For full reviews of all cars go to myccc.co.uk/towcarawards



# 1425-1579kg class winner

Our second-lightest weight division runs the gamut from estates and tourers to 4x4s, so the best from our tests should include something for every caravanner

The Passat Estate is a versatile machine, towing or driving solo with ease. Its luggage capacity makes it great for families

**"The Passat pulled its Swift caravan from 30-60mph in just 11 seconds"**

## Volkswagen Passat Estate

2.0 TDI 177 Bluemotion Technology Sport

| | |
|---|---|
| Price | £27,145 |
| Target Price | £24,807 |
| Kerbweight | 1558kg |
| 85% match | 1324kg |
| Max towing weight | 1800kg |
| Towball limit | 90kg |

THE VOLKSWAGEN PASSAT is another serial winner. For the third year in a row the Passat Estate has topped the second weight category.

Its looks may not stand out from the crowd, but what the Passat lacks in individuality it makes up for in ability. As a tow car, daily commuter or the family taxi, the VW quietly and efficiently gets on with the job.

The VW's towing credentials are what we'll concentrate on here, and after two years at the top of the class, they were never in doubt. Stability at speed is excellent. High winds made some of the most challenging towing conditions we've experienced at the Tow Car Awards, but only slight steering corrections were necessary, even when pulling a caravan with no stabiliser and the AL-KO ATC system disabled. ATC data shows how well the Passat coped with high winds and with speeds above the legal limit.

The punch from VW's latest generation 2.0-litre diesel means reaching 60mph won't take long. The Passat pulled its Swift caravan from 30-60mph in just 11 seconds.

The VW is a practical car, too. With seats up, there are 603 litres of space to fill which was enough for all our test load of holiday luggage. With seats down, that expands to 1731 litres.

In everyday driving, the VW continues to make your life easy, thanks to a comfortable ride and excellent refinement. It's very quiet at speed, and a sound driving position means long journeys are no chore.Its official combined economy of 60.1mpg is impressive for a car of this size, and Sport models come well equipped.

| | |
|---|---|
| Towing | ★★★★★ |
| Solo | ★★★★○ |
| Practicality | ★★★★○ |
| Buying and owning | ★★★★★ |
| Verdict | ★★★★★ |

The Passat Estate is a very capable all-rounder with no major flaws.

For weights and specifications of every car, turn to page 72

## Mazda 6 Tourer

2.2D 150 SE-L

| | |
|---|---|
| Price | £23,345 |
| Target Price | £22,205 |
| Kerbweight | 1578kg |
| 85% match | 1341kg |
| Max towing weight | 1600kg |
| Towball limit | 75kg |

THE MAZDA 6 makes a more immediate impression than the anonymous but competent Passat, but it doesn't tick quite so many boxes.

Up to the legal limit, the 6 hardly seemed affected by crosswinds, but when pushed up to 70mph it moved around more than the VW.

Although we found room for every item of our luggage load, there's less space than in the Passat Estate and the ride is less comfortable.

Still, the keen price and long list of kit makes the 6 Tourer good value.

| | |
|---|---|
| Towing | ★★★★○ |
| Solo | ★★★★○ |
| Practicality | ★★★○○ |
| Buying and owning | ★★★★○ |
| Verdict | ★★★★○ |

An entertaining and stylish estate that tows very well.

## Volkswagen CC

2.0 TDI 140 Bluemotion Technology GT

| | |
|---|---|
| Price | £26,995 |
| Target Price | £24,404 |
| Kerbweight | 1550kg |
| 85% match | 1318kg |
| Max towing weight | 1800kg |
| Towball limit | 90kg |

THE CC PUTS style ahead of space, but if the kids have long since left home, it makes a great tow car.

It's every bit as stable as the Passat Estate – in fact, it was ahead on some judges' score sheets.

The drivers' impressions and data from the AL-KO ATC system show how composed the Volkswagen is at speed, even in strong crosswinds, and the lane-change test was tackled with confidence and composure.

The CC made a good fist of the hill start on a challenging 1-in-6 slope, too.

| | |
|---|---|
| Towing | ★★★★★ |
| Solo | ★★★★○ |
| Practicality | ★★★○○ |
| Buying and owning | ★★★○○ |
| Verdict | ★★★★○ |

The CC offers good looks with the ability to back up the style.

## Mazda 6 2.0 165 Sport 4dr £23,515

THE 6 TOOK 15.5 seconds to go from 30-60mph. In the lane change it felt in charge, even on faster runs. At motorway speeds minor steering tweaks coped with strong crosswinds.

| | |
|---|---|
| Towing | ★★★★○ |
| Solo | ★★★○○ |
| Practicality | ★★★○○ |
| Buying and owning | ★★★★○ |
| Verdict | ★★★★○ |

Stable and good value.

## Hyundai i30 Tourer 1.6 CRDi Premium Auto £24,025

THE i30'S AUTO gearbox made the hill start easy, and the boot took all but one item of test luggage. But the i30 lost points in the lane-change test and wandered in crosswinds.

| | |
|---|---|
| Towing | ★★★○○ |
| Solo | ★★★○○ |
| Practicality | ★★★○○ |
| Buying and owning | ★★★★○ |
| Verdict | ★★★○○ |

Susceptible to crosswinds.

## Volvo V40 D2 SE Nav £23,070

THE V40 LOOKS great, but at high speeds its suspension lacked control, and it moved around in crosswinds. Cabin space is OK, but the boot didn't take all the holiday luggage.

| | |
|---|---|
| Towing | ★★★○○ |
| Solo | ★★★★○ |
| Practicality | ★★○○○ |
| Buying and owning | ★★★★○ |
| Verdict | ★★★○○ |

A stylish, economical but slow tow car.

## Toyota Auris 1.6 Excel CVT £20,250

THE AURIS GAVE a good account of itself. Strong brakes stopped it in just 10.3m from 30mph with a caravan in tow. Solo, though, the Auris is dull, and the cabin isn't spacious.

| | |
|---|---|
| Towing | ★★★○○ |
| Solo | ★★○○○ |
| Practicality | ★★★○○ |
| Buying and owning | ★★★○○ |
| Verdict | ★★★○○ |

An unexciting but competent tow car.

## Chevrolet Cruze Station Wagon 1.7 VCDi 130 LT £19,225

THE CRUZE'S 1200kg towing limit means you can't tow an 85 per cent match – a shame, given its respectable scores. At high speeds it held a straight course even in a stiff wind.

| | |
|---|---|
| Towing | ★★★○○ |
| Solo | ★★★○○ |
| Practicality | ★★○○○ |
| Buying and owning | ★★★○○ |
| Verdict | ★★★○○ |

Inexpensive and capable.

## Vauxhall Mokka 1.4T Tech Line 4x4 £18,259

SOME JUDGES FELT nervous towing with the Mokka in strong winds, though it hung on well in the lane-change test. It didn't shine in the hill start, but did 30-60mph in 17.9 seconds.

| | |
|---|---|
| Towing | ★★★○○ |
| Solo | ★★○○○ |
| Practicality | ★★○○○ |
| Buying and owning | ★★★○○ |
| Verdict | ★★○○○ |

Looks good but not great to drive.





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