

Overall winner

The lightest overall winner in the history of the Tow Car Awards, the Skoda Octavia takes all the laurels for its superb style, drive, pulling power and value



Overall winner
Skoda Octavia
2.0 TDI CR 150PS Elegance

“The Octavia beats all other class winners for value”

The Skoda might be classed as a small hatchback, but its boot space is larger than those in many estate models

Skoda Octavia

2.0 TDI CR 150PS Elegance	
Price	£21,990
Target Price	£20,819
Kerbweight	1330kg
85% match	1131kg
Max towing weight	1600kg
Towball limit	75kg

THE JUDGES HAD to think long and hard when it came to choosing this year's overall champion. With three out of five weight classes awarded to new models this year, the strength in depth has never been greater.

That makes the Skoda Octavia's win all the more remarkable. Not only did it see off the new VW Golf, ending a run of four straight trophies in the lightest weight class, but it has been given the nod over other brilliant cars

such as the BMW 330d Touring and Jaguar XF Sportbrake.

Great though these cars may be to drive, the Octavia has them well beaten for value. For around half the price of the Jag, for example, the Skoda is much more than half the car. Even in its top-specification Elegance guise, the Octavia costs £21,990. That's a very keen price for a car with such a long list of standard equipment.

More important, it's not a lot to pay for a car that tows as brilliantly as the Octavia. It's stable at speed, and kept its composure in the lane-change test however brutally it was driven. The 2.0 TDI is an excellent engine for towing, with pulling power to cope easily with any suitable match.

Yes, the Octavia's 1330kg kerbweight makes it the lightest overall winner in the seven-year history of the Tow Car Awards, so it's only suited to pulling

relatively light tourers. But caravan manufacturers build desirable lightweight 'vans, such as the Swift Alpine 2, and countless preowned models make suitable matches, so owning a car that rests easy on the scales needn't be a barrier to touring.

When you're not towing, the Octavia's low weight becomes an advantage, contributing to the car's excellent ride and handling and official combined fuel economy of 68.9mpg. If you think light equates to small, the Octavia will make you think again.

It's huge inside – easily big enough to stand comparison with much more expensive family cars. The boot mocks the Skoda's classification as a small hatchback: luggage space is more generous than in most of the estate cars in this year's tests.

It all adds up to a very compelling package. The Skoda tows brilliantly, is extremely practical, good to drive and costs less than you'd think. Most importantly, it proves that a brilliant tow car doesn't need to be heavy, thirsty or expensive.

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

Past winners where are they now?



2007
Volkswagen Passat Estate
2.0 TDI Sport 4Motion
Price new £22,337
Typical price now **£7,520**
07-plate, 50,000 miles



2008
Ford Mondeo Estate
2.0 TDCi Titanium auto
Price new £22,655
Typical price now **£7,435**
08-plate, 40,000 miles



2009
Volvo XC60
D5 SE Geartronic
Price new £28,150
Typical price now **£15,595**
09-plate, 30,000 miles



2010
Land Rover Discovery 4
3.0 TDV6 XS
Price new £41,740
Typical price now **£30,445**
10-plate, 20,000 miles



2011
Volkswagen Passat Estate
2.0 TDI 170 Bluemotion Sport
Price new £26,010
Typical price now **£17,010**
11-plate, 10,000 miles



2012
Jaguar XF
2.2D Premium Luxury
Price new £37,205
Typical price now **£25,635**
12-plate, 10,000 miles

Used prices from www.whatcar.com