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Carsguide COTY honours Kia Rio

Kia's baby Rio has swept aside the best new cars launched in Australia in the past 12 months to take overall honours as Carsguide's 2011 Car Of The Year.

"After a rigorous selection, testing and deliberation process, I'm pleased to announce Kia Rio Si Hatch a worthy winner," said Carsguide Managing Editor, Ged Bulmer. "Car of the Year is a natural extension of our efforts to educate, inform and entertain our readers."

Paul Gover, Carsguide Senior Motoring Reporter and one of Australia's most experienced automotive journalists, added: "The Kia Rio Si Hatch is only the second Korean brand to win the award since its inception in 2007.

"Delivering an impressive blend of performance, safety and technology at a fair price we are certain it won't be the last."

After two days of intensive testing on a purpose-built proving ground and the open road the all-new Rio finished on the winner's dais ahead of a stellar field of premium cars, in some cases costing up to five times as much as the punchy little Rio.

"This just a wonderful result for Kia, not only in Australia but as a global company," Kia Motors Australia President and Chief Executive Officer Mr Chongwoo (Charlie) Kim said. "Kia is committed to delivering our customers the best _ and best value _ cars in the market.

"This prestigious award is confirmation that our goals are worthy and achievable."

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Kia Motors Australia Chief Operating Officer, Mr Tony Barlow, described the win as an outstanding recognition of the journey Kia is on, both with its brand and its models.

“With this recognition _ and other awards gathered over the past 18 months _ Kia need no longer stand in anyone’s shadow,” Mr Barlow said. “We have been planning and working to provide Australian buyers with great looking, great value cars that recognise and address the particular driving tastes of the local market.

“That work has borne fruit in the recognition of the motoring experts, like those at *Carsguide*. However, it is also providing a boon for Australian drivers in general with more manufacturers now realising the value of going the extra mile and offering drivers dynamics they really value.”

Since its Australian launch in September the Rio has won the Australia’s Best Cars Award for Small Car Under \$20,000 and has now backed that up with an outright win in Carsguide COTY. Only days ago the Rio’s 1.6-litre GDI Gamma engine was named as one of Ward’s Top Ten engines.

“Since the launch our dealer network has been delighted with the performance of the Rio 5-door hatch and are already looking forward to the arrival of the 3-door hatch and 4-door sedan early next year,” Mr Barlow said.

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