



# Second-hand superstars

*Which?* Car experts pick 13 outstanding cars now available second hand at bargain prices

**T**he new car market's woes are also affecting used car prices – after all, you can't sell a used car for more than the price of a new one – so, while it may seem like a bad time to buy a used car, there are some great bargains to be had.

*Which?* Car experts have tracked down 13 fantastic deals on great cars for any budget – and these are just a small selection of the bargains you can snag.

That said, it's still worth being cautious with your cash. There's no point shelling out on an unreliable motor – it's far better to stick to our recommended models and reap the rewards in the long run.

## The UK used car market

Seismic shifts in new car buying patterns have had a knock-on effect on used car prices. New car sales in the first two months of 2009 were down around 25% overall, yet some models are selling very well. Buyers are drawn towards small, efficient cars, so prices have remained

quite stable. Conversely, values of thirsty luxury cars have tumbled, making this a great time to grab a used car bargain. If you're a low-mileage motorist and like your luxuries, it's never been a better time to choose your prestige chariot.

Falling sales have even affected values of large family cars, particularly mainstream models. A family of four or five should consider a large hatchback or estate, as prices often look better value than MPV choices.

**A 2007 (57-plate), 20,000 mile Toyota Avensis 2.0 D-4D TR 5-door estate is £2,045 cheaper, at £10,550, than a 2007 (57-plate), 20,000-mile Volkswagen Touran 2.0TDI SE 5-door, at £12,595.**

Even if you want to buy used, look at new car prices, too. Look at online brokers such as Broadspeed ([www.broadspeed.com](http://www.broadspeed.com)), Drive the Deal ([www.drivethedeal.com](http://www.drivethedeal.com)) and Buy a Car ([www.buyacar.co.uk](http://www.buyacar.co.uk)), because you might find you can afford a new car after all.

## Expert tips

### Tips for buying a used car

*Which?* Car used car expert George Marshall-Thornhill says: 'A little bit of homework before you buy can save you thousands in the long term. For example, cars with high CO2 emissions will face higher road tax in the future, so if you're going to buy one, be prepared for rising tax bills and a hard time finding buyers when you want to sell.'



■ **DO RESEARCH** Check the *Which?* Car Buying Guide at [www.which.co.uk/carbuyingguide](http://www.which.co.uk/carbuyingguide) to ensure the car you're looking at is sensibly priced. It's also a good idea to check 'completed listings' prices on eBay, to see how much cars auctioned on the site actually sold for.

■ **CHECK SEVERAL EXAMPLES** Don't buy the first car you look at. It's worth checking a few different models, if only to confirm you've made the right choice. Make sure you're insured for any test drive.

■ **BE PREPARED TO TRAVEL** It's worthwhile travelling large distances to find the right car, because you could save much more than your travel expenses. Just make sure the car is genuine and still available.

■ **CHECK VEHICLE PROVENANCE** Second-hand car dealers often provide a certificate showing that there is no outstanding finance on the vehicle, and that it hasn't been written off. If you're buying privately, you can run a listing check with Autocheck ([www.autocheck.co.uk](http://www.autocheck.co.uk)) or HPI ([www.hpi.co.uk](http://www.hpi.co.uk)).

■ **FEWER OWNERS IS BEST** A car with lots of owners is probably bad news, as it may have been sold on after continual problems.

■ **CONDITION IS KEY** When comparing used cars, don't be swayed by gadgets and gizmos condition is much more important. Finally, if the seller seems untrustworthy, they probably are.

WHICH.CO.UK

Want more advice on buying a used car? Watch our video guide

[www.which.co.uk/usedcarvideo](http://www.which.co.uk/usedcarvideo)

# Great value under £5,000

## Seat Altea (2006)

Model: 1.6 Reference Sport 5dr estate

**New** £12,292 **Now** £4,295

**WE FOUND** 2006/55-reg,  
54,800 miles, London



The Altea isn't an obvious choice for most people, but it's got all the credentials to suit family motoring. It's an estate-cum-MPV, so you get lots of flexibility in the seating and a generous 380-litre boot (up to the window line).

This 1.6 petrol version isn't going to set any speed records, but it'll average 34.8mpg according to our tests, and it's smooth and quiet.

Reference Sport spec includes air-con, cruise control, a trip computer and electric heated door mirrors.

