

THE BUYERS GUIDE

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RATING THE CLASS • USED & BEST BUYS

Run with the hip kids

More than ever, buying a compact car need not mean sacrificing on the cool factor

THE supermini or fashionable hatchback segment remains a popular choice among those looking for a compact car with oodles of style. This month we look at this relatively new genre of compact hatches at various price points that are ultimately deemed by the team to be some of the most popular and stylish superminis that you can get your hands on. There might be more exclusive models to choose from, however those need one's budget to stretch rather far, so we have decided to keep the list as relevant and as accessible as possible. So if you are looking for something that is practical, economical, with a fair amount of performance and that added cool factor, then you would do well to look at the options we have put together for you.

A to Z Superminis

MN Top 5

1. Mini Cooper
2. Audi A1
3. Mazda2
4. Volkswagen Polo
5. Opel Corsa

MN Top Pre-Owned Pick

1. Volkswagen Polo
2. Honda Jazz
3. Toyota Yaris
4. Ford Fiesta
5. Hyundai i20



ALFA ROMEO MITO MN verdict **★★★**

While it never quite upset the apple cart of the Mini Cooper since it was launched a couple of years ago, the Mito is a great all-rounder. It has Italian styling which, granted, may not be to everyone's taste in this instance, and excellent driving dynamics. The QV variant is a hoot to drive, but there are other more powerful rival models that you could consider at the price. That said, only dyed-in-the-wool fans of the brand would opt for this one over its rivals.

CO₂ emission: 139g/km **Power:** 125kW
Consumption: 9.2l/100km **Torque:** 250Nm
Range pricing: R295,400-R315,900
Our pick of the range: QV



AUDI A1 MN verdict **★★★★½**

The A1 is the smallest model that the brand makes, yet it manages to ooze the style of many of its siblings. Interior appointments are of high, if minimalist, quality while the engines are small capacity turbocharged units in either diesel or petrol. The range is headlined by the powerful, rather expensive, S1 variant pocket rocket. The more garden variety models do a superb job, while the turbodiesel in particular offers commendable fuel economy.

CO₂ emission: 119g/km **Power:** 90kW
Consumption: 6.4l/100km **Torque:** 200Nm
Range pricing: R247,000-R449,500
Our pick of the range: 1.4T SE auto



CITROEN C1 MN verdict **Untested**

A more stylish proposition than its predecessor, the new C1 is a funky runabout geared more towards the fairer sex, thanks to those pastel-like exterior hues with matching interior materials. Sadly, the model is priced out of the market compared to rivals, no thanks to the exchange rate that continues to pound our beleaguered local currency. Thus, as great as the package might be, the pricing remains the model's biggest Achilles heel.

CO₂ emission: 99g/km **Power:** 60kW
Consumption: 5.2l/100km **Torque:** 118Nm
Range pricing: R168,900-R194,900
Our pick of the range: Untested



FIAT 500 MN verdict **★★★**

Cinquecento (500 in Italian) remains a cute proposition steeped in history, thanks to its predecessor that turned the market on its head back in the 1950s. It was a small, cost-effective mode of transport that remains popular with fans of the Fiat brand. The latest model has borrowed many of the original's design elements, but with contemporary items and finishes. Entry level models still offer great value, but go easy on the options which can inflate the price.

CO₂ emission: 119g/km **Power:** 51kW
Consumption: 6.1l/100km **Torque:** 102Nm
Range pricing: R175,400-R273,940
Our pick of the range: 1.2 Lounge



FORD FIESTA MN verdict **★★★**

Perhaps getting a little long in the tooth now, the Fiesta remains a great proposition. It comes well equipped for a car in its segment and the award-winning EcoBoost engine offers exemplary performance and economy, with the exception of Powershift equipped versions. Titanium specification is rather pricey and you are better off buying the superb ST variant instead. Overall though, the range offers above average driving dynamics and fun factor.

CO₂ emission: 99g/km **Power:** 92kW
Consumption: 5.9l/100km **Torque:** 170Nm
Range pricing: R194,030-R275,900
Our pick of the range: 1.0T Trend



HONDA JAZZ MN verdict **★★★**

A more youthful buyer-biased proposition than its predecessor, the latest Jazz takes the baton from its forebear quite admirably. Boasting sharper design lines, a more spruced-up interior and decent performance in the 1.5l variant, little wonder it has such a loyal buyer profile. Add to this the proven underpinnings that have seen it win quality surveys around the globe, not to mention the practicality quotient, and its appeal is unsurprising.

