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Celica Supra is powered by a dohc fuel-injected Six that produces 145 hp. Pop-up lights distinguish Supra from the other models.

FIRSTHAND REPORT

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Driving the 1982 Toyota Celicas

Toyota built its first double-overhead-camshaft (dohc) engine for its beautiful prototype 2000GT sports car in 1965 and began selling twin-cam Sixes and Fours in production cars two years later. Since that time, some 400,000 of the exotic Toyota engines have been produced for both street and racing cars.

Latest in the series, a fuel-injected, 145-hp, 2.8-liter dohc Six,

comes to the United States as standard equipment in Toyota's all-new Celica Supra. And that's just one of the high-zoot features in this Camaro-class Nipponese flyer.

Toyota's Celica, a perfectly adequate and well-built sporty coupe at a reasonable price, has been around since the early 1970s. The mid-'70s brought the original liftback, which looked like an old Mustang fastback, and then the cleanly restyled next-generation coupe and liftback.

This year, the four-cylinder Celica sports all-new sheet metal and a host of new features and refinements. It's a half-inch longer, an inch wider and over an inch taller,

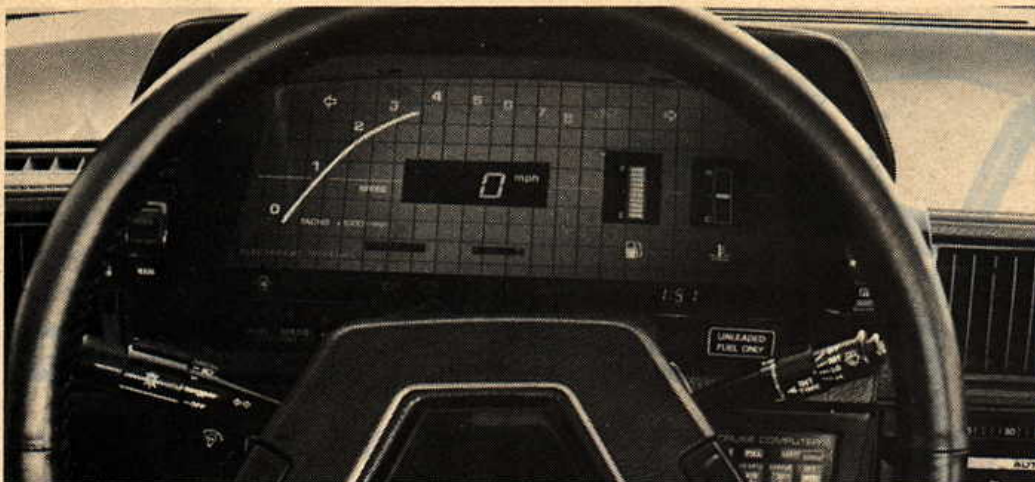
has wider tread front and rear, and a bit more front leg- and headroom. Rack-and-pinion steering replaces the former recirculating ball; there are vented front disc brakes vs. the previous solid discs, headlamps that flip up to vertical from their normal, aerodynamically angled positions, and slick new formal coupe and liftback body shapes—the latter of which splits Japanese wind-tunnel air with an impressive 0.34 coefficient of drag (Cd), which is equal to that of the Porsche 924.

But the new Supra is a whole different ball game. In addition to the new, electronically injected, twin-

(Please turn to page 138)

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Digital dash with a tachometer that simulates a torque curve is rather gimmicky, but we liked it. Among the other features are a trip computer and eight-way adjustable seats.

DRIVING THE 1982 TOYOTA CELICAS (Continued from page 113)

cam engine, it boasts semi-trailing-arm independent rear suspension, variable-assist power rack-and-pinion steering, four-wheel ventilated disc brakes, a limited-slip differential, pop-up halogen headlamps and a choice of five-speed manual or four-speed lockup overdrive automatic transmission.

Inside are a space-age, eight-way adjustable driver's seat with an air-bladder lumbar adjuster, videogame-look digital/graphic instrumentation, a five-speaker home-quality stereo system and a super trip computer.

So special are these new cars to Toyota that the company brought us all the way to Japan to see and drive them, which we did at the Fuji Speedway road-racing course.

Home-grown design

The styling, though a bit controversial, tends to grow on you. Interestingly, the previous Celica, considered a design coup and very successful in America, was styled by Amer-

clichéd, American-style, formal coupe. But at least the coupe doesn't come with a half-vinyl roof and coach lamps.