You can't ignore the Altea at this price – it's only three years old and should offer many more miles of motoring.

**Which? verdict** ★★★★★ **Satisfaction** 82%  
**Breakdowns** ★★★★★ **Faults** ★★★★★ **Niggles** ★★★★★  
**Troublespots** (06-08) No common troublespots reported  
**Safety** ★★★★★ **Theft of** ★★★★★ **Theft from** ★★★★★  
**CO2 (road tax)** 185g/km (£170)

### USING OUR WHICH? CAR REVIEWS

All used cars shown here have been Which? Best Buys or 'worth considering' when new, and represent good value at each price point.

**Price** We checked the prices of real cars for sale on [www.autotrader.co.uk](http://www.autotrader.co.uk) in March 2009, and compared these prices with official valuations from CAP and suppliers of Which? used car price information.

**Which? verdict** Overall score in our tests.

**Satisfaction** How satisfied owners are with their cars.

**Breakdowns** More stars means fewer breakdowns, according to our owners' survey.

**Faults** More stars means fewer likely faults (requiring new parts).

**Niggles** A higher star rating means fewer likely non-critical problems.

**Troublespots** Common areas of weakness for that model.

**Safety** Euro NCAP adult occupant protection, star rating out of five.

**Theft of** Thatcham security score for theft of the vehicle.

**Theft from** Thatcham security score for breaking into the vehicle.

**CO2 (road tax)** CO2 emissions (annual road tax cost).

## OTHER GOOD BUYS UNDER £5,000



### Toyota Yaris (2005)

Model: 1.3 Colour Collection 5dr hatch

**New** £8,942 **Now** £4,895

**WE FOUND** 2005/05-reg, 41,000 miles,  
Manchester

It's ideal for urban motoring, but this 1.3 is perfectly happy on the highway, too. Toyota's reliability has been consistently good, and this car was a Best Buy when new. Best of all, it's been very popular, so it's not hard to find a good one all across the UK.

**Which? verdict** ★★★★★ **Satisfaction** 82% **Breakdowns** ★★★★★  
**Faults** ★★★★★ **Niggles** ★★★★★ **Troublespots** (03-05) Windscreen wipers and washers **Safety** ★★★★★ **Theft of** ★★★★★ **Theft from** ★★★★★ **CO2 (road tax)** 133g/km (£120)



### Honda Accord (2002)

Model: 2.0i VTEC SE Executive 5dr hatch

**New** £16,990 **Now** £2,495

**WE FOUND** 2002/51, 54,000 miles,  
Leeds

Large family car values have plummeted as buyers downsize. But that doesn't make them a bad choice – this Honda Accord was a Best Buy because of its outstanding reliability. You can afford to be choosy, as it was a popular car, so try to find one with all the extras.

**Which? verdict** ★★★★★ **Satisfaction** 88% **Breakdowns** ★★★★★  
**Faults** ★★★★★ **Niggles** ★★★★★ **Troublespots** (00-02) Air conditioning, battery **Safety** ★★★★★ **Theft of** ★★★★★ **Theft from** ★★★★★ **CO2 (road tax)** 207g/km (£210)



### Toyota Corolla (2003)

Model: 2.0 D-4D [116] T3 5dr hatch

**New** £13,640 **Now** £4,995

**WE FOUND** 2003/03, 58,000 miles,  
Stockport

The Corolla makes a safe, sensible choice, not least because of its outstanding reliability. It's a consistent top performer in our surveys, which is why it was a Best Buy. The diesel version we spotted is economical but still drives well, with good in-gear flexibility.

**Which? verdict** ★★★★★ **Satisfaction** 88% **Breakdowns** ★★★★★  
**Faults** ★★★★★ **Niggles** ★★★★★ **Troublespots** (03-05) Braking consumables, seats, windscreen washers/wipers **Safety** ★★★★★ **Theft of** ★★★★★ **Theft from** ★★★★★ **CO2 (road tax)** 151g/km (£145)



# Great value under £10,000

## Vauxhall Vectra (2008)

Model: 1.9 CDTi SRI [120] Sat Nav 5dr hatch

**New** £18,902 **Now** £10,000

**WE FOUND** 2008/08-reg, 4,711 miles, Burnley



It's hard to believe that barely 12 months have passed since this car was manufactured, yet its value has dropped to nearly half of its list price. The Vectra has suffered because of a general trend away from mainstream large cars and the introduction of its replacement model, the Insignia.

