# **Overall winner**

This year's winner comes from the second-lightest class, but it outweighs the rest in terms of performance



#### Volkswagen

Passat Estate 2.0 TDI 170 Bluemotion Sport

List price	£26,010
Target Price	£24,143
Kerbweight	1563kg
85% match	1329kg
Max towing weight	1800kg
Towball limit	90kg

THERE'S NO SHORTAGE of impressive towcars this year. This made choosing one overall champion a tough job.

Our judges are a demanding bunch. We want a car that tows brilliantly, is a pleasure to travel in, economical to run and easy to live with. The car that fits this brief better than any other is the Volkswagen Passat.

It's superb for towing. Some cars have the knack of relaxing the driver and the Passat is one of them. Unshakeable stability and steering that's responsive but never nervous mean you'll end long tows in the Passat feeling fresh, ready to unhitch and start enjoying your holiday.

The 168bhp 2.0-litre diesel is definitely worth paying for as opposed to the 138bhp version. With its added punch, the engine copes better with the Passat's high fifth and sixth gears, so fewer gear changes are needed to hold speed on hilly roads.

Unhitch the caravan, and those tall top gears contribute to remarkable official economy figures, with the promise of 60.1mpg on the combined cycle.

Fuel efficiency also benefits from the Stop/Start system, which cuts the engine in stationary traffic and starts it again when you're ready to move off. Carbon dioxide emissions of just 123g/km are lower than many superminis', putting the Passat in band D for Vehicle Excise Duty.

High gearing helps reduce engine noise, since the diesel is running at low revs, even at 70mph.

Volkswagen has worked hard to make the new Passat's cabin quieter, with more sound-deadening and a thicker windscreen. The effect of these measures is to make the Passat one of the quietest family cars around.

It's practical, too. There's plenty of space for a family of five, and enough room for all their luggage. Fold the back seats down and there's 1731 litres to fill.

Trying to find anything the Passat does badly is a struggle. The towing electrics could be easier to access, and some may find the cabin a little sombre, but that's about it.

Best of all, the Passat proves that a car doesn't need to be heavy or thirsty to make a great towcar. We're pleased to make this Volkswagen our overall champion for 2011.

## **Up to 1424kg** Volkswagen

Golf 2.0 TDI 140 Match 5dr

#### 1425-1574kg

### Volkswagen

Passat Estate 2.0 TDI 170 **Bluemotion Sport** 

#### 1575-1724kg

### **Ford**

Mondeo Estate 2.0 TDCi 163 Titanium Powershift

#### 1725-1899kg **BMW**

520d SE Touring auto

# 1900kg+

**Land Rover** Discovery 3.0 SDV6 XS



for towing and practical, too"