen and Skoda sister brands hog the prizes, SEAT has landed the biggest of them all.

The Auto Express Car of the Year has to be a class leader in its own right, so any model capable of putting the combined might of BMW's 1 Series, Skoda's Octavia and VW's Golf in the shade was always going to be in with a good shout when it came to the big one.

The new Leon takes the best elements of its VW Group stablemates and improves on them. This award-winning recipe combines the space and interior quality of the Golf with the affordability and solidity of the Octavia. Add SEAT's typically sporty handling and a healthy slug of Latin styling flair, and you have a compact family car to trump them all.

Want something practical and frugal? SEAT has the answer. Want to go fast and look good? Look no further. From fuel miser to full-on hot hatch, there's a Leon catering to every taste, and they all come with attractive price tags and plenty of kit. Such a strong blend of talents makes this car the best all-rounder in the compact family class.

Winning Car of the Year can be a burden, because it can be hard to live up to future expectations, but SEAT should have few worries. With the sleek, three-door Leon SC model now available and the ST estate waiting in the wings, this won't be a one-hit wonder.



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SEAT

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