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★ IMPORT CAR OF THE YEAR 1982 ★

THE COMPLETE AUTOMOTIVE MAGAZINE • APRIL 1982

MOTOR TREND

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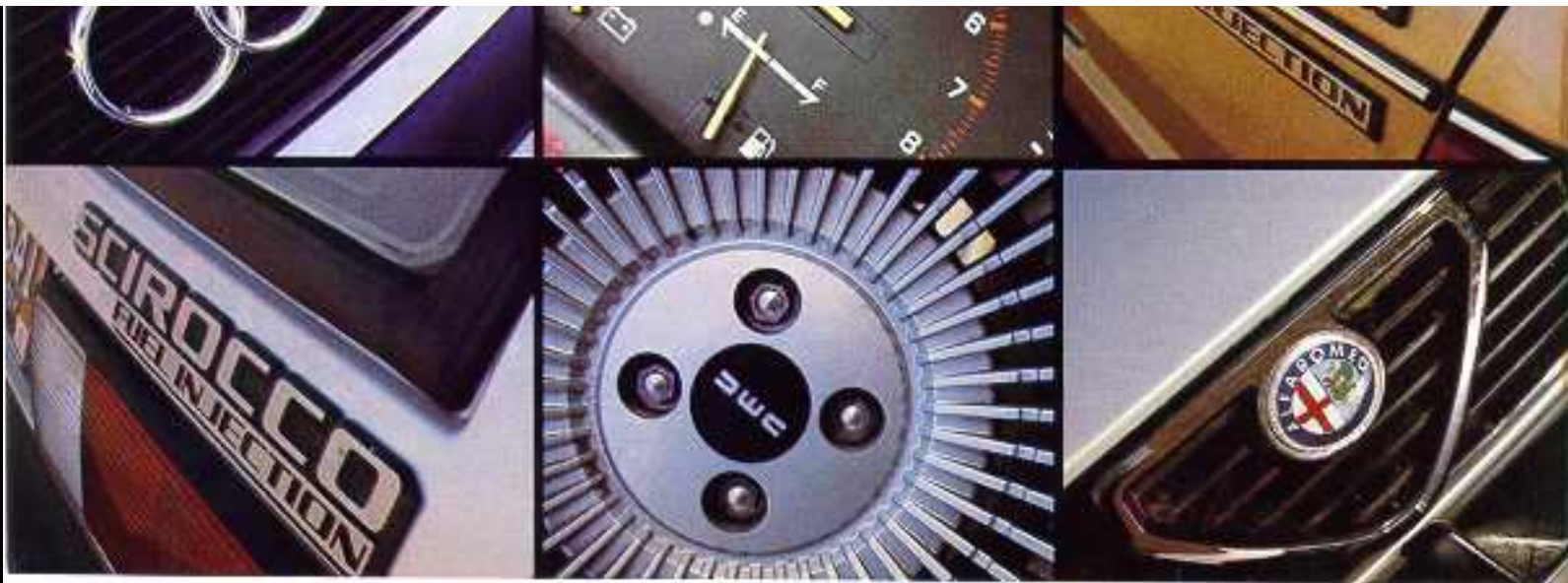
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**MOTOR
TREND**

MOTOR TREND'S 1982 Import Car of the Year

This year's competition brings
new meaning to the word "close"

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETERSEN PHOTOGRAPHIC

With a field as big (14 cars) and as varied (everything from a subcompact Renault to a \$50,000 Mercedes) as the 1982 *Motor Trend* Import Car of the Year competition, one might expect a single car to walk away from the rest. It didn't quite happen that way, though. As a matter of fact, this year's contest was the closest ever.

For our Import Car of the Year testing we returned to Riverside International Raceway. Unlike *any* car of the year competition before, import or domestic, we had to evaluate 14 cars, an all-time high. As a result of so varied a field and our extensive testing (running over the better part of 10 days last December) we noted that, unlike the recent domestic Car of the Year program, there was no runaway favorite of the seven judges. This time, a range of staff-preferred cars appeared, indicating that import auto makers, both European and Japanese, have set similar handling, performance, operating economy, comfort, and styling goals. It would also indicate that import manufacturers are having similar success at attaining those goals.

THE NOMINEES

By early autumn of last year we were getting a pretty good idea of what our 1982 Import Car of the Year field would look like. The qualifications for our import run-off are just like those of its domestic counterpart: To be considered, a given car must be genuinely new for the 1982 model

passenger isolation in a restyled body that still looks like a Honda, the new Accord is indicative of the Japanese company's policy of making not only better cars but better Hondas, too.

At the top of the money pile is the Mercedes-Benz 380SEC. Essentially a 380SEL

tion of the Celica ST in 1971. Eleven years and two generations of Celicas later, Toyota has redone its Shetland pony car. The new Celica shares only engine and transmission with its 1981 predecessor.

The Toyota Celica Supra is so changed from its previous version as to be an alto-

counterpart: To be considered, a given car must be genuinely new for the 1982 model year. New grilles or taillamps don't count. The car would also have to be on sale by the time the April issue was on the newsstands. In spite of these requirements, we still ended up with 14 nominees—a record number.

Among the nominees there were a few cars that only just missed eligibility for last year's Import Car of the Year showdown: Audi Coupe, Datsun 280ZX Turbo, and Alfa Romeo GTV V-6. The same could be said for the Volvo GLT Turbo; and since the station wagon version of this model is new for 1982, we chose it for this year's contest.

BMW's 528e may not look like a new car, but underneath its visually similar skin the car bristles with improvements, most of which have boosted economy with no drastic deterioration of performance.

Honda's new Accord promised to be as significant a new model as the redesigned Civic of 1980, a former Import Car of the Year winner. With improved comfort and

At the top of the money pile is the Mercedes-Benz 380SEC. Essentially a 380SEL Coupe, the M-B flagship is the replacement for the now-discontinued 380SLC. With its 3.8-liter V-8 and curb weight approaching 3800 lb., the SEC offers El Dorado luxury, German style.

In the same class, on paper, as the Accord is the Nissan Stanza. Replacing the long-in-the-tooth 510, the Stanza offers buyers an Accord-like package for around \$600 less. The Stanza marks Nissan's first serious commitment to front-wheel drive.

The 5-door version of the Renault Le Car, or Renault 5 as it is known in Europe, has been sold on the Continent for quite a few years now. The U.S. model was introduced very late in the summer of 1981. Why Renault and AMC chose to wait this long has always been something of a mystery to us. In 5-door form, Le Car is still the Gallic charmer we all know. With a price of \$5600, it is the lowest priced entrant in the Car of the Year competition.

Toyota practically invented the imported pony car market with the introduc-

The Toyota Celica Supra is so changed from its previous version as to be an altogether different car in type and image. A 2.8-liter twin cam driving a 5-speed transmission in a car with 4-wheel independent suspension is the kind of stuff that makes pulses quicken. That conservative Toyota introduced this car is both amazing and wonderful. Toyota has taken the Supra and changed it from merely a 6-cylinder Celica to a GT car that's more than capable of taking on Mazda's RX-7 or Datsun's Z.

