

Lighter colour cars still #1 in South Africa

The latest data from Lightstone shows that white is still the most preferred colour when it comes to vehicle purchases between women and men. When looking at colour car preference between 2010 (where white, silver and black were the most popular choices) and 2015 (where white, silver and grey cars are at the top of the list) there isn't much difference. Of all of the white colour cars purchased, approximately 43% of them are owned by females, which is not far off from their male counterparts who own 57%. When it comes to silver colour vehicles, females own about 44% and males own 56%.

Rory Judd, Head of Online Marketing at MiWay insurance, notes that there are a number of factors owing to why lighter colour cars are the better option. "Cars that are lighter in colour are a good buy as they usually have lower premiums than darker colour cars."

White and silver colour paints are standard and should be readily available at all motor dealerships and repair shops, which means the paint won't have to be ordered in to match the colour of more 'unique' colour cars – which drives up premiums.

Lighter or brighter-coloured cars are more visible on the road and are thus less likely to be involved in a crash during daylight hours than vehicles in lower-visibility colours such as black, blue, grey and green. That said, while lighter colours may have lower premiums, it is not the only factor influencing premiums - what really matters is your driving record and the car you drive. Insurance companies will look at the make and model of a car, the accident rate, how protected the car is in a crash and how expensive it is to repair and replace.

Premiums aside, lighter-colour cars also have a bit more practicality associated to them in that they may be a bit more comfortable in our hot climate than darker cars; and scratches on lighter cars are less noticeable than on darker cars, meaning that lighter colours require less maintenance.

While lighter colour vehicles are great for those looking for a simple "less-is-more" feel or for those who want better insurance premiums, there are still a fair amount of South Africans who prefer more "adventurous" colours when it comes to their vehicles.

According to Lightstone's research into new vehicles purchased, blue cars are in fourth place and red cars are in sixth place of most popular car colours in South Africa. When looking at the 18 732 red vehicles purchased, females own approximately 53%. Red is quite a bold colour and those who opt for a red vehicle may be looking to express themselves with a splash of colour, as opposed to opting for a "play-it-safe" colour such as white or silver. A big trend at the moment is women wearing bright and bold red lipstick, which, when asked, most women will note that they feel more confident and empowered with this colour. It is interesting to note that nail polish maker OPI and Ford recently introduced a limited-edition colour, Race Red, to commemorate the Ford Mustang's 50th anniversary, which could set a trend for colourful car purchases in future.

That said, though, where pink car sales peaked in 2013 with 296 pink vehicles sold in the South African market, this has taken a dip in 2015 where only 12 pink vehicles were sold. Kia Picanto's and Fiat 500's make up the two models that are most favourable in a pink colour.

Cars that are a little more "eccentric" in colour are purchased a lot less frequently, which comes down to the fact that these colour vehicles would have higher premiums owing to the paint colour not being easily accessible, as well as increased difficulty when it comes to trade-ins or re-selling of such colour vehicles – where many people may not have a pink colour preference of used vehicles.

New vehicle sales of pink cars:

COLOUR	TYPE	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
PINK	CHEV Spark	43	67	21	0	0	0
PINK	FIAT 500	0	0	20	126	56	10
PINK	KIA Picanto	0	0	0	170	85	2

New Vehicle Sales:

COLOUR	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
PINK	43	67	41	296	141	12
PURPLE	66	239	366	343	243	126
GREEN	2614	3148	2021	1309	1307	414
YELLOW	1613	1309	675	1641	1032	575
ORANGE	5787	5891	4113	3296	2592	1827
GOLD	3472	4089	4881	4981	6260	2375
BROWN	5510	5582	8441	9271	9286	2890
MAROON	439	311	250	492	5844	3453
BEIGE	8135	9030	14277	16905	13257	4720
RED	26503	37164	44933	49602	45979	18732
BLACK	59103	59050	43149	38888	44866	19424
BLUE	38746	44061	45820	48048	47873	21316
GREY	57497	70986	59924	57219	54936	26276
SILVER	122915	155987	139392	122345	117201	43076
WHITE	128613	188557	188720	200011	208909	90339

Darker and more eccentric colour cars require more maintenance than lighter cars, as scratches are more noticeable and would thus require more frequent paint touch-ups; whereas on white and lighter colour cars, scratches are less noticeable.

Looking at Lightstone's data, it's clear that women have a higher affinity to brightly coloured vehicles, and men steer toward duller colours. Next time you're setting out to buy a vehicle, trends and colours may come and go, but think about what effect the colour of the vehicle will have on your insurance premiums and your pocket in the long run. And if you're a trendsetter at heart, while the cost implications would be a factor in your purchasing decision, there's no doubt you'll opt for something that shows off your personality (and matches your nail polish.)