

# THE BUYERS GUIDE

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## In the family way

In this month's Buyers Guide, the team look at the options in the small family car market

There once was a time when the small family car was either a Toyota Tazz or a Volkswagen Citi Golf. Times have moved on and so have various characteristics of the small family car. In this month's Buyers Guide we list 22 options available in the market from the Chevrolet Aveo to the Volkswagen Polo. The choices are wider than ever and the team even debated whether the category should now also include small SUVs and crossovers, but we have saved those for another day.

The priorities in this segment have also changed, with safety features becoming

increasingly important, as have things like fuel consumption trip computers and iPod connections. Some of these choices even include full infotainment systems with satnav although in this category many people are more likely to opt for the regular portable satnav device, for now anyway.

Boot space is also becoming more important as people ditch the image of having a small runabout with a Venter trailer stuck on the back. Today, the tow bar appears to be only for carrying a bike rack, although be careful that you know the limits of the tow hitch. You will be surprised how much damage you can do to your car if you exceed the towing ability of the gearbox and sometimes it only takes one bike.

Whatever your needs are when it comes to buying a small family car, make sure the car matches the requirements of you, your family and your budget.

Think about every conceivable situation, make a list and then head off to the dealer. The last thing you want is to find that the child seat does not fit in the car or, if the child is still in the planning stage, that the weekend away luggage won't fit in the boot.

### A to Z Small family cars

### MN Top 5

1. Ford Fiesta
2. Renault Clio
3. VW Polo
4. Honda Jazz
5. Kia Rio

### MN Top Pre-Owned Pick

1. VW Polo
2. Ford Fiesta
3. Honda Jazz
4. Hyundai i20
5. Kia Rio



**CHEVROLET AVEO** MN verdict **★★**

The model has been around for a while now, and is getting a little long in the tooth, yet it continues to sell reasonably well thanks largely to its keen pricing. Offering a high level of standard equipment, it is perhaps not the first choice among a sea of newer offerings, but those seeking a vehicle for a bargain price will have a lot of car for the money. Interior finishes err on the cheap side while engine refinement also lags behind rivals.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 173g/km **Power:** 77kW  
**Consumption:** 8.8l/100km **Torque:** 145Nm  
**Price range:** R129,800 – R159,300  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.6 LS sedan



**CHEVROLET SONIC** MN verdict **★★**

It can be considered a stop gap between the Aveo and Cruze hatch, yet offers similar specification levels to the smaller sibling. The front end design, with its four circular headlights, is said to have been inspired by a motorbike. The hatch variant boasts a better looking body form than the sedan and the 1.6l engine offers adequate power for the daily commute. However, steer clear of the automatic transmission as it causes the engine to scream excessively on kickdown.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 155g/km **Power:** 88kW  
**Consumption:** 7.8l/100km **Torque:** 155Nm  
**Price range:** R178,600-R200,700  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.6 LS hatch



**CITROEN C3** MN verdict **★★★**

Recently updated and featuring a host of frugal engines, including a 1.4l turbo diesel, the C3 is stylish with quirky features such as the optional zenith windscreen. The interior is spacious with good head and legroom, but storage nooks and crannies are few and far between. Resale value has never been the marque's strongest point and, as such, could be its biggest Achilles heel. Dynamically, the vehicle tends to wallow but a good ride quality is the upshot.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 136g/km **Power:** 88kW  
**Consumption:** 7.0l/100km **Torque:** 160Nm  
**Price range:** R172,900-R231,900  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.6 VTI Seduction



**CHERY J3** MN verdict **★**

Featuring larger dimensions than most of its competitors, it also features a lower price entry point. It boasts a high level of standard equipment, but refinement is certainly not in its arsenal. The engine feels lacklustre, while reliability and longevity remain to be seen. There are great number of other options available at the price, so the J3 has its work cut out for it.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 183g/km **Power:** 87kW  
**Consumption:** 9.2l/100km **Torque:** 147Nm  
**Price:** R184,900  
*Our pick of the range:* One model only



**DAIHATSU SIRION** MN verdict **★★**

Ageing and no longer the good value proposition it used to be, the Sirion still offers no-nonsense motoring with decent space and economical petrol engines. The design will not appeal to most tastes and the model is in dire need of an update. The larger of the two engines, the 1.5l, offers sprightly performance thanks to the vehicle's overall low kerb weight. Boot space is paltry, so if this is high on your criteria list then you must look elsewhere.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 6.1l/100km **Power:** 67kW  
**Consumption:** 6.8l/100km **Torque:** 120Nm  
**Price range:** R149,995-R164,995  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.3 Sport