Volkswagen's two entries in Import Car of the Year are models that supercede previous offerings. The Scirocco has been restyled, made larger and a bit heavier. Due to improved aerodynamics, the fuel economy has been increased as well. Volkswagen has also chosen to soften the Scirocco, both in line and in the ride department. The firm's Quantum replaces the Dasher line. Unlike the Dasher, which was available in 2- and 4-door hatchbacks and station wagon body styles, the Quantum is offered as a wagon, a 4-door sedan with conventional trunk, and a sportier hatchback coupe.

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Both Quantum and Scirocco are powered by VW's fuel-injected 1715cc OHC four.

Of all the nominees for Import Car of the Year, only one could be considered a truly new car—that is, a car that didn't exist in any form last model year: the De Lorean. John Z's dream is finally here,

with its rear-mounted Volvo V-6, Lotus-designed chassis, and gullwing doors being among the more noteworthy engineering features. There has been a lot of ballyhoo about the De Lorean, and we were interested to see how it would stack up in the Car of the Year competition.

Once the cars were marshaled at Riverside International Raceway that cold Monday morning in mid-December, we were ready to start 10 days of testing, comparing, analyzing, and sharing our thoughts to determine who would walk away with the marbles.

Alfa Romeo GTV V-6



The Alfa Romeo GTV's newly introduced 2.5-liter V-6 has successfully transformed what was once called the Alfetta into a lusty sports car. Alfa Romeo has done an excellent job of adapting the car's running gear (many components of which were designed with the original 2.0-liter 4-cylinder in mind) to the more powerful V-6. This powerplant breaks with the firm's tradition in several areas. The obligatory dual overhead camshafts are gone. True, there are two cams, but since we're talking about a V-6, that's only one cam per cylinder bank. The GTV V-6 uses Bosch L-Jetronic air-controlled fuel injection, which not only helps the car's around-town driveability, but makes cold starts a snap. Throttle response is excellent, and the drivetrain is so pleasing that it makes it easy to overlook any other shortcomings.

Base price	\$17,455	Steering	Rack and pinion
Engine	2400cc (151-cid)V-6	Brakes, F/R	Disc/disc
Horsepower (SAE net)	154 at 5400 rpm	Tires	195/60HR15 Pirelli P6
Torque (lb.-ft., SAE net)	152 at 3200 rpm	Wheelbase	94.5 in.
Transmission	5-speed manual	Length	167.7 in.
Drive wheels	Rear	Height	52.3 in.
Suspension, F/R	Independent/disc	Curb weight	2820 lb.

Audi Coupe



The Audi Coupe was derived directly from the firm's 4000 sedan just as the Rabbit begat the Scirocco. The 2144cc 5-cylinder engine winds out a respectable 100 hp, more than enough to move the 2500-lb. car along quite smartly. The powerplant drives the front wheels through a 5-speed manual gearbox with overdrive ratios in 4th and 5th. Inside, the Coupe's 4000 ancestry is apparent mainly in the instrument panel, which is straight out of the lower-priced sedan. All major instruments are in the driver's primary field of vision, flanked by switches for headlamps, emergency flashers, and rear defroster. The deeply contoured front seats are second only to those in the Supra or perhaps one of the more expensive offerings from Recaro.

Base price	\$12,370	Steering	Rack and pinion, power assist
Engine	2144cc (132-cid) inline 5	Brakes, F/R	Disc/drum
Horsepower (SAE net)	100 at 5100 rpm	Tires	185/60HR14 Firestone 5950
Torque (lb.-ft., SAE net)	112 at 3000 rpm	Wheelbase	98.8 in.
Transmission	5-speed manual	Length	177.0 in.
Drive wheels	Front	Height	53.1 in.
Suspension, F/R	Independent/independent	Curb weight	2507 lb.

Transmission	5-speed manual	Length	161.7 in.
Drive wheels	Rear	Height	52.3 in.
Suspension, F/R	Independent/independent	Curb weight	2823 lb.



BMW 528e



The 528e is powered by a new 2.7-liter inline 6-cylinder engine dubbed "eta" by the factory. Unlike the 528i engine, which was one of the lower displacement versions of BMW's big block six, the eta is, in fact, a bored and stroked variant of the firm's newer small six used in the European-market 320, 323i, and 520 models. While net horsepower has dropped from the 528i's 171 at 5500 rpm to 121 at 4250 rpm, the new engine's peak torque output has remained the same (170 lb.-ft.), with maximum torque occurring at a much lower crankshaft speed. In spite of the loss of 50 hp, the BMW 528e is as capable a sports sedan as its predecessor. BMW has also reduced the weight of the new 5-series by 440 lb. compared with the previous model. As a result, performance has deteriorated only marginally, while there has been a marked improvement in handling. The whole interior seems to say that driver distraction has no place in a true luxury car. And the 528e is a true luxury car.

Base price	820,325	Steering	Recirculating ball, power assist
Engine	2693cc (164-cid) inline 6	Brakes, F/R	Disc/disc
Horsepower (SAE net)	121 at 4250 rpm	Tires	195/70HR14 Michelin XVS
Torque (lb.-ft., SAE net)	170 at 3250 rpm	Wheelbase	103.3 in.
Transmission	5-speed manual	Length	189.0 in.
Drive wheels	Rear	Height	55.7 in.
Suspension, F/R	Independent/independent	Curb weight	2860 lb.

Drive wheels	Front	Height	53.1 in.
Suspension, F/R	Independent/independent	Curb weight	2507 lb.



Datsun 280ZX Turbo



The turbocharged version of Datsun's popular sports car went on sale too late to be considered for last year's Import Car of the Year competition. Since then, Datsun has made several important changes to the Turbo ZX. Thanks to revisions made to the independent rear suspension, the Turbo's tendency to yaw during spirited cornering has been effectively eliminated. The same suspension changes have firmed up the ride noticeably, yet the ZX still squats excessively under hard acceleration. An additional transmission—a Borg Warner T-5 5-speed overdrive manual—has been made available for the '82 model year. Outside, the Turbo ZX wears body-colored urethane bumpers with black rub strips that now line up with a set of body side moldings. The interior has been spruced up with better quality carpeting and spiffier upholstery. Although the most expensive car sold by Datsun on these shores, the 280ZX Turbo does afford the enthusiast a level of performance unequalled at even twice its entry fee.

Base price	517,299	Steering	Rack and pinion, power assist
Engine	2754cc (168-cid) inline 6	Brakes, F/R	Disc/disc
Horsepower (SAE net)	180 at 5600 rpm	Tires	205/60R15 Bridgestone Potenza
Torque (lb.-ft., SAE net)	202 at 2800 rpm	Wheelbase	91.3 in.
Transmission	5-speed manual	Length	170.0 in.
Drive wheels	Rear	Height	51.0 in.
Suspension, F/R	Independent/independent	Curb weight	2867 lb.

