

Brand Report Card

Building one great vehicle is easy. Making a whole portfolio of excellent ones is hard. We tell you which manufacturers stand out.

by Jeff S. Bartlett

CONSISTENCY IS KEY. Our annual analysis reveals that some brands exhibit high-level performance across their lines. Many others do not.

In our 2017 brand analysis, Audi takes the top position for the second year in a row, followed by Porsche, BMW, Lexus, and Subaru. Although these are the same top five as last year, Porsche and BMW rose, and Lexus and Subaru moved down.

This year Chrysler, Acura, Infiniti, and Cadillac were the most upwardly mobile. Chrysler rose seven places, and the other three brands each moved up six places compared with last year.

Some of the standout brands benefit from a tiny roster. Tesla, the highest-ranked American brand, earns its position based on just two models. Likewise, Chrysler has one of the higher average road-test scores, but that's also based on just two models: the 300 and Pacifica (low Overall Scores keep both from being recommended). Fiat, Jeep, Mitsubishi, and Land Rover remain stubbornly stuck at the bottom of the list.

To arrive at the rankings, we averaged the Overall Scores for new cars from every major automotive brand based on the vehicles we have purchased and tested, then we ranked

them. Brands with just one tested model were omitted.

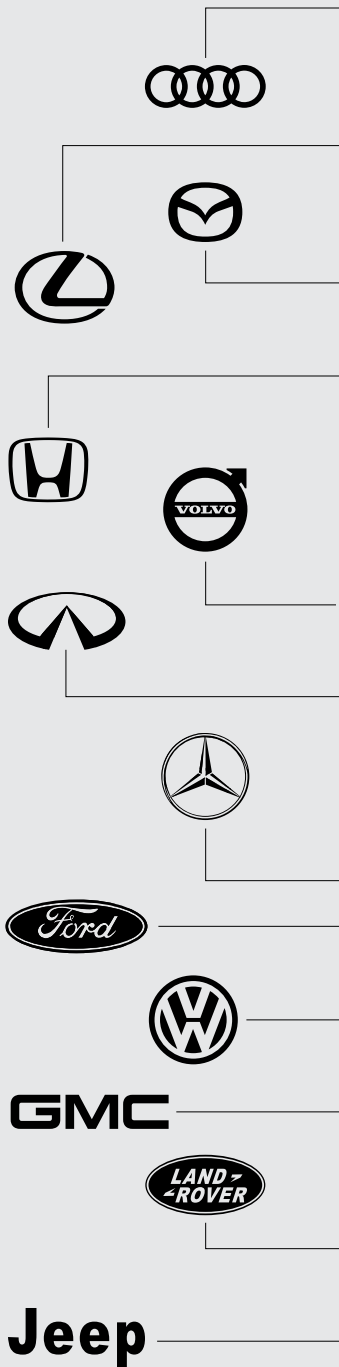
The Overall Score is the combination of our road tests, predicted reliability, owner satisfaction, and safety. For each brand we indicate the percentage of tested models that earned a recommended designation. This percentage reveals a meaningful differentiation. Only Porsche, BMW, and Mazda earned a recommendation on every model we tested. Audi, Honda, and Hyundai lead the other brands, with 86 percent of their tested lines being recommended.

From year to year we see movements in brand rankings because of changes in reliability and new road tests. Subaru dropped from second to fifth place because the previously very reliable Legacy and Outback are now rated only average, and the WRX/STI dropped to below average. Similarly, Mini dropped 11 places because the unreliable Cooper and Clubman weighed down the average Overall Score. Volkswagen tumbled eight spots because its reliability slid from average last year to below average for 2017.

Finally, the rankings do not reflect corporate behavior. Consumer Reports continues to push for consumers to be fully compensated for Audi, Porsche, Volkswagen, and other vehicles potentially affected by emissions cheating scandals.

Top—and Bottom—of the Class

Analyzing our exclusive test and survey data across the car model lines allows us to rank the brands and provide valuable insights into how they compare on several key factors.



Rank	Brand	Overall Score	Road-Test Score	Predicted Reliability	Owner Satisfaction	% of Tested Models Recommended
1	Audi	81	86	↑	↑	86
2	Porsche	78	88	↓	↑↑	100
3	BMW	77	86	↓	↑	100
4	Lexus	77	74	↑↑	↑	75
5	Subaru	74	81	↓	↑	83
6	Kia	74	77	↑	↓	71
7	Mazda	73	75	↑	↑	100
8	Tesla	73	88	↓	↑↑	50
9	Honda	72	77	↓	↑	86
10	Buick	72	72	↑	↓	67
11	Toyota	71	68	↑	↑	78
12	Hyundai	70	73	↑	↓	86
13	Acura	68	73	↓	↓	40
14	Volvo	68	77	↓	↓	40
15	Lincoln	68	80	↓	↑	25
16	Infiniti	67	77	↓	↓	17
17	Chevrolet	67	74	↓	↑	47
18	Cadillac	66	79	↓	↓	33
19	Chrysler	66	84	↓	↑↑	0
20	Mercedes-Benz	66	80	↓	↑	13
21	Ford	65	74	↓	↓	46
22	Nissan	64	69	↓	↓	33
23	Volkswagen	64	78	↓	↓	25
24	Mini	60	71	↓	↑	0
25	GMC	60	73	↓	↑	20
26	Jaguar	59	79	↓	↑	0
27	Dodge	56	74	↓	↓	0
28	Land Rover	52	71	↓↓	↑	0
29	Mitsubishi	51	46	↓	↓	0
30	Jeep	45	55	↓	↓	0
31	Fiat	41	52	↓↓	↓	0

*A brand must have at least two tested models to be included. Alfa Romeo, Genesis, Maserati, Ram, and Smart lack sufficient data.