



CAR and DRIVER ROAD TEST

TOYOTA CORONA

Laden with inexpensive luxuries,
the Corona takes on the compacts



If the Toyota Corona is typical of what the Japanese automobile industry is producing, European manufacturers deserve to lose a healthy slice of the American market. At less than \$2000, the Corona is a better buy than practically any car being imported from Europe. As small cars go, it is infinitely suitable for the American market—which is almost certainly the market that Toyota researched. Toyota has really done its homework.

The only fair standard of comparison for a Japanese car is a corresponding European model. Both are bred in the same climate of taxation—taxation by capacity and by gasoline consumption. Of necessity,

this combination spawns small automobiles, though within these size limitations, there's room for wildly divergent designs.

The Toyota's engine is a 115.7 cu. in. 4-cylinder—neither too small to be underpowered nor too big for the economy class. Developing 90 horsepower, it's powerful enough to deliver all the performance you'll find in an economy sedan—our 2-speed automatic model accelerated to 60 mph in less than 18 seconds and topped 80 mph eventually. Surprisingly, the engine is not at all stressed at .77 bhp per cu. in.; as a result, the Toyota is amazingly quiet and economical, especially below 70 mph. It will lope along at that

speed with engine noise hardly noticeable and wind noise almost nonexistent, though the sound and the fury increases above that velocity.

There's nothing too unusual about the extra gadgets you find fitted to the Corona—except that there are so many for a so-called economy car. Instead of the customary grudging concessions to comfort, the Toyota has, as standard, two-speed windshield wipers, electric washers, twin headlights, back-up lights, total and trip odometers, oil pressure warning lights, alternator, high beams and parking brake, plus separate gauges for fuel, water, temperature and oil pressure. In addition, the Corona has the fastest-

Powerful, sturdy, and comfortable as all get-out, the Corona abounds with pleasant touches. It does everything that a European economy sedan does, and it'll probably do it longer.

heating cigarette lighter in the west and a superb heating/ventilating system that directs the air flow just where you want it. The instruments are well laid out and the controls all within reach and logically positioned. All this makes the car seem more like a mini-American sedan than an exotic Oriental device. The one annoying gadget was the turn indicator switch—operated by swivelling the horn ring. Five times out of ten we inadvertently blew the horn trying to signal for a turn.

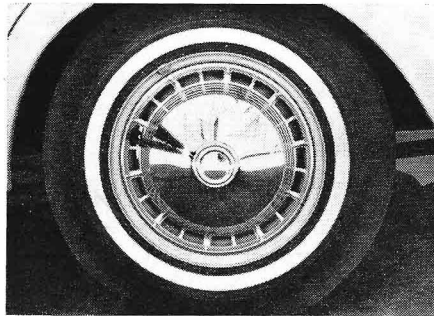
The automatic transmission was prone to creep, making it a bit tiresome on city streets, especially because the Corona needed fairly heavy pressure on the brake pedal. But unlike most small-car automatics, performance didn't suffer with the 2-speed. At full throttle it shifted from low to high at just under 50 mph, and the 0-60 time averages were just a second slower than the 3-speed-manual equipped Corona. Our only complaint about the unit is the 50-mph shift, which makes it impossible to employ first gear via kick-down in passing situations.

The Toyota's acceleration surprised us. Even at high speeds, it kept on accelerating at a fair rate: 70 mph came up in 25.3 seconds and 80 mph in 43.2 seconds. After 80, acceleration tailed off sharply, but the car eventually stumbled over 85 mph, where it felt stable, although slightly out of its element.

Steering and roadholding were fine. Fast cornering induced quite a bit of body roll, but both rear wheels stayed firmly planted on the ground. There was none of the inside rear wheel lift or roll oversteer we've experienced with so many inexpensive cars that share the Toyota's suspension layout (double wishbones with a coil spring/damper unit at the front and rigid rear axle mounted on leaf springs at the rear). The suspension was stiff by American standards, but soft enough to be comfortable. One advantage the Corona has over many economy cars is its longer wheelbase, which gives it a relatively pitch-free, flat ride.