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De Lorean



From its Giugiaro-designed stainless steel body to its Lotus-engineered chassis, the De Lorean is *flash*. The high rear weight bias makes for some interesting handling for the driver who gets into a corner a bit too fast and/or uses the brakes at the wrong time. The Peugeot-Renault-Volvo (PRV) 2849cc V-6 dangling out past the rear axle can become a mighty pendulum in the hands of an inexperienced pilot. But that isn't going to be a major concern to most De Lorean drivers; handled with respect, the De Lorean can be a blast to drive. The passenger compartment is like a cocoon enveloping its occupants. The car's high beltline, deeply raked windscreen, low seating position, and thick A-pillars combine to make the interior seem claustrophobic to some, intimate to others. At best, visibility to the sides and rear is restricted. As a first effort, the De Lorean is good—quite good—though the car could benefit from further refinement. Still, all the bits and pieces



Honda Accord LX



The Accord has been completely restyled, sharing no sheet metal with the first generation car. Honda's designers have gone to great lengths to preserve the Accord identity while eliminating the visual clutter of the older car. The second-generation car is powered by the same 1751cc overhead cam four as last year's Accord. The underpinnings are derived from the '81 Accord as well, although there have been some modifications to improve road isolation at the front. The steering—rack and pinion—is power assisted on the LX model tested here. Unlike most assisted steering these days, the Accord LX's is speed sensitive. That is, the boost decreases—to zero by 35 mph—as vehicle speed increases. The LX version of the Accord is even more luxurious than before. The crushed velour upholstery of earlier LX models has given way to a subdued corded fabric, and color-keyed trim is used to better advantage than on previous models. On the whole, the interior is

...and, of course, the big question is good—quite good—though the car could benefit from further refinement. Still, all the bits and pieces are there—high-tech backbone chassis, 4-wheel independent suspension, 5-speed gearbox, high-sex body work, and gullwing doors. That's more than you get in some GT cars costing much more.

Base price	\$25,000	Steering	Rack and pinion
Engine	2549cc (174-cid) V-6	Brakes, F/R	Disc/disc
Horsepower (SAE net)	130 at 5500 rpm	Tires	Front: 195/80HR14; Rear: 235/60HR15 Goodyear NCT
Torque (lb.-ft., SAE net)	162 at 2750 rpm	Wheelbase	94.8 in.
Transmission	5-speed manual	Length	165.0 in.
Drive wheels	Rear	Height	44.9 in.
Suspension, F/R	Independent/independent	Curb weight	2712 lb.



Mercedes-Benz 380SEC



The 380SEC returns the firm to its original "cut-down sedan" approach. The SEC rides on a 112.2-in. wheelbase (down 8.6 in. from the SEL's wheelbase) yet still offers rear seat occupants substantially more room than the SLC. With an overall length approaching 200 in., the SEC is actually longer than a 1982 Pontiac Bonneville G. It is powered by the same light alloy 3839cc 155-hp V-8 as the 380SEL. The coupe's suspension is just like that of the S-class sedan as well, with the same diagonal-pivot independent rear suspension that is one of the company's engineering trademarks. The car's 4-wheel disc brakes do an admirable job of hauling the car down from speed. The SEC is pure Mercedes-Benz inside. The firm, leather-covered seats (fabric is also available) provide the right level of support in the right places. The instrument panel is as straightforward as a driver could want. At nearly \$50,000 a throw, the 380SEC offers the buyer all the items you'd expect, including climate-control air conditioning.

Base price	\$49,827	Steering	Recirculating ball, power assist
Engine	3839cc (234-cid) V-8	Brakes, F/R	Disc/disc
Horsepower (SAE net)	155 at 4750 rpm	Tires	205/70HR14 Michelin XVS
Torque (lb.-ft., SAE net)	196 at 2750 rpm	Wheelbase	112.2 in.
Transmission	4-speed automatic	Length	199.2 in.
Drive wheels	Rear	Height	55.4 in.
Suspension, F/R	Independent/independent	Curb weight	3760 lb.

a subdued corded fabric, and color-keyed trim is used to better advantage than on previous models. On the whole, the interior is more comfortable than before due to increased leg, shoulder, and elbow room and recontoured seats front and rear. Honda has taken yet another very good car and reengineered it without eroding its personality. The result is an even better Accord.

Base price	\$8449	Steering	Rack and pinion, power assist
Engine	1751cc (107-cid) inline 4	Brakes, F/R	Disc/drum
Horsepower (SAE net)	75 at 4500 rpm	Tires	165/70SR13 Michelin X2X
Torque (lb.-ft., SAE net)	96 at 3000 rpm	Wheelbase	96.5 in.
Transmission	5-speed manual	Length	165.8 in.
Drive wheels	Front	Height	53.3 in.
Suspension, F/R	Independent/independent	Curb weight	2259 lb.



Nissan Stanza



The new Stanza shares no componentry with previous front-wheel-drive Datsuns. The electronically controlled 4-cylinder powerplant cranks out 88 hp from its 1974 cc, driving the front wheels through a 5-speed overdrive transaxle. And instead of looking like something from an oversized 310, the Stanza's all-independent suspension, with MacPherson struts both front and back, seems more like that of a Honda Accord. Priced at an even \$1000, the optional XE package gives you a rear window wiper with washer, tilt steering wheel, instrumentation package (tach, voltmeter, and an oil pressure gauge), power steering, height and lumbar adjustments for the driver's seat, cloth upholstery, AM/FM stereo radio, wider whitewall radial tires, and a set of bright trim rings. More than enough useful bits and pieces to warrant the package's grand tab. The Stanza is as different from Nissan's previous front-drive products as the Rabbit was from the Beetle. Nissan has placed its family car well ahead of the competition.

Base price	\$7799	Steering	Rack and pinion, power assist
Engine	1974cc (120-cid) inline 4	Brakes, F/R	Disc/drum
Horsepower (SAE net)	88 at 5200 rpm	Tires	165/70SR13 Bridgestone RD115
Torque (lb.-ft., SAE net)	112 at 2800 rpm	Wheelbase	97.2 in.
Transmission	5-speed manual	Length	170.9 in.
Drive wheels	Front	Height	53.9 in.
Suspension, F/R	Independent/independent	Curb weight	2215 lb.

