

All business TRUCK-CALIBER SUV

BY JOE SAGE

Toyota offers six crossovers and SUVs (eight if you count RAV4 and Highlander Hybrids separately), from the carlike C-HR at \$21 grand to the big premium Land Cruiser at \$85 grand. As builders of full-size Tundra and tough midsize Tacoma pickups, Toyota has a solid body-on-frame basis for 4Runner, Sequoia and Land Cruiser, while C-HR, RAV4 and Highlander share unibody platforms with various car models.

We spent some time with the 4Runner last winter in the mountain snows around Flagstaff and appreciated its solid truck heritage and minimalist evolution, retaining useful features and interfaces you can operate while wearing your ranch gloves.

Sequoia has followed a similar path. For 2018, it received a relatively minor but cleverly applied facelift, with new headlights and grille treatment that fall into the, "Did you do something with your hair? You look great!" category. Smaller and more stylish LED headlight units flow visually into the grille via a simple black element that transforms its traditional snout into a more modern horizontally unified front treatment, enhanced further by the use of body color across the top of the grille frame, nicely conquering the challenge where styling and

engineering meet the accounting department.

Sequoia runs from SR5 at \$48,600 to Platinum at \$64,310, with TRD Sport and Limited in between. All have the same 5.7L V8 (with a flex fuel option), any in 2WD or 4WD. Fuel mileage is not stellar, but decent for a three-ton eight-seater with 401 lb-ft of torque—and backed up by a huge 26.4-gallon tank. Our TRD Sport 4x4 at \$54k brings Bilstein shocks, performance suspension and additional ground clearance. With optional leather interior, it still totals thousands less than Limited or Platinum, and still with its TRD Sport advantages.

The beefy Sequoia is surprisingly nimble, with a relatively tight turning circle for its size, useful from off-roading to boulevard U-turns. We took it on a mountain two-track, where its maneuverability, ground clearance and low-range 4x4 system were all tops. It could tackle even more.

Top models have a fancier sound system, but we noted fine audio quality from the TRD's Entune unit, with clear channel separation, clean bass and distinct presentation of each instrument in even the rockin'est song. Our only beef seems easy to fix: the tilt of the screen, along with its satin finish and lack of any shielding, rendered the backup camera about two-thirds unseeable in daylight.

Toyota is now based in Texas, and the Sequoia is built in Indiana, for an all-American persona. As with the 4Runner, Sequoia's tactile, glove-worthy controls and a nicely finished but rugged interior

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	5.7L 32v DOHC dual indep VVT-8 alum V8
DRIVETRAIN	4WD (RWD available)
HP/TORQUE	381 hp / 401 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	6-spd ECT auto
SUSPENSION	F: High-mount coil-spring indep dbl wishbone, low-pressure gas shocks, hollow stblzr bar R: coil-spring indep dbl wishbone w low-pressure gas shocks, hollow stblzr bar / avail rear air susp
STEERING	speed-sense var power rack & pinion
BRAKES	F: 13.9" vented / R: 13.6" vented discs
WHEELS/TIRES	8.0x18 / P275/65 R18 114T M/S
LENGTH/WHEELBASE	205.1 / 122.0 in
TURNING CIRCLE	38.1 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	(TRD Sport) 10.0 in
SEATING	three rows / eight seats
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	34.8 / 34.9 / 34.5 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	42.5 / 40.9 / 35.3 in
CARGO VOL	18.9 / 66.6 / 120.1 cu.ft
WEIGHT	5945 lb
TOW CAPACITY	7100 lb
FUEL CAPACITY	26.4 gal
FUEL / MPG	reg / 13/17/14 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$54,240
TRD SPORT-PREMIUM PKG:	7-psngr black leather-trimmed seats w contrast stitch, heated 10-way power driver & 4-way front passenger seats, power recline & fold-flat 3rd row seats, Entune premium audio w nav & app suite, auto-dim rear mirror w compass & Homelink.....
	3810
OPTIONS:	all-weather floor liners (149); glass breakage sensor (299); wheel locks (80).
DESTINATION CHARGE	1295
TOTAL	\$59,873

that can handle some mud and snow, along with a traditional 4x4 driveline, give you an SUV that can keep up with any comparable pickup, in both function and personality. ■