**FIAT PUNTO** MN verdict **★★**

Offering a decent level of standard equipment and relatively contemporary styling, the model recently received an update, including a 1.4l Multiair engine. With light driver controls, it makes for an ideal urban commuter. Interior finishes are a tad cheap, but overall pricing remains on the keen side. It faces steep opposition from rival manufacturers, though. It does, however, come with a three-year/100,000km maintenance plan.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 133g/km **Power:** 77kW  
**Consumption:** 6.8l/100km **Torque:** 130Nm  
**Price range:** R162,900-R192,990  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.4 Multiair Easy



**FORD FIESTA** MN verdict **★★★★**

It comes with great styling, good standard equipment on higher models, and powerful yet frugal 1.0l EcoBoost and 1.6l TDCi engines. Driving dynamics are one of the model's highlights while refinement, even with the three-cylinder EcoBoost engine, is outstanding. Higher specification also gets you the brilliant Sync infotainment system, which is intuitive to use.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 99g/km **Power:** 92kW  
**Consumption:** 5.1l/100km **Torque:** 170Nm  
**Price range:** R164,700-R254,500  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.0l EcoBoost Trend



**HONDA BALLADE** MN verdict **★★★**

Built in India and offering decent space and specification levels, the Ballade is a good choice for those shopping for a good quality sedan bearing the Honda nameplate. Some of the plastics used are not up to Jazz standards and the pricing of the model is not exactly what one would deem cheap. It still comes with a standard four-year/60,000km maintenance plan and being a Honda, residual value should remain favourable.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 148g/km **Power:** 88kW  
**Consumption:** 7.5l/100km **Torque:** 145Nm  
**Price range:** R173,800-R218,200  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.5 Elegance



**HONDA JAZZ** MN verdict **★★★★**

Still one of the best offerings in the segment, the Jazz offers good build quality, generous space and versatility, and peppy performance from its i-VTEC equipped engines. Residual value is excellent, so buying into the range comes with added peace of mind. The range is also popular in the pre-owned market and most are still in good condition.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 151g/km **Power:** 88kW  
**Consumption:** 7.6l/100km **Torque:** 145Nm  
**Price range:** R165,000-R262,400  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.5 Elegance



**HYUNDAI ACCENT** MN verdict **★★★**

Essentially an i20 sedan, the Accent is well put together, offers excellent specification at the price and decent performance from the engine. Pricing is relatively keen while the range also boasts one of the best warranties in the business at five-years/150,000km. It does, however, face some in-house opposition in the form of the Kia Rio sedan.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 145g/km **Power:** 91kW  
**Consumption:** 7.0l/100km **Torque:** 156Nm  
**Price range:** R183,900-R204,900  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.6 Fluid



**HYUNDAI i20** MN verdict **★★★★**

This remains a popular choice among rental and individual buyers and, much like its Accent sibling, has a comprehensive list of standard specification at the price. The 1.4l petrol engines are adequate and the six-speed manual transmission is superb. While the diesel offers excellent fuel economy, it is unrefined and lacklustre in the performance stakes.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 104g/km **Power:** 73kW  
**Consumption:** 6.8l/100km **Torque:** 136Nm  
**Price range:** R147,900-R199,900  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.4 Glide



**KIA RIO** MN verdict **★★★★**

Stylish looks, good specification levels, and excellent passenger space, the Rio has a great deal to offer the small family car segment. The 1.2l lacks power, but is keenly priced, while the 1.4 TEC will appease those looking for a great deal of car at the price. It takes the fight directly to the Volkswagen Polo, offering better specification levels and a comprehensive five-year/150,000km factory warranty.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 151g/km **Power:** 79kW  
**Consumption:** 7.6l/100km **Torque:** 135Nm  
**Price range:** R155,995-R200,995  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.4 TEC



**MAZDA 2** MN verdict **★★★**

Getting long in the tooth and with the new model likely to make its debut in other markets next year, the baby Mazda offers excellent driving dynamics, particularly in the instance of the 1.5l Individual model. It has over the years become expensive and lacks the technology currently offered in the Ford Fiesta. There also other new contenders to consider in the segment.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 140g/km **Power:** 76kW  
**Consumption:** 7.0l/100km **Torque:** 136Nm  
**Price range:** R171,600-R254,000  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.5 Individual