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Renault Le Car 5-door



Mechanically, the Le Car 5-door is identical to the 3-door that Renault and AMC have been selling all these years. Unlike most small front-wheel-drive cars, the baby Renault mounts its engine inline rather than transversely. The 1397cc engine was the least powerful of our Car of the Year contestants, producing only 51 hp in federal emissions trim. With so few cubic inches on tap, one



Toyota Celica Supra



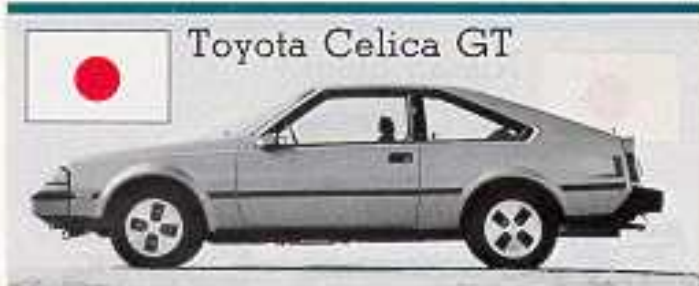
This year Toyota's Celica Supra has been decked out with the kind of stuff car nuts dream about: a 2.8-liter twin-cam six, independent rear suspension, limited slip differential, all in a shape that would put the *Millennium Falcon* to shame. With the '82 Supra, Toyota has leveled its guns (big ones) squarely at Datsun's 280ZX 2+2. The Supra offers its front occupants a much more comfortable seat than does the Datsun. Passengers in the rear will

powerful of our Car of the Year contestants, producing only 51 hp in federal emissions trim. With so few cubic inches on tap, one finds oneself constantly stirring the 4-speed manual gearbox to keep things moving. But then, Le Car is basic transport, not a weekend warrior sedan for frustrated racers. Not that the Le Car can't be driven with a good deal of gusto. But those wheeling the miniature Renault at speed will discover the dreaded French roll first hand. The car's supple 4-wheel torsion-bar independent suspension makes Le Car ride like a much larger car, but also induces catamaranesque cornering attitudes. To some it's a small price to pay. The combination of better access (5 doors) to a moderately roomy interior in a car that's less than 12 ft. long with a base price of around \$5600 makes the Renault Le Car an interesting addition to the economy market.

Base price	\$5595	Steering	Rack and pinion
Engine	1397cc (85-cid) inline 4	Brakes, F/R	Disc/drum
Horsepower (SAE net)	51 at 5000 rpm	Tires	145SR13 Michelin XZX
Torque (lb.-ft., SAE net)	71 at 3000 rpm	Wheelbase	95.2 in.
Transmission	4-speed manual	Length	142.5 in.
Drive wheels	Front	Height	55.0 in.
Suspension, F/R	Independent/independent	Curb weight	1820 lb.

280ZX 2+2. The Supra offers its front occupants a much more comfortable seat than does the Datsun. Passengers in the rear will find the Supra much more accommodating as well. A lot of effort went into the Supra's styling. Since financial considerations dictated the Supra would have to share sheet metal with the 4-cylinder Celica from the firewall rearward, as before, the designers decided to rework the nose by lowering and extending it. The result is a look that is both elegant and aggressive. At a price just shy of \$15,000 in base form, the Supra comes with a list of standard equipment that a few cars costing \$10,000 more would be wise to offer. With seats that are equal to (some say better than) most offerings from Recaro, automatic temperature-set climate control, and cruise control, the entry-level Supra could never be called stripped.

Base price	\$14,508	Steering	Rack and pinion, power assist
Engine	2759cc (168-cid) inline 6	Brakes, F/R	Disc/disc
Horsepower (SAE net)	145 at 5000 rpm	Tires	225/60HR14 Dunlop SP Sport D3
Torque (lb.-ft., SAE net)	155 at 4400 rpm	Wheelbase	100.0 in.
Transmission	5-speed manual	Length	183.5 in.
Drive wheels	Rear	Height	52.0 in.
Suspension, F/R	Independent/independent	Curb weight	2810 lb.



Toyota Celica GT

The Toyota Celica series was launched in this country at the May 1971 Los Angeles Auto Expo. With a sporty coupe body, decent fuel economy, and a base price of \$2598, the Toyota sport coupe sold like the proverbial hotcakes. This year the Celica has been reworked, and, like the previous models, the current version is sportier than any of its predecessors. Although available in either notchback or hatchback body styles, only the latter can be said to be a successful restyle of the previous model. The chiseled nose carries a set of single rectangular headlamps that flop back when not in use. The system is similar in concept, if not execution, to that of Porsche's 928. In the Celica one finds a well laid out—and very comprehensive—instrument panel. All of the gauges are illuminated from behind for easy reading at night. In fact, everything in the interior is the same as the Supra except for the seats, which are nowhere near as nice as those in the 6-cylinder Celica, but still very good. And, if you must have the super eight-way adjustable seats from the Supra, Toyota makes them available—along with Supra wheels and Supra flares.

Base price	\$6389	Steering	Rack and pinion, power assist
Engine	2368cc (144-cid) inline 4	Brakes, F/R	Disc/drum
Horsepower (SAE net)	96 at 4600 rpm	Tires	185/75R14 Michelin X
Torque (lb.-ft., SAE net)	129 at 2400 rpm	Wheelbase	98.4 in.
Transmission	5-speed manual	Length	176.8 in.
Drive wheels	Rear	Height	52.0 in.
Suspension, F/R	Independent/solid axle	Curb weight	2533 lb.



Volkswagen Quantum

The Quantum replaces Volkswagen's Dasher series, and is propelled by Volkswagen's solidly established 1715cc OHC 4-cylinder engine. The base transmission is a 5-speed manual, with a fully automatic 3-speed offered as an option. The Quantum's strong suit is its excellent interior space utilization. The rear seat is especially large for a car of the Quantum's dimensions, and is able to accommodate three adults with more than a modicum of comfort. The rear features a one-third/two-thirds split backrest to expand the already large load area. Everything from the instruments to the fabric trim (a warm brown tweed-like material on our coupe) fits the image VW is trying to present. The Quantum is a truly grown-up Volkswagen. The Quantum's suspension is a refinement of that used on the Dasher. At the front the MacPherson struts employ negative scrub radius steering geometry—what VW used to call "skid breaker" in the old Dasher commercials. At the rear the Quantum is coil sprung, as was its predecessor, but the new car now uses a V-shaped twist axle.

Base price	\$10,350	Steering	Rack and pinion, power assist
Engine	1715cc (105-cid) inline 4	Brakes, F/R	Disc/drum
Horsepower (SAE net)	74 at 5000 rpm	Tires	185/80HR14 Goodyear NCT
Torque (lb.-ft., SAE net)	90 at 3000 rpm	Wheelbase	100.4 in.
Transmission	5-speed manual	Length	178.1 in.
Drive wheels	Front	Height	55.1 in.
Suspension, F/R	Independent/independent	Curb weight	2271 lb.

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TESTING

Because of the scope of Import Car of the Year, the instrumented testing at Riverside Raceway is done by three people. Instrumented testing consists of acceleration, braking, and slalom runs. To maintain consistency, Engineering Editor Ron Grable hurled each contestant through a 712-ft. triple-lane-change slalom a minimum of six times. Mr. Grable was accompanied by Associate Editor Bob Nagy in what would be called the Nausea Seat by the end of the day. Bob's responsibility was to tend the onboard electronics and to keep his breakfast and/or lunch down. He performed superbly at both tasks. Meanwhile



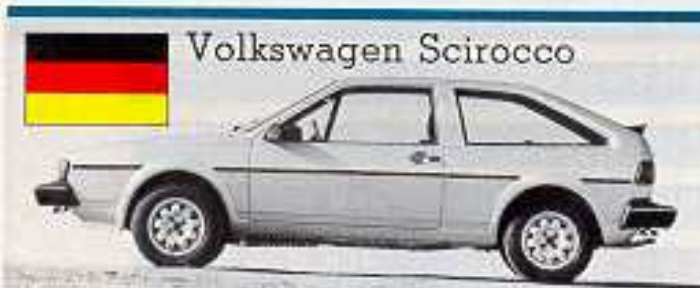
Feature Editor Jim Hall was running quarter-mile acceleration times and then brake runs on each car.

