

AND FINALLY.... TRUCK RODEO TOP WINNERS

Photos: Kevin McCauley / Capturing the Machine

This took awhile. In late *September*, we joined the Texas Auto Writers' Association (TAWA, of which we are a member) for their annual Texas Truck Rodeo comparo event, a longstanding don't-miss-it item on our calendar. At its roots off-road-centric, the event was once again held on a specially engineered course on the grounds of Eagles Canyon Raceway outside Decatur, Texas. Paved country highways outside the gates were available for vehicles that lean more in that direction.

A total of 41 automotive media drove 29 vehicles in 11 categories (14 SUVs and eight pickups by brand and model, with multiple variants of several). Collectively, we then vote for the best.

Although a competitive event in a rapidly evolving market, rather than announcing results upon completion, they now string it out for months.

Refer to our *November-December 2024* issue for our original details and commentary for each vehicle, but no awards yet. Rather, the category awards were voted a few weeks later, once we were all back home, with winners revealed at the San Antonio Auto Show in late November (refer to our *January-February 2025* issue), as follows:

CATEGORY WINNERS: PICKUPS

- Compact: Hyundai Santa Cruz
- Midsize: Toyota Tacoma
- Full-Size: Ram 1500
- Heavy Duty: Ram 2500 Rebel
- Luxury: Ram 1500 Tungsten
- Off-Road: INEOS Grenadier Quartermaster Fieldmaster

CATEGORY WINNERS: SUVs

- Subcompact: Nissan Kicks SR
- Midsize: Lexus GX 550
- Luxury: Genesis GV80
- Off-Road: INEOS Grenadier Trialmaster
- Electric: Kia EV9

TRUCK OF TEXAS, SUV OF TEXAS

Top trophies were voted on after that, then announced later still, at the Houston Auto Show in late January. These final superstars are shown at right—both coincidentally from now-Texas-based Toyota-Lexus. (Though they have seven US assembly plants, their San Antonio truck plant now produces Tundra and Sequoia, with Tacoma assembly moved to Mexico, while Lexus GX is Japan-built.)

And now, just like that, it's time for the same group's track-and-road-based Texas Auto Roundup in late April, presumably to stretch out similarly. Watch for a first overview in our next issue. ■



TRUCK OF THE YEAR: TOYOTA TACOMA



SUV OF THE YEAR: LEXUS GX 550