CO₂ emission: 140g/km **Power:** 88kW
Consumption: 7.2l/100km **Torque:** 145Nm
Range pricing: R179,900-R264,900
Our pick of the range: Elegance manual



HYUNDAI GRAND i10 MN verdict **★★★**

Yet another surprise package in the segment, the Grand i10 adds all the fundamentals that made its predecessor, the Getz, such a great package. It has decent space, is well specified and reasonably priced when considering the specification levels on offer. Performance is more than adequate while remaining economical. It will appeal to those looking for a vehicle with good equipment levels, is relatively cost-effective to run and with comprehensive after-sales backup.

CO₂ emission: 130g/km **Power:** 64kW
Consumption: 7.1l/100km **Torque:** 120Nm
Range pricing: R147,900-R168,900
Our pick of the range: Fluid manual



HYUNDAI i20 MN verdict **★★★**

Featuring a more Eurocentric design than its predecessor, the i20 is also more spacious and features a long list of standard equipment in the top specification variants. The drivetrain could do with modern turbo technology, which is perhaps the only area in which the model is lagging behind. The rest of the package is sorted indeed and a great proposition for those looking for a stylish, well put together hatchback.

CO₂ emission: 147g/km **Power:** 74kW
Consumption: 7.8l/100km **Torque:** 133Nm
Range pricing: R184,900-R214,900
Our pick of the range: Fluid manual



KIA RIO MN verdict **★★★**

Recently updated, the Rio remains a great package with good equipment levels and excellent tactile quality. It has decent interior and boot space, so those with small children will have no qualms about putting them in the back seat. However, much like the i20, the model finds itself lagging behind the competition in the powerplant stakes. That aside though, it remains a good proposition for those in the market — just avoid the lacklustre automatic variant if possible.

CO₂ emission: 151g/km **Power:** 79kW
Consumption: 7.6l/100km **Torque:** 135Nm
Range pricing: R176,995-R224,995
Our pick of the range: Tec manual



MAZDA2 MN verdict **★★★★**

The new Mazda2 may have retained some of the outgoing model's design elements, but this is easily one of the best models to come from the marque. It has a great interior not dissimilar to the Mazda3 and excellent driving dynamics. That 1.5l turbodiesel engine is fantastic as it offers exemplary refinement and great driveability via the automatic gearbox. It is, quite possibly, one of the best packages in the segment and it will be interesting to see how it fares among its rivals.

CO₂ emission: 89g/km **Power:** 77kW
Consumption: 4.4l/100km **Torque:** 250Nm
Range pricing: R188,000-R259,900
Our pick of the range: Hazumi



MG3 MN verdict **Untested**

The Chinese-owned MG brand has not had a great spell since relaunching a few years back. Its MG3 hatchback is perhaps one of the best looking models in the company's current portfolio. It comes with only one engine derivative, a 1.5l petrol, which is not the most powerful. Depending on trim, there are high specification and personalisation levels on offer if you so wish. The model remains a fairly unknown entity, so its reliability and longevity remains to be seen.

CO₂ emission: 138g/km **Power:** 78kW
Consumption: 7.1l/100km **Torque:** 135Nm
Range pricing: R145,000-R179,900
Our pick of the range: Untested



MINI COOPER MN verdict **★★★★★**

The latest Mini Cooper has grown both in stature and refinement and has adopted a great number of BMW elements in the interior. Power from the 1.5l turbo petrol engine is excellent and the dynamics of the model still hark back to the original with its go-kart handling antics. Overall, though, the new model is a more refined proposition than its predecessor, which is perhaps not a bad thing for those looking for a less compromising ride quality in their vehicle.