It should come as no surprise that the Datsun Turbo ZX 5-speed was the fastest car through the quarter mile. Turning a 15.85-sec. e.t. at 87.60 mph is fast by anybody's standards. The Alfa Romeo pulled the second fastest e.t. with the Supra about a third of a second behind. In mid-pack, Nissan's Stanza led a rather varied group



of cars in the acceleration testing. The front-wheel-drive Stanza was quicker than the Audi Coupe, VW Scirocco, and its rival from Honda, the Accord.

Brake evaluation is made by consecutive stops from 30 mph, then 60 mph. Half of the 14 cars were fitted with 4-wheel disc brakes, yet the vehicle that produced the best deceleration numbers was the Audi, a car with the more conventional front disc/rear drum setup. The Alfa, Accord, BMW, and 280ZX followed closely. The varied specifications of these cars indicates that low vehicle weight is a major factor in hauling a car down quickly. If vehicle weight is higher, more sophisticated braking systems and tires can help make up for some of the increased mass.



The engine in the new Scirocco is the same as has been offered for the past few years: a transverse inline 4-cylinder displacing 1715 cc with Bosch K-Jetronic fuel injection. The engine powers the front wheels through a 5-speed transaxle with overdrive ratios in both 4th and 5th gears. Even the suspension is unchanged, with the same MacPherson-strut front workings and rear axle assembly as used on the Rabbit. The majority of the 1982 Scirocco's fuel economy boost has come from the restyled sheet metal. VW stated that as long as the company had to restyle the Scirocco, the new car should employ every aerodynamic trick that could be mass-produced within the bounds of production technology and, more important, within the realm of market acceptability. Did it work? The reduction of the Scirocco's fuel consumption in light of the new model's higher weight would seem to indicate VW is on the correct track, aerodynamically speaking. And the jury—in this case, the car-buying public—is still out on the question of cosmetic acceptability.

Base price	\$10,150	Steering	Rack and pinion
Engine	1715cc (105-cid) inline 4	Brakes, F/R	Disc/drum
Horsepower (SAE net)	74 at 5000 rpm	Tires	175/70SR13 Michelin X2X
Torque (lb.-ft., SAE net)	90 at 3000 rpm	Wheelbase	94.5 in.
Transmission	5-speed manual	Length	165.7 in.
Drive wheels	Front	Height	51.4 in.
Suspension, F/R	Independent/independent	Curb weight	2058 lb.



Volvo's GLT Turbo just missed qualifying for the 1981 Import Car of the Year competition. For 1982 the Swedish firm has added a station wagon to the Turbo lineup; as it was the newest offering, we chose the wagon to run through our '82 contest. With 127 hp on tap, the 3129-lb. Turbo wagon can move along quite well. Around 2500 rpm the Volvo's B21F Turbo engine starts to feel its ponies. The GLT Turbo wagon is equipped with a 4-speed manual transmission utilizing an electrically actuated overdrive (0.80:1). Volvo will offer a 4-speed overdrive automatic later on in the 1982 model year. The GLT Turbo wagon has most of the goodies that have endeared Volvo wagons to buyers for years, primarily the interior loadspace of some domestic intermediates in a car about 2 ft. shorter. Accommodation in the Turbo wagon is first rate for both the front and rear seat passengers. Sumptuously upholstered in leather, the GLT is fitted with the seats that have made Volvo a legend in the orthopedic world, and boasts an instrument panel that is legible, comprehensive, and attractive.

Base price	\$15,920	Steering	Rack and pinion, power assist
Engine	2127cc (130-cid) inline 4	Brakes, F/R	Disc/disc
Horsepower (SAE net)	127 at 5400 rpm	Tires	195/60R15 Pirelli P6
Torque (lb.-ft., SAE net)	150 at 3750 rpm	Wheelbase	104.3 in.
Transmission	4-speed manual with electric overdrive	Length	182.5 in.
Drive wheels	Rear	Height	57.2 in.
Suspension, F/R	Independent/solid axle	Curb weight	3129 lb.

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Through our triple-lane-change slalom, the times for the front running cars were extremely close. The three fastest cars, 280ZX, De Lorean, and Supra, in that order, were all within *one tenth of a second* of each other. The BMW 528e turned out a 10.13-sec. e.t., putting it in the middle of the pack. The Mercedes, Volvo, and Stanza clustered in a pack just behind the Bimmer. And curiously, the VW Scirocco and Quantum turned in exactly the same slalom times. We say curiously since the Quantum weighs 213 lb. more than the Scirocco, a testimony, perhaps, to the greater grip of its 185/60HR14 Goodyear NCT tires.

After the instrumented phase of the testing, we ran each car on the same high-speed loop, using a section of the Riverside road course that we set up for domestic Car of the Year. This consisted of a long, slightly uphill straight, and a quick right hander that sets you up for a decreasing radius left. Then a short downhill section to a 90° right-hander, then 90° left. Up a slight incline, then through a downhill left followed immediately by a right, then another left, and you're back where you started. This time, each of the seven Import Car of the Year judges would drive the nominees. On the loop the BMW shone in spite of its mediocre slalom time. The

car stayed predictable with only its irritating rpm-controlled fuel cut-off killing the engine at times, putting a damper on the fun. The Supra was very quick, although there was some belief that the car would have felt better still if its 225/60HR14 tires had been the available Bridgestone Potenza rather than the Dunlop SP Sport D3s as fitted. The Renault Le Car was barrels of fun on the loop as it exhibited its traditional French roll at every opportunity.

Riding on its Pirelli P6 radials, the Volvo Turbo Wagon was a top candidate for most unlikely to be seen on the track. Not that the wagon was out of its element being thrown about R/R, it just doesn't look

QUARTER-MILE ACCELERATION	
Alfa Romeo GTV V-6	16.80 secs. 81.40 mph
Audi Coupe	18.14 secs. 74.00 mph
BMW 528e	17.42 secs. 78.70 mph
Datsun 280ZX Turbo	15.85 secs. 87.80 mph
De Lorean	17.45 secs. 77.70 mph
Honda Accord LX	19.49 secs. 67.10 mph
Mercedes-Benz 380SEC	18.42 secs. 74.10 mph
Nissan Stanza XE	19.07 secs. 74.10 mph
Renault Le Car 5-Door	20.18 secs. 64.60 mph
Toyota Celica GT	18.60 secs. 72.50 mph
Toyota Celica Supra	17.87 secs. 80.20 mph
Volkswagen Quantum	19.47 secs. 67.70 mph
Volkswagen Scirocco	18.24 secs. 72.40 mph
Volvo GLT Turbo Wagon	17.70 secs. 79.80 mph
Seconds	15 16 17 18 19 20