But the Vectra isn't a bad car, simply an unfashionable one. It will transport a family of five in plenty of comfort, and it's quiet and easy to drive. Vauxhall is

nothing if not generous with its specification, so on this car you get satnav, auto-dimming rearview mirror and cruise control. SRI spec adds some subtle body modifications along with lowered suspension, but if that's not your cup of tea then there are hundreds of nearly new Vectras to choose from.

Which? verdict ★★★★★ Satisfaction 73% Breakdowns ★★★★★ Faults ★★★★★ Niggles ★ Troublespots (06-08) Braking system Safety ★★★★★ Theft of ★★★★★ Theft from ★★★★★ CO2 (road tax) 154g/km (£145)

## GOOD VALUE ESTATE CARS UNDER £10,000



## Mazda6 estate (2005)

Model: 2.0d TS2 [136] 5dr estate

**New** £18,807 **Now** £6,995

**WE FOUND** 2005/55-reg, 39,000 miles, Southend

If you're looking for a bargain estate car, you could do a lot worse than the superb Mazda6. Though this example is four years old, it has covered fewer than 40,000 miles. Its 136bhp diesel achieved 40.9mpg in our tests, respectable for a large estate such as this. And the boot will swallow a massive 865 litres with the seats folded.

Which? verdict ★★★★★ Satisfaction 88% Breakdowns ★★★★★ Faults ★★★★★ Niggles ★★ Troublespots (03-05) Battery (petrol), exterior trim, light rusting, lights Safety ★★★★★ Theft of ★★★★★ Theft from ★★★★★ CO2 (road tax) 176g/km (£170)

## OTHER GOOD VALUE HATCHBACKS UNDER £10,000



## Mazda3 (2006)

Model: 1.6 TS2 5dr hatch

**New** £13,762 **Now** £6,995

**WE FOUND** 2006/06-reg, 36,201 miles, Canterbury

The Mazda3's replacement is in showrooms now, which depresses resale values of the previous generation car, though there's nothing wrong with it. Reliability has been good for this car, so it should provide plenty more trouble-free years of motoring.

Which? verdict ★★★★★ Satisfaction 89% Breakdowns ★★★★★ Faults ★★★★★ Niggles ★★★★★ Troublespots (06-08) No common troublespots reported Safety ★★★★★ Theft of ★★★★★ Theft from ★★★★★ CO2 (road tax) 162g/km (£145)



## VW Golf (2005)

Model: 2.0 GT TDI 5dr hatch

**New** £17,477 **Now** £9,995

**WE FOUND** 2005/55, 28,315 miles, Portsmouth

Another superseded car – Mk 5 Golf prices dropped after the introduction of the Mk 6 car. But it's still a popular choice, particularly with the TDI diesel engine. We recommend the 2.0 TDI if you can afford it, as it's quieter and more refined than the 1.9 diesel.

Which? verdict ★★★★★ Satisfaction 86% Breakdowns ★★★★★ Faults ★★★★★ Niggles ★★ Troublespots (03-05) Cooling system and fuel system (petrol), exterior trim, rainwater seals Safety ★★★★★ Theft of ★★★★★ Theft from ★★★★★ CO2 (road tax) 145g/km (£120)



## Kia Cee'd estate (2007)

Model: 1.6 CRDi LS 5dr SW estate

**New** £14,380 **Now** £9,994

**WE FOUND** 2007/07-reg, 10,980 miles, Northampton

Some people want a sure-fire guarantee of reliability when they buy a used car. One way of doing this is to buy a car that has its warranty intact. The Cee'd comes with an outstanding seven-year warranty, so our example car would be covered until 2014. If you don't want an estate, the Cee'd hatchback is also a great choice.

Which? verdict ★★★★★ Satisfaction 93% Breakdowns ★★★★★ Faults ★★★★★ Niggles ★★ Troublespots (06-08) No common troublespots reported Safety ★★★★★ Theft of ★★★★★ Theft from ★★★★★ CO2 (road tax) 128g/km (£120)

# Great value under £15,000

## Audi A6 (2006)

Model: 2.7 TDI SE 4dr saloon

**New** £26,310 **Now** £14,699

**WE FOUND** 2006/56-reg, 15,662 miles, Cannock



**A**t this end of the market, there are some truly tempting deals around this spring. Audi's A6 is a Best Buy luxury car, with an outstanding cabin and some great interior goodies. The 180bhp 2.7TDI engine is a surprisingly eager performer, particularly when it's matched to the six-speed manual gearbox.

