



THERE IS NO SHORTAGE of automotive awards in India, with virtually every automotive publication and portal handing out their own trophies, across different categories, every year. The most respected and coveted awards, however, are the ICOTY and IMOTY (Indian Car/Motorcycle of The Year) awards, which have (since 2006 and 2009) declared one car and one motorcycle as the best products to have been launched in the calendar year. To be precise, for vehicles to be eligible for the awards, they need to be launched between December 1st of the previous year and November 30th of the current year. MW





has been a part of the juries for these prestigious awards since 2015.

This year, the Maruti Suzuki Swift won the ICOTY 2019 award, fending off strong competition from other excellent cars, including the Honda Amaze, Honda CR-V, Hyundai Santro, Mahindra Alturas G4, Mahindra Marazzo, Toyota Yaris and the Maruti Suzuki Ertiga. The Hyundai Santro and Honda Amaze finished second and third.

The Royal Enfield Interceptor 650, possibly the most significant Indian bike launch in years, won the IMOTY 2019 award by a huge margin, beating the Yamaha YZF-R15 and the

Clockwise from top:
The ICOTY jury: Siddhartha Lal, CEO Royal Enfield, receives the award from Dr. Raghupati Singhania, Chairman & Managing Director, JK Tyre & IND US tires Ltd.; Team Maruti Suzuki receiving the award from Dr. Singhania



TVS Apache RR310, which finished second and third respectively. The other machines on the list were the BMW G 310 R, BMW G 310 GS, Hero Xtreme 200R, Honda CBR650F, Suzuki GSX-S750, Suzuki V-Strom 650 XT ABS, SWM Superdual T, Triumph Tiger 800 and the TVS Apache RTR 160 4V.

An all-new category was instituted this year – the Premium Car of The Year – keeping in mind the growing premium and luxury automotive segment in the country. The Volvo XC40 won this award handily, with its sibling, the XC60, coming in at second place. The Mercedes-AMG E63S was in third position. The other contenders were the Audi Q5, Audi RS 5 Coupe, BMW 6 Series GT, BMW X3, MINI Countryman, Range Rover Velar, Lexus ES 300h and Porsche Cayenne.

Another possible award for 2020 was announced during the ceremony – the ISOTY or Indian Scooter of The Year award. This is to recognise the significance of scooters in the Indian market. However, a minimum of five new scooters will need to be launched in the corresponding year, for the award to be given. There are also plans to institute an award for Green Car of The Year, with the rider that at least two such vehicles are launched during the eligibility period.

At the awards ceremony in Mumbai last month, Dr. Raghupati Singhania, Chairman & Managing Director, JK Tyre & Industries Limited (which has been sponsoring the awards since their inception) gave away the trophies to Kenichi Ayukawa, MD and CEO, Maruti Suzuki, Siddhartha Lal, CEO, Royal Enfield and Charles Frump, MD, Volvo Car India.



The winners were also presented with certificates signed by all jury members.

This time, the ICOTY and IMOTY juries included Yogendra Pratap, Rahul Ghosh and Abhik Das (*Auto Today*), Dhruv Behl, Ishan Raghava, Arup Das and Jared Solomon (*AutoX*), Aspi Bhatena and Sarmad Kadiri (*Car/Bike India*), Sirish Chandran and Aninda Sardar (*Evo India*), Kartik Ware and Raunak Ajinkya (*Motoring World*), Shubhabrata Marmar, Abhay Verma and Rohit Paradkar (*Overdrive*), Girish Karkera, Agasti Kaulgi, Devesh Shobha and Debabrata Sarkar (*Top Gear*), Muralidhar Swaminathan (*The Hindu Business Line*), Pablo Chaterji (*MW*), Hani Musthafa (*Flywheel*) and Vikrant Singh (*CarWale/BikeWale*).

These juries, consisting of senior Indian automotive journalists, are easily the largest such bodies here, with almost 300 cumulative years of automotive evaluation experience. The jury members are known for their analytical skills and competence in evaluating and testing cars and bikes, as a part of their profession. As for the awards themselves, they are in line with international standards and are modelled along the lines of the American Car of The Year, European Car of The Year and Japanese Car of The Year. At the jury rounds, the eligible cars and bikes are thoroughly evaluated across a variety of parameters – price, performance, reliability, value, suitability to Indian conditions, the after-sales experience and so on. The voting process is also along the lines of the international awards mentioned previously, with the entire process being scrupulously fair and unbiased.