



## THE MARKET

German-born Opel builds cars that combine classic body styles with rugged and durable mechanical design. Opel is all about questioning conventions and treading new paths. It's a brand with a strong personality, embodied in vehicles driven by people of similar charisma. It offers excellent value for money and the promise of Opel's superb backup service.

Opel has been manufacturing cars in Europe since 1898. The brand's market in Europe accounts for 78 percent of holding company General Motor's European sales. In 2006, Opel was ranked as the fourth most-registered vehicle make in Europe, where 1,563,196 Opel vehicles were sold, giving Opel a market share of 7.2 percent.

Opel's parent company in South Africa, General Motors SA, currently assembles Opel and Isuzu vehicles at its production facility in Port Elizabeth. Opel has a seven percent share of the South African vehicle market, while GM's market share grew by 1.4 percent last year to 13.6 percent. Sales were up 40 percent, compared to an industry average of 26 percent.

Opel is a brand that moves South Africans, with a full range of vehicles catering for most segments of the local market.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

**Local:** In 2007, the Opel Astra GTC 1.9 CDTi was nominated as a 2006 Car of the Year Finalist. In July 2007, GM retained leadership of the "sub-1-ton" segment with the Opel Corsa Utility for a 26th consecutive month. In August 2007, Associated Magazines' popular *Women on Wheels* (WOW) supplement selected Opel as finalists in two categories of the Women's Car of the Year Awards:

- Best Car for Women under R100 000 - Opel Corsa Lite
- Best Car for Women between R100,000 and R200,000 - Opel Tigra

**International:** In January 2007, Opel's new Corsa was named "Car of the Year 2007" and "Best Supermini" by the renowned British consumer magazine *What Car?* The Corsa beat 14 category winners to take the top honours, adding to its rapidly growing list of European awards.

## HISTORY

The Opel brand's history began with a sewing machine designed by Adam Opel in 1862. When the founder died in 1895, Opel's company was not



only leading European sewing machine sales, but also producing over 2,000 bicycles annually.

Opel shifted its focus from sewing machines to cars in 1898. Adam Opel's sons managed the company and acquired car manufacturer Lutzmann. As a result, the cars produced initially by Opel were distributed under the brand name Opel-Lutzmann. For economic reasons, the partnership only lasted two years.

In 1900, Opel entered into a partnership arrangement with French company Automobiles Darracq SA. The models produced by the company were called Opel-Darracq. The cars had a Darracq chassis integrated and installed into Opel car bodies. Opel-Darracq models were developed and unveiled



in 1902, but it was only in 1906 that the brand started marketing its cars. Opel-Darracq grew to become the biggest German car manufacturer by 1913.

Opel's partnership with General Motors began way back in 1929. At that time, the US-based GM had accumulated an 80 percent stake in Opel-Darracq. Adhering to takeover rules, GM bought 100 percent of Opel from the Opel family for a reported \$33.3 million. From then on, Opel dropped the Darracq name and became a GM subsidiary and in-house brand known simply as Opel.

By 1936, with an annual production of 120,923 vehicles, Opel was Europe's largest car manufacturer. Growing steadily over the years, Opel branched out to different countries to set up operations. In 1982, the company built a new plant in Zaragoza, Spain, specifically for the production of the Opel Corsa - the most compact car ever produced by Opel.

There were celebrations in 1983 as the 20-millionth Opel left the Rüsselsheim plant.

In 1985 Opel became the first vehicle manufacturer to offer a complete range of models equipped with catalytic converters. The brand also developed a global sponsorship concept which formed the basis of a strong engagement in dynamic ball sports and partnerships with world-class athletes and teams, in keeping with its strong inclination towards "sporty" design.

1987 brought celebrations of the 125th anniversary of Opel, and in 1994 Opel produced its 30-millionth vehicle.

In 2002, the Corsa - the world's most successful small car - celebrated its 20th birthday and a production record of 11 million units were produced since the first one was delivered in September 1982.

In 2003, Opel distributors around the world began redefining the Opel brand to embrace



a process of new and innovative thinking and adopt a clean-sheet approach to design issues. The Opel Master Brand Strategy focussed on versatility, flexibility, and creative solutions to suit evolving customer product expectations. Opel was aiming at a dramatic shift in perception for the Opel brand in South Africa, for customers to experience a new experience of quality that built on Opel's already solid reputation.

By 2007, Opel's market share in South Africa had reached seven percent, with buyers continually expecting a more dynamic and exciting performance from the brand.

### THE PRODUCT

With an innovative range that has across the board appeal for South African drivers, Opel products include:

#### Passenger cars:

- Corsa Lite
- Corsa
- Astra
- Astra OPC
- Astra GTC
- Astra TwinTop
- Tigra TwinTop

#### MPVs:

- Meriva
- Zafira
- Zafira OPC

#### Commercial vehicles:

- Corsa Utility
- Combo
- Vivaro
- Movano

Opel believes that design expresses the essence of a brand more than anything else, and appearance is one of the major factors in the purchasing decision. The company prides itself on designs that produce the "wow" effect that reflects each product's innovation, dynamic qualities and modernity.

### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The new Opel Corsa will soon be seen on South



African roads and pundits claim the most stunning model will be the OPC version. This hot hatch has a powerful 141 kW 1.6 litre turbo unit under its bonnet.

With its self-confident looks, the new Corsa includes unique design with strong, sporty lines, a newly-developed chassis for safe and agile cornering, and innovative high-tech features that include plenty of interior space, comfort and style.

The Opel Corsa is the fourth generation of a product that has been extremely popular with South African drivers. The OPC model is the perfect expression of the Corsa's character, with superb handling and agility designed to deliver loads of fun on the road.

### PROMOTION

The Opel brand is advertised in various media, including television, cinema, radio, print and the Internet. Promotions are designed around product launches or special events, each appealing to a specific market.

### BRAND VALUES

Opel is a brand that talks "eye to eye" with its customers and avoids what it terms "arrogance" in its partnerships with buyers. Opel's values -

dynamism, versatility, partnership, creativity and quality - all blend to create a brand with a strong character that questions conventions and comes up with solutions that suit every aspect of today's lifestyles.

The Opel brand is about respect, trust and worth. Opel employees believe their daily work must be charged with dynamism, enthusiasm and passion for the brand, enabling them to constantly achieve a little more than customers may expect.

A credo of the Opel brand is "Quality isn't everything - but without quality everything else is in vain". A payoff line used in the past, still remembered by Opel fans today, was, "Opel, the reliable car". The brand is centred on the one standard that counts when measuring quality - the standard its customers would apply.

According to Opel, brand values are the key to everything that bears the Opel "Blitz" logo. The payoff line, "Fresh thinking - better cars", epitomises what the brand is all about, from the

### THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT OPEL

- Opel's history began with founder Adam Opel building sewing machines in 1862
- General Motors and Opel's partnership began in 1929
- In January 2007, Opel's new Corsa was named Car of the Year 2007 and Best Supermini by the renowned British consumer magazine What Car?
- The internationally popular Opel Corsa is the most compact car ever produced by the company
- The Opel Corsa celebrated its 20th birthday in 2002
- In July 2007, GM retained leadership of the "sub-1-ton" segment, with the Opel Corsa Utility selling more than its competitors for 26 consecutive months



Other brands in the GMSA stable



**HUMMER**

