

2024 COTY competition heats up, semi-finalists announced

The 2024 Car of the Year (COTY) committee has announced the eagerly awaited semi-finalists for its upcoming 38th competition, hosted by the South African Guild of Mobility Journalists (SAGMJ) and sponsored by Old Mutual Insure (OMI) for the second year running.



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Garth Napier, MD of Old Mutual Insure, expressed his excitement at unveiling this year's semi-finalists, a diverse group that exemplifies innovation and excellence in the automotive industry. "We anticipate a highly competitive and thrilling competition this year as the validation committee meticulously evaluated each contender.

"The COTY validation committee has been diligent in selecting vehicles, ensuring they meet the eligibility rules that only entirely new model ranges, not derivatives of existing ones, qualify for entry. The sole exception is a sports derivative of an existing model range, which can compete in the performance category.



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Francesco Biondi 20 Dec 2023



For the 2024 competition, over 80 vehicles were scrutinised, with 30 meeting the stringent entry criteria. Votes cast by SAGMJ members resulted in 25 semi-finalists, a rigorous process that ensures the competition's standards are upheld. This sets the stage for a thrilling 2024 COTY competition.

"The 2024 COTY has a competitive lineup across all categories, setting the stage for fierce competition among overall and category winners," said Mabuyane Mabuza, Chairperson of the 2023 and 2024 COTY committee and vice-chairperson of the SAGMJ.

Strong representation

The 25 semi-finalists boast strong representation across all categories. Starting with the Budget and Compact category that targets accessibility for first-time buyers, the Citroen C3 is joined by the Suzuki Fronx and the Toyota Vitz.

There's heightened competition in the Compact Family from the previous year includes a newly launched luxury Chinese brand, Omoda. While the Family category welcomes the first Chinese battery-electric vehicle, the GWM Ora 03, in the COTY competition, adding a groundbreaking element to the mix and highlighting the competition's evolving landscape.

In the Premium and Luxury categories the dominance of brands like Mercedes Benz, BMW, and Lexus is evident with three, two, and one entry, respectively. The Adventure SUV category sees competition from an Indian contender, the Mahindra Scorpio N, while the 4x4 Double Cab category is represented solely by the Volkswagen Amarok this year.

In an interesting move, Ford Motor Company, the 2023 COTY overall winner with the Ford Ranger, entered its new Ranger Raptor V6 in the Performance category set to challenge high-performance derivatives from BMW, Honda, and Toyota. This competitive category promises huge excitement and anticipation.

The semi-finalists are:

Budget and Compact

- Citroen C3
- Suzuki Fronx
- Toyota Vitz

Compact Family

- Omoda C5
- Renault Captur
- Suzuki Grand Vitara
- Toyota Urban Cruiser

Family

- BMW X1
- GWM Ora 03
- Mazda CX-60
- Nissan X-Trail
- Mitsubishi Outlander

Premium

- Lexus NX
- Mercedes-Benz GLC

Luxury

- BMW 7 Series
- BMW XM
- Mercedes-Benz EQE
- Mercedes-Benz EQS

4x4 Double Cab

- Volkswagen Amarok

Adventure SUV

- Lexus LX
- Mahindra Scorpio N

Performance

- BMW M2
- Ford Ranger Raptor
- Honda Civic Type R
- Toyota Corolla GR

The rising prevalence of battery-electric vehicles (BEV) and hybrid-electric vehicles (HEV), coupled with the expansion of local infrastructure to support this sector's growth, prompted the removal of the New Energy category of the COTY competition. These vehicles will now integrate seamlessly into other qualifying categories.

"The calibre of the 2024 COTY semi-finalists is truly impressive, reflecting the industry's commitment to pushing boundaries and delivering outstanding vehicles. Best wishes to each participant as they vie for the coveted title in their respective categories," said Napier.

"Congratulations to the 2024 COTY semi-finalists for completing the rigorous selection process. Choosing the 25-vehicle lineup is challenging for our expert members, but it is the start of an exciting time in the COTY history every year. Best of luck in this year's competition, and thank you for actively participating in this superb, long-standing, and prestigious automotive event," concluded Mabuza.

January 2024 sees the COTY jury narrowing this list to finalists. These contenders undergo rigorous evaluation before the jury finalises scores, revealing the official 2024 South African Car of the Year winners in May.