BRAKING	30-0 mph		60-0 mph	
	Feet	Feet	Feet	Feet
Alfa Romeo GTV V-6	37 ft.	147 ft.		
Audi Coupe	37 ft.	140 ft.		
BMW 528e	40 ft.	144 ft.		
Datsun 280ZX Turbo	43 ft.	139 ft.		
De Lorean	44 ft.	153 ft.		
Honda Accord LX	39 ft.	145 ft.		
Mercedes-Benz 380SEC	48 ft.	163 ft.		
Nissan Stanza XE	41 ft.	151 ft.		
Renault Le Car 5-Door	49 ft.	168 ft.		
Toyota Celica GT	45 ft.	171 ft.		
Toyota Celica Supra	43 ft.	159 ft.		
Volkswagen Quantum	45 ft.	165 ft.		
Volkswagen Scirocco	43 ft.	154 ft.		
Volvo GLT Turbo Wagon	47 ft.	165 ft.		
Feet	20 40 80 120 160 200			

Seconds	15	16	17	18	19	20
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Feet	20	40	80	120	160	200
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right seeing a station wagon flung around a racetrack.

We followed up our instrumented testing and track runs with evaluation of the cars on public roads. Here, on our secret 70-mile loop, we would get to examine each vehicle as a system. Every judge had 14 scoring books, one for each car. The books were separated into four categories: Ride and Drive, Passenger Comfort and Convenience, Styling and Design, and Quality. Each judge would award from one to 100 points, with 50 points as the median. If a judge considered the instrument panel legibility, for example, average on a certain car, he would assign that category 50

points. If the judge thought the panel to be better than the average for cars in the subject vehicle's market segment, he would score higher; worse than average, lower. This allowed us exercise of subjective experience and, as you might expect with seven people and 14 cars, we had some basic differences of opinion. Those differences are, however, an indicator of the staff's total automotive experience. And by averaging out all the judge's scores we eliminated the effects of strong personal prejudices from the results.

After a week in Riverside, we headed back to the City of Angels for fuel economy testing. Each of the nominees was run

on our 73-mile fuel consumption loop. The Stanza topped the list at a healthy 39.38 mpg, with the Scirocco hot on its tail. The Accord turned in a respectable 36.59 mpg, enough to put the Honda in 3rd place for economy. Down substantially in the pack was the Renault Le Car, sandwiched between the Supra and the ZX Turbo. It would seem the petite 85-cid engine's equally petite 51 hp necessitates large throttle openings to keep the show on the road, as it were. Forward momentum seems to take precedence over fuel economy. It surprised no one that the Mercedes, with the largest engine of the group, had the poorest economy showing, 19.30 miles

SLALOM

Alfa Romeo GTV V-6	8.94 secs.
Audi Coupe	9.92 secs.
BMW 528e	10.13 secs.
Datsun 280ZX Turbo	9.78 secs.
De Lorean	9.86 secs.
Honda Accord LX	10.36 secs.
Mercedes-Benz 380SEC	10.17 secs.
Nissan Stanza XE	10.26 secs.
Renault Le Car 5-Door	10.91 secs.
Toyota Celica GT	10.49 secs.
Toyota Celica Supra	9.88 secs.

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Alfa Romeo GTV V-6	23.27 mpg
Audi Coupe	32.74 mpg
BMW 528e	23.03 mpg
Datsun 280ZX Turbo	28.63 mpg
De Lorean	24.32 mpg
Honda Accord LX	36.59 mpg
Mercedes-Benz 380SEC	19.30 mpg
Nissan Stanza XE	39.38 mpg
Renault Le Car 5-Door	28.99 mpg
Toyota Celica GT	25.50 mpg
Toyota Celica Supra	30.42 mpg

Toyota Celica Supra	9.88 secs.
Volkswagen Quantum	10.29 secs.
Volkswagen Scirocco	10.29 secs.
Volvo GLT Turbo Wagon	10.24 secs.
Seconds	9 10 11

Toyota Celica Supra	30.42 mpg
Volkswagen Quantum	31.74 mpg
Volkswagen Scirocco	39.24 mpg
Volvo GLT Turbo Wagon	25.60 mpg
Miles per gallon	20 24 28 32 36 40

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to a gallon. But then again this is a \$50,000 car, so the SEC's thirst isn't likely to be a major concern to potential buyers.

The next step was to take the instrumented data and the fuel economy numbers and convert the resulting figures into

point scores. To do this, all contenders' results were translated into a percentage of the best performance in a particular test, and points were awarded on that basis. Thus, the top time (or stopping distance, or mpg) earned 100 points, and the others

scored relative to that standard. In addition, a dollar-value score was added to help factor out the "Sure-it's-good-it-better-be-for-\$30,000" syndrome.

The point values for each category and sub-category were then weighted by factoring them with constants to determine the relative importance of each category.

THE TOTALS

To keep each of you in suspense (you haven't looked ahead to see which car won, right?), we're going to go through the field from 14th to 1st.

Finishing in 14th position was the Renault Le Car 5-door. The little French car finished at the top of the Base Price category. Le Car placed ahead of the Celica GT, Audi Coupe and Mercedes-Benz 380SEC in the Performance Evaluation category.

Next came the Alfa Romeo GTV V-6. In spite of placing very well in the Performance Evaluation category, the Alfa unfortunately suffered in the areas of overall Dollar Value and Quality Control. With a better finished and more comfortable interior, the Alfa could have finished substantially higher.

Nissan's Stanza finished in 12th position. Due to the car's high fuel economy

CATEGORY SCORES	*The score						
	Ride and Drive	Quality	Passenger Comfort and Convenience	Styling and Design	Dollar Value	Performance	Base Price
Alfa Romeo GTV V-6	10	13	13	13	14	7	10*
Audi Coupe	5	4	2	1	3	14	7
BMW 528e	2	1	1	6	11	9	12
Datsun 280ZX Turbo	3	8	6	12	4	4	10*
De Lorean	6	10	9	8	7*	8	13
Honda Accord LX	12	7	11	5	2	3	4

Honda Accord LX	35,036	11,428	33,260	13,748	1575	5264	85
Mercedes-Benz 380SEC	4 38,284	3 12,570	3 35,904	3 13,904	13 1194	13 4578	14 0
Nissan Stanza XE	13 33,304	12 10,724	12 32,780	9 13,464	7* 1470	1 5418	2* 90
Renault Le Car 5-Door	14 30,620	14 9460	14 31,464	14 12,304	12 1215	11 4774	1 100
Toyota Celica GT	11 35,848	5 11,892	10 33,740	7 13,580	6 1491	12 4780	2* 80
Toyota Celica Supra	1 40,940	2 12,580	4 35,836	2 14,076	1 1608	5 5138	8 55
Volkswagen Quantum	9 38,388	9 11,380	7 34,136	11 13,112	9 1392	6 4984	5* 80
Volkswagen Scirocco	8 37,024	11 11,244	8 33,816	10 13,136	10 1380	2 5362	5* 80
Volvo GLT Turbo Wagon	7 37,312	6 11,816	5 35,768	4 13,996	5 1521	10 4844	9 50

Nissan's Stanza finished in 12th position. Due to the car's high fuel economy numbers and relatively good acceleration figures, the Stanza finished 1st overall in the Performance Evaluation category.

