

The ultimate Christmas present

For readers who want the ultimate Christmas present, there are some very tempting executive cars on the market this season. Build quality, comfort and standard equipment are all now better than ever. If you spend hours behind the wheel you'll be grateful for the refinement the majority of these business-oriented saloons offer.

Here is our pick of the top ten most popular executive cars.

Jaguar XF

Few cars feel as exceptional as the Jaguar XF. In a market conquered by great German makes such as the BMW 5 Series and Mercedes E-Class, the Jaguar XF is a seriously different competitor that stands out thanks to its smooth styling and magnificently distinctive interior. Jaguar moved away from the conventional styling of the S-Type and has instead gone with a sharp yet graceful look, giving the Jaguar XF plenty of personality, helped by that big cavernous grille at the front.

Audi A6

Compared with the former A6, Audi really moved the game on with the latest model, with better finesse, sharper looks and a more improved interior. It comes with tough engines including the cost-effective 2.0 TDI, while at the top of the range there's the terrific 3.0 BiTDI with more than 300PS.

BMW 5 Series

The 5 Series still sets the standard for handling in the executive motoring market and it's proving as well-liked as ever. There's a wide range of engines, including a hybrid

Jaguar XF



34 ▶

Audi A6



BMW 5 Series

variety, but the 520d is in all probability the finest, especially with its notable economy figures.

Audi A5 Sportback

Creating a larger version of the A5 Coupe may have seemed a little out of the ordinary when Audi unveiled the Sportback, but the bigger five-door hatchback has proved exceptionally popular thanks to its extra practicality. It may not have the rear legroom of the A6 but the handsome A5 Sportback comes with the same amazing engines.

Mercedes-Benz E-Class

The three-pointed star still carries a lot of influence among buyers despite Mercedes-Benz losing its way in the 1990s with general build quality. Thankfully, the German automaker remedied this some time ago and the latest E-Class is utterly superb. It feels as solid and dependable as any Mercedes-Benz of old.

Lexus GS

With an improved hybrid system and an immeasurably better cabin, the innovative Lexus GS is a big move forward compared with its forerunner. There's still no oil-burner and while the entry level GS250 doesn't have much pull, the hybrid GS450h offers stirring performance with low emissions and frugal fuel consumption.



Audi A5 Sportback



Mercedes-Benz E-Class



Lexus GS



Mazda 6



Volvo S80



Peugeot 508

Infiniti Q70

Infiniti is a relatively fresh brand in the UK but it's aiming to raise its profile in a comparable way to fellow Japanese car maker Lexus. There has already been an alliance with the Red Bull F1 team, but it's the quality of its cars that will eventually make or break the motor firm. The Q70 is unquestionably a first-rate car and unlike Lexus there's a diesel variant alongside a hybrid.

Volvo S80

The Volvo S80 is starting to show its advancing years now - hardly unexpected, bearing in mind it has been on sale since 2006. On the other hand, it still has sizeable appeal for those after a comfortable and realistically priced executive express. The looks aren't much to write home about, but the cabin is top notch with a bona fide Scandinavian feel to the design.

Peugeot 508

This executive-cum-family saloon from Peugeot is admirable. The four door car has a sturdiness and level of kit that reflects the aspirations of those who want to, but can't quite afford to go for premium motoring marques. For example, the high ranging Peugeot 508 Allure BlueHDi saloon not only looks convincing for business, it will also serve as an excellent main family car.

Mazda 6

The new Mazda 6 is a great looker – and one that performs very well. But forget all that for a moment – and just look at it. It's a very fetching car and one you would probably want your company to put on 2015's fleet. Seriously, we would be proud to have a Mazda 6 sitting in our staff car park. It is a really sleek number – particularly in saloon, rather than touring, guise.



Infiniti Q70