

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

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TRAILHUNTER

Toyota
4Runner
Trailhunter

VEHICLES • EQUIPMENT • TECHNOLOGY • PEOPLE • EVENTS • DESTINATIONS • ATTRACTIONS

Toyota has considerably reset the table over the past couple of years, with replacements and new generations, successively, of both the Tacoma midsize pickup and now the ever-popular 4Runner. Less obvious to the casual observer was the relationship of the new Land Cruiser (and its cousin, Lexus GX). This can get complicated, and if bringing Japanese and global versions into the conversation, exponentially moreso. But the interrelationships among these, variously of platform, style, engineering and lineup, are knit together.

The new Land Cruiser is its own success story. With its styling set apart from Tacoma and 4Runner (long easily spotted as siblings), anyone can

see it is now less like Sequoia (or Tundra) than in the past, but not everyone knows how closely related it is now to 4Runner. The significance of this is multi-pronged, but what's notable overall is that it has contributed to a new 4Runner with considerably more heft and presence.

We've been able to introduce you to all of the above, successively, in these pages—via local introductory drives, our regional comparo drives, and various weeklies along the way, such as this.

Our sample here is top-tier—the more powerful (yet relatively fuel-frugal) i-FORCE MAX hybrid turbo powertrain and the new Trailhunter build—both as also on our new Tacoma Trailhunter in this

same issue, where you can find additional details. As with Tacoma, Trailhunter shares its top-tier status with TRD Pro—in fact, moreso, as both are the same price for 4Runner, whereas they vary by a few dollars (and bed-length variables) on Tacoma.

What is the same is that it presents a new buying decision, equal parts difficult and easy. As with Tacoma, we recommend any serious shopper go drive both trims—Trailhunter and TRD Pro—where you will quickly learn that, while each is highly capable and highly outfitted, with any specification differences clear and objective, each has its own distinct personality, which is of course more subjective. You will have less difficulty se-

lecting your match than you might expect.

We did not take this off-road, but we did have higher than average time on the pavement—freeways, surface streets, mountain highways, parking lots—with many positive notes.

The eight-speed automatic is a good one, providing a continuous power curve through corners from a stop, a situation that trips up many. Highways had revealed the prior gen's power limitations, but with this, cruising was strong, heading to higher elevations or back down. (Again, Trailhunter is the higher-horse i-FORCE MAX.) Extreme rain troughs we often cross at speed, in the course of things, were near nonexistent. Twice, in fact.

Steering is accurate. This big-wheeled version is particular tall, a good feeling in traffic. Cameras are therefore all the more useful when parking, of-

ten with a few more feet in front or behind than it seems, and they assist tremendously. (We did, though, have an instance of it insisting we should stop, quite forcefully, while still four or five feet from a wall behind us. Better than most, though.)

As with the Tacoma Trailhunter, this bears the dirt-avoiding raised air intake most people will call a snorkel, complete with its light but persistent metallic sound effects.

As with the Tacoma, those with the most extreme dirt duty may still look at TRD Pro first, even if just from familiarity or habit. Whichever you think of first, you owe it to yourself to drive both. Either one will be great for 90 percent of the off-road driving that 90 percent of people do. But style equals personality, and this is where you will find your best match. ■

TRAILHUNTER JOINS THE ALL-NEW 4RUNNER LINEUP

BY JOE SAGE



SPECIFICATIONS

Preproduction unit: some specifications with sample, some via NHTSA, all subject to final.

ASSEMBLY	Toyota Tahara, Aichi, Japan
ENGINE	i-FORCE MAX 2.4L 4-cyl turbo hybrid, DOHC 16v, D-4ST fuel inj
HP/TORQUE	326 hp / 465 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	11:1
TRANSMISSION	8-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN	4WD
SUSPENSION	F: indep dbl wishbone w stblzr bar, twin-tube shocks; R: multi-link w coils, outboard-mounted twin-tube shocks
STEERING	EPS: pwr-asst rack & pinion
BRAKES	F: 13.4 vented; R: 13.2 vented
WHEELS/TIRES	18-in bronze-finish alloys w 33-in Toyo 265/70R18 tires
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	194.9 / 112.2 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	(Trailhunter) 10.1 in
APPR/DEP/BRKOVER	(") 33 / 24 / 24°
TURNING CIRCLE	39.4 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	na
LEGROOM (F/R)	na
CARGO CAPACITY	na
WEIGHT	(Trailhunter) 5500 lb
GVWR	(") 6505 lb
TOW CAPACITY	6000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	reg unl / 19 gal
MPG	23/24/23 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$66,900
OPTIONS: (preproduction; not itemized)	na
DESTINATION CHARGE	na
TOTAL	na

2025 TOYOTA 4RUNNER LINEUP

	4x2	4x4
SR5	\$40,770	\$42,770
TRD Sport	47,250	49,250
TRD Sport Premium	52,610	54,610
Limited	55,400	57,400
TRD Off-Road		49,190
TRD Off-Road i-FORCE MAX		51,990
TRD Off-Road Premium		54,970
TRD Off-Road Premium i-FORCE MAX		57,770
Limited i-FORCE MAX		60,200
Platinum i-FORCE MAX		62,860
Trailhunter i-FORCE MAX		66,900
TRD Pro i-FORCE MAX		66,900