The Celica models

The Celica's shovel-nose front looks functional but seems a bit too radically sloped, and the "rock-forward" headlamps are too cute and gimmicky. The big front bumper is significantly changed. The 2.4-liter, overhead-cam, four-cylinder engine (which Toyota builds especially for the American market) puts out the same willing 96 hp at 4,800 rpm and the same 129 ft. lb. of torque at 2,800 rpm as it did before; the MacPherson-strut front and live-axle, coil-spring rear suspensions give about the same ride and handling; and the whole feeling is very familiar: competent and adequate, but less than thrilling.

There is better steering response from the new rack-and-pinion steering, and the cars seemed to corner better around the speedway than I

percent more torque than last year, a modified MacPherson-strut front suspension (offset spring for less friction and twice as much caster for improved on-center steering feel), variable-boost (less assist at higher speed) power rack-and-pinion steering replacing the old recirculating ball, and fully independent rear suspension instead of the previous live axle. The result is livelier performance and *tremendously* better handling, especially from the near-looking, big-tired, flared-fendere version, which Toyota calls its Performance Pack.

There was no opportunity for straight-line acceleration testing, but Toyota says the Supra does 0 to 100 kph (62 mph) in 8.8 seconds and quarter-mile from rest in 16.4 seconds. Subjectively, we felt the new Six's power was inadequate, particularly at off-the-line low rpm, considering the cost and the complexity of its dohc valve train. Another 15 or 20 hp would be very helpful in properly propelling the Supra's 2,900 pounds—especially that Performance Pack version. The five-speed manual transmission, however, is excellent, the four-speed lockup overdrive automatic is one of the industry's best, and the four-wheel disc brakes were exceptional in stopping power and fade-free stability.

Incredible eight-way driver's seat

The Supra's cockpit was basically the Celica's with more flash and gadgetry. Personally, we liked the Star Wars video dashboard. But it should have some sort of oil-pressure gauge and either ammeter or voltmeter. The incredible eight-way driver's seat sets a new industry standard for adjustability—fore/aft, recline, headrest vertical, headrest fore/aft, seat height, thigh support and ad-

ered a design coup and very successful in America, was styled by *Americans* in Toyota's California Calty Design studio—and was not very successful in Japan.

This time around, they did it themselves, trying to please their own countrymen, as well as everyone else. The result is an aggressively handsome fastback shape somewhat spoiled by overdecoration and incongruity of detail at both ends, and a

ing, and the cars seemed to corner better around the speedway than I expected—due partly to the increased tread width, but largely due to the better-than-stock tires fitted to our test cars. The interior, of course, is all-new and very nice, with a full set of gauges (attractive and functional) in the panel, tasteful decor and trim and a new heating system that allows left/right mixing so both driver and passenger are comfortable. There's also, at least, almost enough legroom for long-legged American drivers. The only two sour notes (for me) are the inverted "V" steering hub (I still think the spokes should be horizontal for proper driving) and a flip-up ashtray lid that interferes with the radio controls.

The Supra model

The Supra, on the other hand, has 25 percent more horsepower and 7

headrest vertical, headrest fore/af seat height, thigh support and adjustable air-bladder lumbar support for driving comfort. There's a little rubber squeeze pump to inflate the lumbar bladder and three buttons on the side bolster to exhaust air in just the right places to conform precisely to your shape and preference. Another gimmick, perhaps, but darned clever one.

The radio, in recent Japanese fashion, is marvelous in its hi-tech look, sound and complexity. And there's a trip computer in the dash.

The neatest gadget of all, however, a Navicom computer-controlled electronic compass that graphically displays direction and distance to a precoded destination, is for the Japanese home market only. We understand they can't produce enough Navicoms this year to offer them in export cars. Or maybe they figure we wouldn't understand it yet. **P**

SPECIFICATIONS: 1982 TOYOTA CELICA

	Liftback, coupe	Supra
Wheelbase (in.)	98.4	103.0
Length (in.)	176.6	183.5
Width (in.)	65.6	66.3
Height (in.)	52.0	52.0
Curb weight (lbs.)	2,559	2,910
Engine (cyl./type)	4/in-line	6/in-line
Valve train	sohc	dohc
Displacement	2.4 liters	2.8 liters
Horsepower/rpm	96/4,800 rpm	145/5,600 rpm
Torque/ft.-lb.	129/2,800 rpm	155/4,400 rpm
Fuel cap. (gal.)	16.1	16.1