Then came the De Lorean and the Honda Accord. Only 27 points separated the two cars. While the De Lorean placed in the lower end of the Quality Control section, the Honda was among the top three finishers in this category. The Honda also garnered high scores in the areas of Design and Styling as well as Overall Value.

The Toyota Celica GT, in 9th position, was separated from the 8th-ranked VW Quantum by only 101 points. See what we mean by close? The Celica turned in a good score in the Base Price department, tying the Stanza for 2nd place in this category.

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The Quantum, on the other hand, gathered no firsts or seconds but did manage to place consistently in the middle of the field.

VW's Scirocco took 7th place, with a score in the Performance Evaluation good enough to give it a 2nd-place finish in that category.

In spite of its blistering acceleration the Datsun 280ZX Turbo finished no better than 3rd in the Ride and Drive category, behind the BMW 528e and Celica Supra.

Like the Quantum, the Volvo GLT Turbo Wagon finished well overall but without gathering any 1st- or 2nd-place scores. The Turbo did place well up in the Passenger Comfort and Ride and Drive categories. The Volvo's 5th-place finish shows how well the Swedish manufacturer has developed the 240-Series cars, and what a difference turbo power makes to them.

The Audi Coupe scored a 1st place in the Styling and Design segment, which helped it finish in 4th place overall. The



GRAND TOTALS

Toyota Celica Supra	110,233 points
BMW 528e	109,910 points
Mercedes-Benz 380SEC	106,434 points

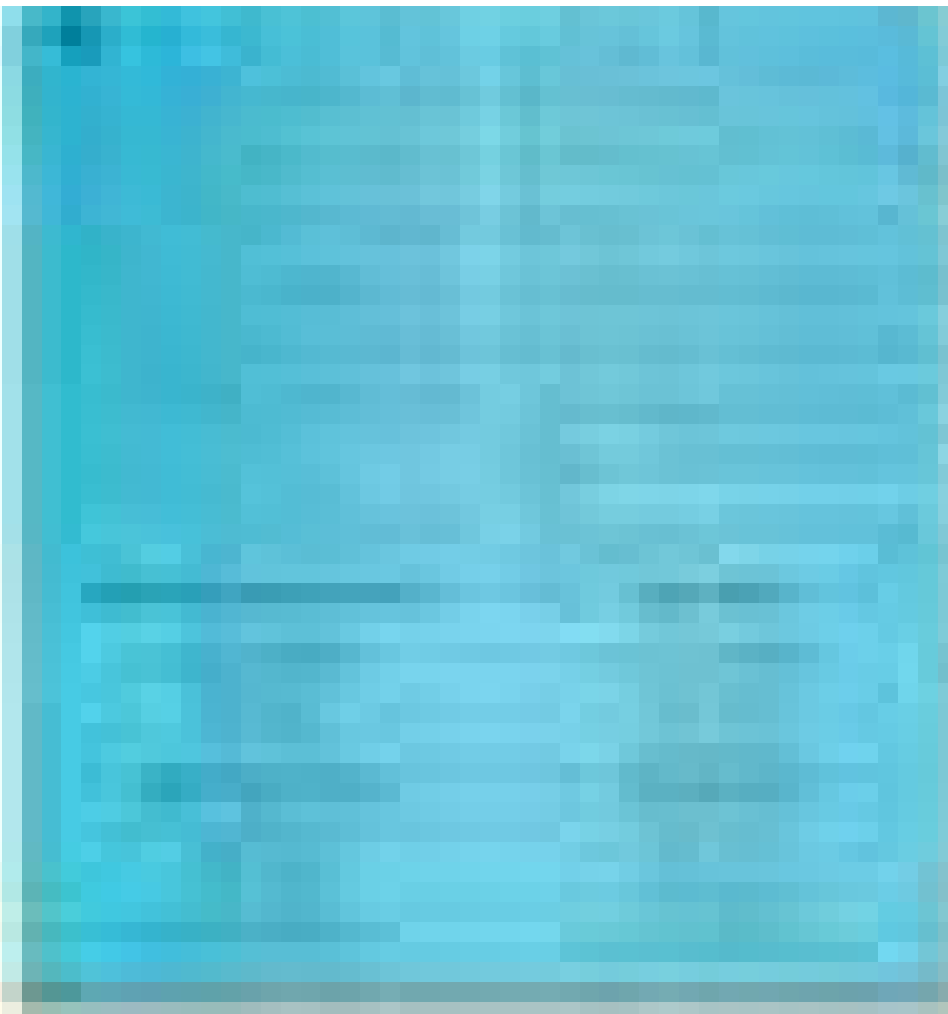
the Styling and Design segment, which helped it finish in 4th place overall. The Coupe also finished 3rd in Overall Value, and 2nd in Passenger Comfort.

Despite a poor showing in Overall Value—13th—the Mercedes-Benz 380SEC took 3rd overall. The Merc did squeeze out a 3rd in the Passenger Comfort section but, on the whole, the 380 was definitely hampered by its pricetag.

The BMW 528e is our 2nd-place finisher, trailing the winning car by a mere 323 points. The Bimmer took 1st place in the Quality category as well as in Passenger Comfort. The 528 failed to do as well in the Base Price section where it finished in 12th position, and its price disparity of almost \$10,000 from the winning car probably accounts for the margin of victory.

That makes Toyota's Celica Supra the winner of *Motor Trend's* Import Car of the Year award for 1982. Gathering top marks in the grueling Ride and Drive evaluation, the Supra also placed 2nd in Quality Control and Styling and Design. It should be noted the Supra led the field in the Overall Value rating, as well.⁹

Mercedes-Benz 380SEC	106,434 points
Audi Coupe	105,946 points
Volvo GLT Turbo Wagon	105,207 points
Datsun 280ZX Turbo	104,256 points
Volkswagen Scirocco	102,242 points
Volkswagen Quantum	101,472 points
Toyota Celica GT	101,371 points
Honda Accord LX	100,396 points
De Lorean	100,369 points
Nissan Stanza XE	97,230 points
Alfa Romeo GTV V-6	96,331 points
Renault Le Car 5-Door	89,957 points
Points (x1000)	85 90 95 100 105 110



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Tony Swan



"Not only is the Supra the most exciting Japanese car in the last five years, it's the most exciting Toyota ever."

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Toyota Supra | 8. Honda Accord |
| 2. Mercedes-Benz | 9. VW Quantum |
| 3. Datsun Turbo ZX | 10. Alfa Romeo GTV |
| 4. Audi Coupe | 11. Toyota Celica GT |
| 5. BMW 528e | 12. De Lorean |
| 6. Volvo GLT Turbo | 13. Nissan Stanza |
| 7. VW Scirocco | 14. Renault Le Car |

Jim McCraw



"The Supra is now the definitive Japanese sports GT. I'd only change one of two things: Make it either 500 pounds lighter or 50 horsepower stronger."