Although the front seat is a bench-type, three adults would be hard-pressed to breathe up front, and the same is true of the rear.

But using that European standard again, the Corona has bags of room for four, plus a generous trunk.

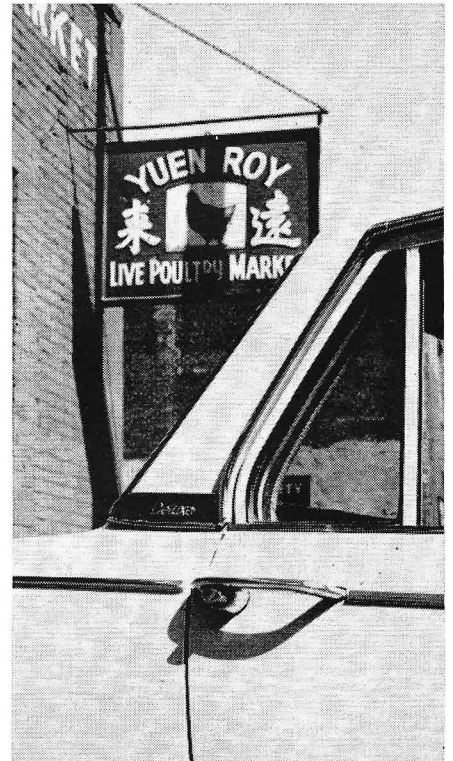


We subjected the 9-in. drum brakes to a series of high-speed panic stops. Staunch pedal pressure was needed to get maximum retardation, but the car did pull up in a straight line, although a rear wheel usually locked up as the speed dropped below 20 mph. Only after considerable thrashing about was there any sign of fade, and then it was accompanied by the usual tendency to pull either to the left or right. But for normal use, the finned drums are more than adequate.

The automatic choke needed some jiggering on cold mornings, and un-

til it was well warmed up, the engine tended to run out of power at low rpm and stall. It also stalled when the engine got hot in bumper-to-bumper Manhattan traffic.

The real selling points of an economy car have to be reliability and longevity, and that kind of data comes from year-round, day-in, day-out driving. In the short time we had the Corona, we could feel a certain solidity of character in the car. The Toyota is well built. When we flung it across very rough surfaces, there were no rattles, clonks, or bangs. The suspension feels as if it's going to last, and the engine sounds tireless and comfortable at cruising speeds. Toyota has approached the Corona's design so well that we can be pretty certain they aren't skimping on materials or quality control. The car is designed to an excellent scale—bigger than most economy cars, yet quite a bit smaller than the compacts. The engine is just the right size and produces the proper amount of power to ensure quiet running, fuel economy and durability. In a class where you get only what you pay for, the Toyota Corona is full value for the money. **C/D**



PHOTOGRAPHY: GENE BUTERA

The Japanese are famous for making things better and cheaper than everybody else. Cameras, tape recorders, motorcycles—and now, compliments of Toyota, comes a real American-style compact.



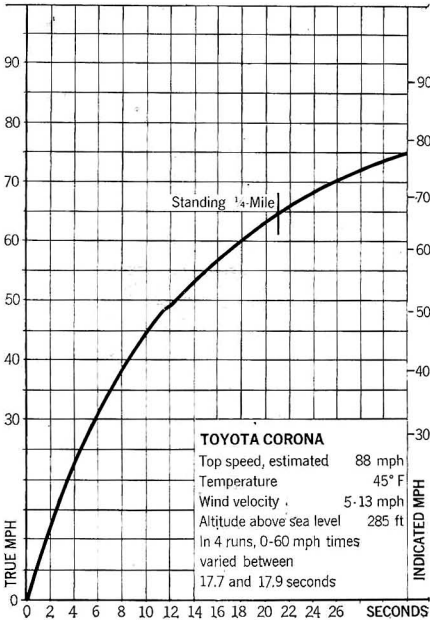
TOYOTA CORONA

Importer: Toyota Motor Distributors
231 Johnson Ave.
Newark, New Jersey

Price as Tested: \$2000.00

ACCELERATION

	Seconds
Zero To	5.6
30 mph	8.7
40 mph	12.6
50 mph	17.8
60 mph	25.3
70 mph	25.3
Standing 1/4 mile	65 mph in 20.9



