

RENAULT MEGANE RS

THE MEGANE RS is a brand new contender in this market and had a hard act to follow after the previous R26 model was such a hit with driving purists. However, the new RS sees off all challengers in this segment with ease. It boasts the best chassis and engine combination by some margin and provides its driver with great balance and poise that belies the fact it is a front-engined, front-wheel drive machine. The Megane feels solid to drive and even after hours of thrashing around a circuit or mountain pass it still feels as bullet-proof as it did when first leaving the home garage. Renault has made a lot of noise about this car, launching it in two chassis variants as we have come to expect. The standard RS

chassis is good, but the Cup chassis at R50k more is phenomenal and begins to warrant the price difference the more you aim it into every bend. As far as the fun factor goes, the less understeer you get from a hot hatch the more fun you're inevitably going to have and the RS sorts the competitors out with a limited-slip differential that works seamlessly, offering the flattest ride in the business. The RS wins the hot hatch category easily.

NEED TO KNOW

PRICE | R349900-R399900

RANGE | 3-dr hatch

ENGINES | 2.0-litre turbo petrol

TRANSMISSION | 6-speed manual

NCAP RATING | ★★★★★



RENAULT CLIO RS

ANOTHER BRILLIANT HATCH from the Renault RS stable, this the smaller Clio which is just as capable and even better value for money. Naturally aspirated 2.0-litre mill is slick but lags slightly at altitude.



VOLKSWAGEN GOLF GTI

STILL THE DEFAULT choice for South Africans looking for a smart hatch they can rely on. Lacks the pin-sharp dynamics and fun factor of the Renaults.



CITROËN DS3

NEWCOMER TO THE segment provides surprising performance and fantastic bang for buck. Finicky French gearbox lets the overall experience down.

It boasts the best chassis and engine combination and provides great balance and poise