Audi's recent update of the A6 was deliberately subtle, so from a distance this could be a new car. The example we spotted is low mileage, and it would

make a great mile muncher with its 40mpg capability. The 184g/km CO2 output is impressive for a luxury car, putting car tax costs at £210 a year.

Options to look out for include leather, Bose stereo and Bluetooth phone connection, but don't pay over the odds for trinkets like a wooden gear knob.

**Which? verdict** ★★★★★ **Satisfaction** 89% **Breakdowns** ★★★★★ **Faults** ★★★★★ **Niggles** ★★★★★ **Troublespots** (06-08) In-car entertainment, onboard computer **Safety** ★★★★★ **Theft of** ★★★★★ **Theft from** ★★★★★ **CO2 (road tax)** 184g/km (£170)

## WHICH? LEGAL ADVICE

If you have a legal problem with your car, contact Which? Legal Service for specialist advice over the phone.

Unlimited telephone advice from professional lawyers costs just £39 for a year's membership, and offers you practical advice tailored to your case on a wide range of everyday problems, from car issues like parking and clamping fines to consumer issues such as holidays from hell.

Call now on 01992 822828 or visit [www.whichlegalservice.co.uk](http://www.whichlegalservice.co.uk).

**which?** Legal Service

## Which.co.uk Car Buying Guide

Check out new and used car prices, specs and statistics using the online Car Buying Guide at [www.which.co.uk/carbuyingguide](http://www.which.co.uk/carbuyingguide) – it is updated regularly, and contains more than 230 mainstream new and used car reviews from the Which? team. It's packed with reliability and ownership information, as well as the lowdown on car dealers.

## OTHER GOOD VALUE OPTIONS UNDER £15,000



## BMW 1 Series (2007)

Model: 130i M Sport 5dr hatch

**New** £25,755 **Now** £15,000

**WE FOUND** 2007/07-reg, 14,000 miles, Reading

BMW may be best known for its superb and ubiquitous 3 Series, but the 130i hot hatchback is a well-kept secret. Fitting a smooth-as-silk 265bhp three-litre straight-six petrol engine into a car as small as the 1 Series is a recipe for outstanding performance.

**Which? verdict** ★★★★★ **Satisfaction** 85% **Breakdowns** ★★★★★ **Faults** ★★★★★ **Niggles** ★★★★★ **Troublespots** (06-08) No common troublespots reported **Safety** ★★★★★ **Theft of** ★★★★★ **Theft from** ★★★★★ **CO2 (road tax)** 221g/km (£210)



## Mazda6 (2008)

Model: 2.0D TS 5dr hatch

**New** £17,055 **Now** £12,395

**WE FOUND** 2008/57-reg, 4,323 miles, Doncaster

We've mentioned the old Mazda6 in our 'Less than £10,000' section, but the new one is also extremely good value. We'd recommend the diesel, as it drives and steers better than the petrol versions, and is more economical.

**Which? verdict** ★★★★★ **Satisfaction** NA **Breakdowns** NA **Faults** NA **Niggles** NA **Troublespots** (06-08) NA **Safety** ★★★★★ **Theft of** ★★★★★ **Theft from** ★★★★★ **CO2 (road tax)** 147g/km (£120)



## Jaguar XKR (2002)

Model: 4.0 Supercharged convertible auto

**New** £62,645 **Now** £14,000

**WE FOUND** 2002/02-reg, 46,000 miles, London

Think a supercharged Jaguar convertible is out of your reach? Think again. The one we found looks like incredible value with such a low mileage. It'll be expensive to run, but it's hard to ignore this future classic car which cost more than £60,000 just seven years ago.

**Which? verdict** NA **Satisfaction** 87% **Breakdowns** ★★★★★ **Faults** ★★★★★ **Niggles** ★★★★★ **Troublespots** (00-02) Suspension **Safety** NA **Theft of** ★★★★★ **Theft from** ★★★★★ **CO2 (road tax)** 305g/km (£400)