

ALFA MITO MAKES FINAL CAR OF THE YEAR SHORTLIST

02.10.2008 - Alfa Romeo will again be gunning for European Car of the Year glory with the MiTo, which ranks among the seven finalists announced today. For Alfa Romeo, a two-time winner of this prestigious award, the process to make it this far has already been rigorous. A total of 37 cars were eligible for the 2009 Car of the Year, of which 30 have dropped by the wayside, including fancied candidates such as the new Audi A4, Jaguar XF and Mazda 6.

The Fiat Group has won the European Car of the Year award on no fewer than 12 occasions, including last year's runaway winner, the Fiat 500. Alfa Romeo has contributed two successes to this total – the svelte 156 taking out the honours by a large margin in 1998, with a follow-up success for the closely-related 147 in 2001, claiming victory by a single point from the Ford Mondeo.

Car of the Year is an international award, judged by a panel of senior motoring journalists across Europe. Its object is to acclaim the most outstanding new car to go on sale in the 12 months preceding the date of the title. The voting process is designed for that purpose, and not to provide a scale of merit of all competing cars. To this end, there are no categories, sub-divisions or class winners.

The jury for Car of the Year 2009 consists of 59 members, representing 23 European countries. National representation on the jury is related to the size of the country's car market and its importance in car manufacturing. France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Spain each have six members; other countries, proportionally fewer.

Models eligible for judging are those released in the twelve months prior to the award. The award is not restricted to European cars, but nominees must be available in at least five European countries, and have expected sales of 5,000 a year. Nominees are judged on the following criteria: design, comfort, safety, economy, handling, performance, functionality, environmental requirements, driver satisfaction, and price.

The new Alfa MiTo will face stiff competition this year from the other candidates, whose ranks include the likes of the Citroen C5, all-new Ford Fiesta, Opel/Vauxhall Insignia, Renault Megane, Skoda Superb, and the recently-launched Volkswagen Golf. A final round of voting will now be held to determine the winner, which will be announced on November 17, 2008.