**NISSAN ALMERA** MN verdict **★★★**

With masses of space and specification at the price, the Almera offers a great deal to the market. While styling is not something that one might deem progressive, under those demure looks is a vehicle to appease both the individual and rental companies alike. Resale remains to be seen, but at the current price the vehicle should present a bargain buy in a few years' time.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 84l/100km **Power:** 73kW  
**Consumption:** 8.6l/100km **Torque:** 134Nm  
**Price range:** R165,000-R175,500  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.5 Acenta



**NISSAN LIVINA** MN verdict **★★★**

It might share most of its underpinnings with the now defunct Tiida, but the Livina remains a good proposition for those families looking for a spacious, cost-effective option. The X-Gear offers those pseudo off-road looks, which remain popular among individuals who want something a little different to the conventional.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 150g/km **Power:** 80kW  
**Consumption:** 8.6l/100km **Torque:** 153Nm  
**Price range:** R168,600-R205,800  
*Our pick of the range:* X-Gear



**OPEL CORSA** MN verdict **★★**

Recently updated with a 1.4l turbo-charged engine, the model is now a sprightlier performer than its forebear. Unfortunately, the good resale value has become pricey and the interior finishes lag behind those of competitors. Save for the high-performance OPC variants, the Corsa certainly has its work cut out for it in the market.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 70l/100km **Power:** 77kW  
**Consumption:** 7.0l/100km **Torque:** 174Nm  
**Price range:** R195,400-R343,200  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.4 Essentia



**PEUGEOT 208** MN verdict **★★★**

A worthy successor to the 207 model range, the 208 rates among the better offerings in the market with decent pricing and good specification levels that also include a standard five-year/60,000km service plan. The 1.2l three-cylinder engine is frugal and surprisingly sprightly, even at the rarefied Highveld altitude. Even among a sea of other competitors, the Pug is still a great option.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 105g/km **Power:** 60kW  
**Consumption:** 5.4l/100km **Torque:** 118Nm  
**Price range:** R147,900-R259,900  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.2 Active



**RENAULT CLIO 4** MN verdict **★★★★**

Great styling, equipment, and a frugal three-cylinder engine make it little wonder that the new Clio is a finalist in the SA Car of the Year competition. Pricing is its biggest drawback and the model has had a warm reception among the motoring media and the public at large. While resale value is still not the brand's strongest point, the Clio is a great buy.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 105g/km **Power:** 66kW  
**Consumption:** 5.4l/100km **Torque:** 135Nm  
**Price range:** R152,900-R189,900  
*Our pick of the range:* Dynamique



**SUZUKI SWIFT** MN verdict **★★★**

A great overall package with good specification levels in the instance of the 1.4 GLS model, the Swift remains an undiscovered gem among its rivals. While it has a paltry boot compared to some of its competitors, it does very well in other areas. The engine may lack some get up and go, but it more than makes up for it with its thrifty drinking habits. As far as resale values go, it should make a good pre-owned in the future too.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 132g/km **Power:** 70kW  
**Consumption:** 6.6l/100km **Torque:** 130Nm  
**Price range:** R163,900-R221,900  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.4 GLS



**TATA MANZA** MN verdict **★**

Good space is perhaps one of its selling points, but overall build quality lags behind its competitors. Engine refinement is also below par and, at the price, there other options that one can consider. Resale value has not been the marque's strongest point, so the model is more than likely to depreciate quite considerably over the years.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 163g/km **Power:** 66kW  
**Consumption:** 8.4l/100km **Torque:** 116Nm  
**Price range:** R127,995-R145,995  
*Our pick of the range:* Ignis



**TOYOTA YARIS** MN verdict **★★**

With a less complex model line-up, the Yaris seems to be lagging behind competitors when it comes to standard specification. Pricing, although rationalised recently to bring it in line with rivals, is still higher than most. While the Hybrid offers good all-round economy, it is rather expensive. That said, it remains a solid vehicle, but there are a fair number of cheaper alternatives on the market.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 131g/km **Power:** 73kW  
**Consumption:** 6.4l/100km **Torque:** 125Nm  
**Price range:** R145,600-R261,400  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.3 Xs



**VOLKSWAGEN POLO** MN verdict **★★★★**

A firm favourite in the segment thanks to its high build quality and good residual value, the Polo is somewhat of a no-brainer option in the segment. It has a comprehensive range and a good mix of petrol and diesel engines to suit most tastes. While there are other models in the segment that offer better value at the price, the Polo remains a great choice.  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emission:** 144g/km **Power:** 63kW  
**Consumption:** 7.3l/100km **Torque:** 132Nm  
**Price range:** R172,200-R289,600  
*Our pick of the range:* 1.4 Comfortline