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Mazda's CX-7 SUV claimed its second successive award in the highly respected annual Towcar Awards, being selected as the "Editor's Choice" for 2011 and described as "one of the best 4 towcars you can buy for sensible money".

Announcing the results, Practical Caravan magazine editor Nigel Donnelly commented: "The Mazda CX-7 is a good match for many a mid-range tourer and unlike many cars in its class, it's an engaging drive with precise steering, good brakes and generous standard kit." The Mazda scored a four-star rating (out of a possible five) for towing, solo driving, buying and owning.

Jointly organised by Practical Caravan and What Car? magazines, together with the Camping and Caravanning Club, this year's Towcar Awards competition put 50 cars through their paces, each assessed in a series of rigorous tests by experts from the magazines and the club at the MIRA test track in Warwickshire.

The diesel powered SUV provides impressive power with 400Nm of torque along with superb handling and powerful braking which impressed the awards judges both with and without a caravan in tow.

"In the best Mazda tradition, our diesel-powered Mazda CX-7 enables us to offer a distinctive vehicle that is very different from the huge line-up of SUV-category vehicles currently available," comments Mazda UK's Sales Director, Peter Allibon. "Its spirited performance, excellent torque levels and responsive drive combined with everyday practicality make this model perfect for towing or day-to-day driving."

"The CX-7's appearance is heavily orientated towards sportscar styling, while offering excellent driving dynamics, a commanding SUV-style driving position and a strong road presence that conveys Mazda's "defy convention" brand identity. It's the ultimate expression of "Zoom-Zoom" excitement in a sophisticated Sports Crossover," adds Allibon.

Last year, the Mazda CX-7 demonstrated its towing capability to win the "Best in Class" title for the 1,725-1,899kg weight category, seeing off shortlisted rivals that included: the Volvo XC60 2.4D, Honda CR-V 2.2 iDTEC and Suzuki Grand Vitara 1.9 D.

The model tested for the Towcar Awards 2011 was the Mazda CX-7 2.2D Sport Tech, which is marketed in the UK as a single, highly specified and lavishly equipped model with 19-inch alloy wheels and Xenon headlights, priced at £27,580 (on the road), in a choice of five colours.

The Mazda CX-7 includes the 173ps, 2.2-litre turbocharged four-cylinder MZR-CD diesel engine producing up to 400Nm of torque and a six-speed manual transmission with a fuel-stretching "overdrive" top gear ratio. Mazda's unique Active Torque 4-wheel drive system distributes up to 100 percent of engine torque to the rear wheels to maintain traction. Combined fuel economy returns 37.7mpg with CO2 emissions of 199g/km.

Inside the Mazda CX-7 Sport Tech, there are numerous standard premium features including: leather seats, climate control air-conditioning, cruise control, electric windows, powered driver's and front passenger's heated seats, a bespoke BOSE® premium surround sound audio system with 6-CD autochanger and nine speakers, plus integrated satellite navigation and Bluetooth® technology.

Within its dramatically styled body, the Mazda CX-7 has generous space for five occupants to travel in comfort, while the sports utility-style rear seat functionality and generous boot space (455 litres to the belt line with the rear seats upright, 1,348 litres to the ceiling with the 60/40 split rear seats folded), makes this Mazda an ideal vehicle for multi-activity lifestyles.

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