

Isuzu Pickup Picks Up 2 More Awards in UK

The Isuzu Rodeo pickup earned van and towcar of the year honors in the United Kingdom, making three awards in total won in the UK by the Rodeo, or Isuzu D-MAX as it is known in many other markets. The Rodeo was named the UK's Commercial 4x4 of the Year earlier this year by Britain's "4 x 4" magazine (April issue).

The pickup received a gold award in the Van of the Year Awards 2004 conducted by What Van?, Britain's biggest monthly van-buying guide.

Awards were announced in the magazine's October issue.

Awards for top light-commercial vehicles were split into 13 categories, including pickups. At one time or another, What Van? staff drove every light commercial vehicle in the UK market, assessing it for drivability comfort, performance, handling, refinement, safety, load area, economy and value for money.

"It's new, it's big, it's bold and it's a worthy winner of What Van?'s Pick-Up of the Year award. We're talking about Isuzu's handsome-looking Rodeo," wrote the magazine.

The screening panel was enormously impressed by the performance of the Rodeo's three-liter direct-injection intercooled turbo-diesel engine that powers both the 4x4 single and double cab models. The panel declared, "On conventional roads Rodeo boasts the best ride of any 4x4 pick-up we've ever encountered and we've no arguments with the gearchange or the brakes."

The other honor, the Towcar of the Year Award 2005 (Utility Class), was presented by the Caravan Club, which represents more than 850,000 caravan, motor-home and trailer-tent owners. Isuzu's Rodeo Denver, a high-spec, three-liter 4x4 double cab pickup, took home the prize.

Now in its 22nd year, the awards program featured seven judges who tested 51 vehicles of 22 manufacturers in 10 categories. They looked at all aspects of towing, including hill starts, traction, stability, pulling power and practical features, such as ability to accommodate large, bulky loads like awning bags and water carriers. They also judged how level the vehicle remains when hitched to a caravan, and the ease of attaching a trailer's breakaway cable.

Testing took place on a grueling course at the famous Millbrook Proving Ground in Bedfordshire. A recent explosion in "lifestyle vehicle" sales resulted in fierce competition for the pickup class award.

Rated for pulling up to 3,000 kg in its three-liter model, and backed by an impressive list of safety equipment and comforts, the Rodeo has been a big success since its launch in the UK last November.

