

bolder, better and more clearly scion

- MORE POWER • INCREASED MPG • DYNAMIC PERFORMANCE
- AGGRESSIVE PREMIUM STYLING • ADDED SAFETY FEATURES

Toyota is widely thought of as being fairly neutral and very mainstream—despite such offerings as the very cool Venza, the über-macho Tundra or the Toyota Celica Supra of the past (RIP). Lexus was introduced in 1989 to—seemingly improbably at the time, but ultimately very successfully—take on the German luxury brands in the US market (and now sold globally). The lineup was rounded out in 2003 with the introduction of Scion, their third marque, conceived to bring a quirky and youthful image to the quirky and youthful automotive market.

First up were the original xA, a diminutive hatchback, and the xB, a boxy little affair that was more function, style and statement than performance. The xB has been highly redone since then, while keeping its original name, and the xA has been only mildly redone, while taking the new name of xD.

The Scion tC coupe arrived a year after

the xA and xB, despite having been represented in the original show teasers at the 2002 New York International Auto Show, in the ccX concept. And whereas it demonstrated the same quality and value as the other two models, it struck us as being far less distinctive in styling—closer to what Toyota itself might present under its own flag, than to the quirky individualism of the Scion nameplate.

Roll forward to today. The Scion tC has been upgraded in performance, features, even fuel mileage—and its style has taken a subtle but effective turn toward the distinctiveness that makes a Scion a Scion. Scion has been a great platform for Toyota show concepts, and the new tC's more aggressive stance derives from the Calt studios-designed Scion FUSE concept. The 2011 tC is immediately recognizable by its angular C-pillar and relatively flat roof, which evoke the look of the xB. But much is new with this car beyond its sheetmetal.

NEW FOR 2011

A 2.5-liter 16-valve 4-cylinder DOHC engine with aluminum alloy block and head and Dual VVT-i replaces the 2.4L unit, upping horsepower by 12%, from 161 hp in the 2010 model to 180 hp today. Transmissions are replaced, the old 5-speed manual with a 6-speed, and the old 4-speed automatic also with a 6-speed. Both performance and fuel economy benefit from these changes, with EPA city figures moving from 20 mpg with manual and 21 mpg with automatic, in the old model, to 23 mpg with either transmission for 2011; similarly, highway figures climb from 27 (MT) and 29 (AT) in the 2010 model, to 31 mpg with either transmission for 2011. (The tC with automatic has an ECO drive indicator, so you can check on your green credentials.) Zero-to-60 acceleration time moves up significantly, from 8.2 seconds to 7.6 with the manual and from 9.1 to 8.3 with automatic. These specs all represent solid win-wins.



Wheels are increased from 17" to 18", tires gain a slight performance edge, moving from P215/45ZR17 to P225/45R18, though they lose the Z rating. Front ventilated disc brakes are increased from 10.83" to 11.65", back solid discs from 10.59" to 10.98". Safety first: more go comes with more stop.

And speaking of safety, the 2011 tC adds a front knee airbag, now bearing two, and adds all-new active front headrest, brake override system, VSC, TRAC and brake assist. You'll feel better than ever putting your kid or your own young self in this.

But we're not here to crash. Inside, the audio system—a critical element in a youth machine—not only adds iPod connectivity, a natural, but augments the 160-watt Pioneer amp with a 140-watt 2-channel



BY JOE SAGE



LAS VEGAS TRAVEL NOTES

If you travel to Las Vegas from Arizona, you probably either stay on the Strip, to be in the heart of the action, or on the metro fringe, to decompress, save a buck and have one foot out the door for the drive back to Arizona.

For the Scion tC launch, we were shown the best of both worlds: the Hard Rock Hotel



& Casino. Just a mile from the Strip (east on Harmon Road from Planet Hollywood) and at the north end of McCarran International Airport (LAS), it offers a panoramic view of the glittering Strip that you can't get when staying on the Strip itself.

Being a Hard Rock Cafe at its core, it has



more than the average share of rock'n'roll memorabilia, throughout the casinos, hotel lobby, restaurants and extensive hallways.

The facility is easy to navigate, with the wheel-and-spoke nature of its casino. Yet it



is very complete, with a wide range of restaurants and shops, multiple room towers and options, night clubs, fitness centers, multiple pools including one with a sand beach and one upstairs with a glass side, as

Travel Notes (cont'd) >>



A moon roof with mesh wind deflector is new on the 2011 Scion tC. Toyota Racing Development (TRD) offers a full complement of specifically engineered and factory approved add-ons. Trunk space is very generous, and split folding rear seats expand its utility considerably. The 2.5L DOHC 4-cylinder with VVT-i boosts power, acceleration and fuel economy.

amp, for 300W total rocking power, while also bringing speaker count from seven to eight. The sound is tops.

NEVADA DRIVE TIME

Starting from the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, our test drive routes included the Strip, the Las Vegas metro grid, and a great loop through Red Rock Canyon park. Red Rock was some distance from downtown Las Vegas, so it also included metro freeway and open highway time. The tC performs on the freeway alongside its larger brethren without a second thought and is great fun on the two-lanes. The park loop was a one-way with plenty of twists, turns and hills, and despite pushing it considerably, it never exceeded its limits, under our control nor even at the hands of our race champion codriver. A great performer.

YOU WANT ONE

Aimed at a youthful buyer, the Scion tC starts at just \$18,275 manual or \$19,275 automatic (MSRP, plus \$720 destination charge). As with all Scions, the base model comes fully equipped. A 36-month/36,000-mile new vehicle warranty is augmented by a 60,000-mile powertrain and uncapped corrosion warranty, and 5,000- and 10,000-mile maintenance are included at no cost.

Scion's youth roots run deep. Statistics show it is the youngest brand in the industry, with the average buyer a 26-year-old male. There are over 800,000 Scions on the road today, and of their buyers, 71% were new to the Toyota brand family. And that was one of the company's primary goals in establishing Scion. Of the total, over 300,000—over 41%—are the Scion tC, so this sporty coupe has brought the most buyers to the brand, of any.

Scion has inspired many clubs, a wealth of aftermarket products, and passionate loyalty. Marketing for the new Scion tC has included social media, of course, as well as major market gatherings nationwide, with a fusion of art and music, from college house parties to rocking events with the Jack Beats, Blu Jemz and others, plus events at such iconic venues as Knott's Berry Farm. Scion Installation LA is a permanent creative venue from Scion Space.

Though aimed at a youthful buyer, our advice could ruin their youngest-brand statistic: we see no reason the new Scion tC coupe wouldn't appeal to everyone. ■

LAS VEGAS TRAVEL (CONT'D)

well as a convention hall and a variety of conference rooms and breakouts for the business planner. The Hard Rock presents concerts, poolside shows and more entertainment at The Joint. Rooms were spacious, postmodern and high style, bathrooms were enormous, with glass walls



back to the bedroom; even the lighting was spectacularly executed. A fine place to stay.

We enjoyed Tuscan-style dinner at AGO, named for restaurateur Agostino Sciandri. A Mexican buffet lunch at the Pink Taco passed the tamale test with high marks—as so few do. We missed the Hofbräuhaus,



kitty-corner from Hard Rock, but had heard raves from a world-traveling colleague who had also stayed at Hard Rock just a couple of weeks prior.

The Hard Rock Hotel & Casino is at turns



flashy and classy, while equally casual and down-to-earth. An excellent choice.

Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Las Vegas
4455 Paradise Road, Las Vegas NV 89169
800-HRD-ROCK (800-693-7625)

Travel was via US Airways from Phoenix, a slam-dunk. —JS

