GENEVA CAR OF THE YEAR: WORDLFEED 1715GMT

DURATION: 12:58

Opel / Vauxhall Astra wins 2016 Car of the Year (COTY) award on the eve of the Geneva Motor Show.

SHOWS: GENEVA, SWITZERLAND (FEBRUARY 29, 2016) (CAR OF THE YEAR – ACCESS ALL)

COTY CERMONY B-ROLL
1. ANDRE HEFTI, GENERAL MANAGER OF GENEVA MOTOR SHOW SPEAKING TO AUDIENCE
2. HAKAN MATSON, PRESIDENT OF THE COTY JURY SPEAKING ON STAGE ANNOUNCING THE NOMINEES
3. CLIP WITH ALL SEVEN NOMINEES
4. MATSON PRESENTING THE JURY MEMBERS
5. CLIP WITH JURY MEMBERS
6. FINAL RESULTS
7. OPEL / VAUXHALL ASTRA WINS CAR OF THE YEAR 2016
8. DR. KARL-THOMAS NEUMANN CEO OPEL GROUP RECEIVES THE TROPHY ON STAGE
9. NEUMANN GIVES A SPEECH
10. VARIOUS OF NEUMANN POSING FOR MEDIAS

INTERVIEW WITH WINNER, DR. KARL-THOMAS NEUMANN, CEO OPEL GROUP + B-ROLL
11. (SOUNDBITE) (English) DR. KARL-THOMAS NEUMANN, CEO OPEL GROUP, SAYING:
"Well, when I came here we were so proud to be in the finals, but then I came here and was so nervous. I knew we had a good chance, but no one could really give me any indication where we are. And then you see we went from second place to first place to second place to first place, so I'm totally nervous but we made it and I'm very glad now. It means a lot for me personally but also for everyone at Opel and Vauxhall."
12. (SOUNDBITE) (English) DR. KARL-THOMAS NEUMANN, CEO OPEL GROUP, SAYING:
"Well I think it is good because we want people to look at Opel and Vauxhall again; we are telling them that we are building great cars and now the top journalists of Europe, they are seeing this, and I think that makes an impact for the customers."
13. (SOUNDBITE) (English) DR. KARL-THOMAS NEUMANN, CEO OPEL GROUP, SAYING:
"I think it's the mix. We say it's the best car we've ever built because it's lighter, it's very light, it's very efficient, it drives very dynamic, but it's still comfortable for everyday use, and it's superbly connected. It has our new infotainment generation and it has features like massage seats and like the matrix light, which you don't find in this class, so we have tried our best to build an outstanding car, and the jury has seen that."

14. VARIOUS OF NEUMANN POSING FOR PHOTOS
15. NEUMANN TALKING TO MEDIAS
16. VARIOUS OF OPEL / VAUXHALL ASTRA
END OF FEED

STORY: Opel / Vauxhall Astra has been voted the European Car of the Year (COTY) 2016 in Geneva, Switzerland on Monday (February 29).

For the fifth year running, the prestigious COTY award was named at the Geneva International Motor Show. Known as the oldest automobile prize, it's celebrates this year its 53rd anniversary.

The car was awarded 309 points by the panel of 58 international journalists across 22 European countries, ahead of its nearest rival the Volvo XC90 with 294 points.

"We went from second place to first place to second place to first place, so I'm totally nervous but we made it and I'm very glad now", said the CEO of Opel Group, Dr. Karl-Thomas Neumann after receiving his trophy.

The selection of the hatchback comes as the German carmaker, owned by General Motors, was looking to turn the corner with its European operations, which have been losing money for years. GM's best asset in European market, the Opel/Vauxhall Astra has been entirely redefined to match or surpass its main competitors in functionality, performance, efficiency and appeal; in 2015 it has racked up 130,000 sales.

"It's the best car we've ever built because it's lighter, it's very light, it's very efficient, it drives very dynamic, but it's still comfortable for everyday use, and it's superbly connected. It has our new infotainment generation and it has features like massage seats and like the matrix light, which you don't find in this class," Neumann added.

With the 2016 prize, Opel collected their fifth Car of the Year award. The previous winners were the Astra Mk2, Omega A, Insignia and Ampera.

Other seven-strong shortlist finalist in this year's competition were the Mazda MX-5 who finished on the last step of the podium with 202 points, followed by the Audi A4 with 189 point, the Jaguar XE came fifth with 163 points, while Skoda Superb took 6th position with 147 points and the BMW 7 series seventh with 143 points.

The candidates were selected amongst the cars put on sale in Europe during the previous calendar year with a short list of seven finalists issued last December. To be eligible, the model had to target annual sales of at least 5'000 units.