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Toyota Supra | 8. Mercedes-Benz |
| 2. Volvo GLT Turbo | 9. VW Quantum |
| 3. BMW 528e | 10. Renault Le Car |
| 4. Datsun Turbo ZX | 11. De Lorean |
| 5. Honda Accord | 12. Nissan Stanza |
| 6. Toyota Celica GT | 13. VW Scirocco |
| 7. Audi Coupe | 14. Alfa Romeo GTV |

Kevin Smith



"Why deny it? I love what the Germans build into a car: not the most features per dollar, but a truly satisfying feel of complete competence."

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. BMW 528e | 8. Toyota Celica GT |
| 2. Mercedes-Benz | 9. Volvo GLT Turbo |
| 3. Audi Coupe | 10. VW Quantum |
| 4. VW Scirocco | 11. Nissan Stanza |
| 5. Honda Accord | 12. De Lorean |
| 6. Datsun Turbo ZX | 13. Alfa Romeo GTV |
| 7. Toyota Supra | 14. Renault Le Car |

The 2759cc Supra engine is a DOHC derivative of the 5M engine that propels the Cressida. While the twin cam and the Cressida engines share displacement (the lower ends are common) and weight, the DOHC

num cylinder head employs hemispherical combustion chambers and reshaped pistons to bump the compression ratio to 8.8:1 compared to the single cam engine's 8.0:1. In order to maintain what has come

lifters, a first on a DOHC engine. The hydraulic tappets eliminate the need for periodic valve adjustments and also cut down on valve clatter. The use of a toothed belt to drive the cams instead of a conventional

sida engines share displacement (the lower ends are common) and weight, the DOHC unit produces nearly 30 more horsepower, at a higher crankshaft speed. The alumi-

8.8:1 compared to the single cam engine's 8.0:1. In order to maintain what has come to be known as "traditional Toyota durability," the twin cam uses hydraulic valve

on valve clatter. The use of a toothed belt to drive the cams instead of a conventional chain also makes for a quieter engine and obviates the need for regular inspection to



Jim Hall



"The Japanese have decimated the British sports car by building superior products. The Supra looks like it may do the same to the European GT car."

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Toyota Supra | 8. VW Scirocco |
| 2. De Lorean | 9. BMW 528e |
| 3. Volvo GLT Turbo | 10. Datsun Turbo ZX |
| 4. Audi Coupe | 11. Nissan Stanza |
| 5. VW Quantum | 12. Renault Le Car |
| 6. Mercedes-Benz | 13. Honda Accord |
| 7. Toyota Celica GT | 14. Alfa Romeo GTV |

Ron Grable



"Both the BMW and the 380SEC are ultra-refined touring cars. The Supra's position speaks highly of Toyota's engineering."

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Toyota Supra | 8. VW Quantum |
| 2. BMW 528e | 9. Volvo GLT Turbo |
| 3. Mercedes-Benz | 10. Alfa Romeo GTV |
| 4. Toyota Celica GT | 11. Honda Accord |
| 5. VW Scirocco | 12. De Lorean |
| 6. Datsun Turbo ZX | 13. Nissan Stanza |
| 7. Audi Coupe | 14. Renault Le Car |

Fred Gregory



"Any one of the top three or four finishing cars could have won by me, it was that close."

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. BMW 528e | 8. Alfa Romeo GTV |
| 2. Audi Coupe | 9. Toyota Celica GT |
| 3. Mercedes-Benz | 10. VW Scirocco |
| 4. Volvo GLT Turbo | 11. Honda Accord |
| 5. Toyota Supra | 12. VW Quantum |
| 6. Datsun Turbo ZX | 13. Nissan Stanza |
| 7. De Lorean | 14. Renault Le Car |

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make sure the chain is properly tensioned. Aspiration is by Bosch L-Jetronic air-controlled fuel injection made under license by Nippondenso, a division of Toyota.

The standard transmission on the Supra is one of Toyota's excellent 5-speed manuals. The aluminum-cased gearbox features rather close spacing between 3rd, 4th, and 5th speeds to keep the revs up during acceleration. The low (3.287:1) 1st gear combined with a 3.73:1 rear axle ratio help launch the Supra with the verve that's appropriate for a car of its station.

The Supra's underpinnings are as contemporary as the engine. Up front, it's MacPherson struts. The coil springs, while

mounted around the struts, are angled more sharply than the struts. This method of spring mounting helps lower the hoodline without having to resort to placing the spring on the lower control arm, as in the new Camaro/Firebird layout. A beefy anti-roll bar completes the front suspension inventory. In the rear, the Supra features an all-new independent suspension system. The rear wheels are suspended by coil springs with a set of angle-mounted telescopic shock absorbers. A pair of trailing arms locate the outer hubs and springs. Power-assisted rack-and-pinion steering is standard, with an overall ratio of 18.1:1 (3.1 turns lock-to-lock).

Toyota pulled all the stops out when it cooked up the Supra interior. The instrumentation is complete, concise, and easy to read, and the instrument panel is beautifully worked out; none of the backlit gauges reflects in the windscreen or side windows. That's thorough design. But perhaps the most important and impressive interior element of the Supra is something the driver will not often look at yet always use—the 8-way driver's seat. While both driver's and passenger's seats look identical, the one behind the steering wheel has three extra adjustments: lumbar support, seat cushion height, and thigh support. The lumbar support is the fun part, eschewing tradi-

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tional knobs, cams, and levers in favor of pressure. The system uses a squeeze-bulb hand pump to inflate three air bladders in the backrest. The bladders can be adjusted to the desired firmness by pressing one or all of three buttons on the side of the seat.

These components could make a pretty good car just by themselves. But the Supra is much more than a pretty good car; it's a complete driving system.

A good meter of how well Toyota has sorted out the Supra is a quick look at the cars that finished just behind it in our Import Car of the Year field. The new BMW 528e, which finished a very close 2nd, delivers all the things people expect from the

Bavarian concern: excellent handling, comfort, tasteful design, and Black-Forest-elf quality. BMW calls it the ultimate driving machine, and it is possible to make a strong case for this assertion. Most of these same qualities are expected from the third finisher in Car of the Year, Mercedes-Benz. The 380SEC offers all those German sport sedan strengths as well—at an even higher price. But neither car offers the same blend and balance of performance, handling, comfort, styling, and *value* as the Toyota. So with that final critical element in mind, are we saying the Supra is better than a BMW 528e or a Mercedes 380 coupe? Yes, we are.

The Supra has a combination of elements, like the smooth-as-silk twin cam engine and IRS, that have never been offered together as successfully in this country short of a few of the ultra-exotics (a Lamborghini and a Ferrari or two come to mind). That Toyota can sell such a combination at such a price is nothing short of amazing. Overall performance on a par with the 528 for about \$10,000 less is noteworthy in anybody's book.

It takes the right stuff to make a performance car. It also takes the right stuff to win *Motor Trend's* Import Car of the Year award. For 1982, Toyota's got the right stuff on both counts.

—Jim Hall