CO₂ emission: 105g/km **Power:** 100kW
Consumption: 5.4l/100km **Torque:** 230Nm
Range pricing: R303,500-R398,823
Our pick of the range: Cooper



OPEL ADAM MN verdict **★★★**

Opel's Adam is one of the most stylish models to come from the marque and comes with a number of customisation options. The 1.0l turbo, three-potter offers good performance and economy, while interior appointments are a mix of chic and high quality materials. Rear quarters and boot space are a bit of an issue, so those with family car aspirations need not apply. That said, the Adam makes for a welcome alternative to the current crop of superminis on the market.

CO₂ emission: 119g/km **Power:** 85kW
Consumption: 9.2l/100km **Torque:** 170Nm
Range pricing: R189,900-R232,900
Our pick of the range: Jam



OPEL CORSA MN verdict **★★★★**

Featuring a sharper front façade, well laid out interior and a high specification, the new Corsa is a far cry from the previous generation model. Offered with the 1.0l three-cylinder turbocharged engine, which has decent performance and economy, it is also one of the most refined propositions in the market. It now has the clout to challenge the VW Polo and Ford Fiesta on almost every level, which bodes well for those looking for an alternative in the segment.

CO₂ emission: 99g/km **Power:** 85kW
Consumption: 4.9l/100km **Torque:** 170Nm
Range pricing: R185,500-R236,300
Our pick of the range: Cosmo



RENAULT CLIO MN verdict **★★★**

The Clio remains one of the most stylish models in the segment with a great engine and relatively palatable pricing point. There are some build quality issues but there is no denying the overall value for money that the model represents. However, it does have to contend with its own sibling, the already brilliant Sandero hatch, although this does not have the design cache that the Clio so easily commands.

CO₂ emission: 105g/km **Power:** 70kW
Consumption: 5.4l/100km **Torque:** 150Nm
Range pricing: R167,900-R339,900
Our pick of the range: Dynamique



TOYOTA YARIS MN verdict **Untested**

Having been given an extensive cosmetic makeover, the Yaris is now funkier and more "out there" than its pre-facelift self. Space remains a highlight, but perceived quality lags the Koreans, as does the overall specification levels. The hybrid is decidedly expensive, while the petrol engines offer paltry performance compared to its rivals. After-sales and backup will remain among the best in the country, but the model does face stiff opposition.

CO₂ emission: 131g/km **Power:** 73kW
Consumption: 6.7l/100km **Torque:** 125Nm
Range pricing: R167,900-R276,300
Our pick of the range: Untested



VOLKSWAGEN POLO MN verdict **★★★★**

Easily one of the classiest models in the segment and it remains the best-selling, too. Build quality is superb, while residual values rank as one of the best in the country. TSI engines offer excellent driveability and economy, while specification in the Comfortline trim is quite exemplary. Pricing is a little steep when compared to rivals, so from a value for money perspective the Polo has its work firmly cut out for it.

CO₂ emission: 117g/km **Power:** 66kW
Consumption: 5.9l/100km **Torque:** 160Nm
Range pricing: R198,600-R315,100
Our pick of the range: 1.2 TSI Comfortline



VOLKSWAGEN UP! MN verdict **★★★**

One of the most stylish hatches in its segment, the Up! definitely quells all the negative connotations that entry-level city cars are too cramped and downright ugly. It features the sort of build quality we have come to expect of the brand, while the 1.0l three-cylinder normally aspirated engine manages to lug the little car around with relative ease. The top specification model offers excellent equipment levels and is the one to choose in the range.

CO₂ emission: 108g/km **Power:** 50kW
Consumption: 5.6l/100km **Torque:** 95Nm
Range pricing: R133,500-R140,500
Our pick of the range: Move Up!

WHAT'S COMING



Toyota Aygo

With many of the manufacturers having either refreshed their models, or launched an all-new model, there is perhaps no better time than the present to shop for one of these models. Audi's A1 will in May receive a makeover similar to that on the S1, which includes LED lighting technology among other things. The Opel Adam's open-top version, the Swing Top, will be made available at some point, although no official timelines were given at the time of going to print. The Toyota Aygo is currently under strong consideration for SA, although the current exchange rate means the model is at this moment not feasible for local introduction. Meanwhile the Mini range will be bolstered with a high-performance variant in the form of the John Cooper Works (JCW) edition later in the year. Smart will also be launching its ForTwo and ForFour city cars that now boast even funkier styling and a smoother dual clutch automatic gearbox among other things.



Smart ForTwo