ENGINE

Water-cooled four-in-line, cast iron block, 3 main bearings
Bore x stroke . . . 3.46 x 3.07 in, 87.8 x 77.9 mm
Displacement . . . 115.7 cu. in, 1897 cc
Compression ratio . . . 8.0 to one
Carburetion . . . Single downdraft 2-bbl
Valve gear . . . Pushrod-operated overhead valves
Power (SAE) . . . 90 bhp @ 4600 rpm
Torque . . . 110 lbs-ft @ 2600 rpm
Specific power output . . . 0.77 bhp per cu. in, 47.6 bhp per liter
Usable range of engine speeds. 500-5000 rpm
Electrical system . 12-volt, 35 amp-hr battery, 360W alternator
Fuel recommended . . . Regular
Mileage . . . 23-28 mpg
Range on 12-gallon tank . . . 276-336 miles

DRIVE TRAIN

Transmission . 2-speed automatic plus torque converter

Gear	Ratio	Overall mph/1000 rpm	Max mph
1st	2.05	7.58	-8.5
2nd	1.82	6.73	9.6
Final drive ratio	1.00	3.70	17.5
			88

Final drive ratio . . . 3.70 to one

CHASSIS

Wheelbase . . . 95.3 in
Track . . . F: 50.0, R: 50.0 in
Length . . . 161.8 in
Width . . . 61.0 in
Height . . . 55.9 in
Ground Clearance . . . 7.1 in
Curb Weight . . . 2139 lbs
Test Weight . . . 2387 lbs
Weight distribution front/rear . . . 56.8/43.2%
Pounds per bhp (test weight) . . . 25.62
Suspension F: Ind., unequal-length wishbones, coil springs, anti-sway bar
R: Rigid axle, semi-elliptic leaf springs
Brakes . . . 9.1-in drums F & R
132.4 sq in swept area
Steering . . . Recirculating ball
Turns, lock to lock . . . 3.5
Turning circle . . . 16.2 ft
Tires and wheels . . . 5.60-13 on 5.0-in.

CHECK LIST

ENGINE

Starting . . . Good
Response . . . Fair
Noise . . . Fair
Vibration . . . Fair

DRIVE TRAIN

Transmission Linkage . . . Good
Power-To-Ground
Transmission . . . Excellent

BRAKES

Response . . . Good
Pedal Pressure . . . Poor
Fade Resistance . . . Fair
Smoothness . . . Good
Directional Stability . . . Good

STEERING

Response . . . Good
Accuracy . . . Very Good
Feedback . . . Good
Road Feel . . . Very Good

SUSPENSION

Harshness Control . . . Fair
Roll Stiffness . . . Good
Tracking . . . Good
Pitch Control . . . Fair
Shock Damping . . . Fair

CONTROLS

Location . . . Fair
Relationship . . . Good
Small Controls . . . Good

INTERIOR

Visibility . . . Very Good
Instrumentation . . . Good
Lighting . . . Good
Entry/Exit . . . Fair
Front Seating Comfort . . . Fair
Front Seating Room . . . Fair
Rear Seating Comfort . . . Fair
Rear Seating Room . . . Fair
Storage Space . . . Good
Wind Noise . . . Good
Road Noise . . . Fair

WEATHER PROTECTION

Heater . . . Very Good
Defroster . . . Very Good
Ventilation . . . Excellent
Weather Sealing . . . Good
Windshield Wiper Action . . . Excellent

QUALITY CONTROL

Materials, Exterior . . . Very Good
Materials, Interior . . . Good
Exterior Finish . . . Good
Interior Finish . . . Good
Hardware and Trim . . . Fair

GENERAL

Service Accessibility . . . Very Good
Luggage Space . . . Fair
Bumper Protection . . . Fair
Exterior Lighting . . . Very Good
Resistance to Crosswinds . . . Very Good

