

Driver's ed extreme

By Tyson Hugie / drivetofive.wordpress.com

We headed out to Wild Horse Pass this winter to meet the fifth-generation 2020 Toyota GR Supra—a car with big shoes to fill, since the outgoing model was discontinued more than 20 years ago and there has been a great deal of hype around the successor. For the new car, Toyota partnered with BMW to create a sports car that reignites Supra's heritage by way of an inline-6 engine (which is what prior generations of Supra were also powered by).

Vehicle product training specialist Dave Lee gave our group the lowdown on some of the engineering features, design background and performance stats of the new Supra while we waited for our track session to begin. Benchmarking Porsche Boxster and Cayman, the GR Supra achieves 50/50 weight balance on a surprisingly smaller wheel-base than its "86" (formerly Scion FR-S) sibling.

2020 Toyota GR Supras are powered by a 335-hp 3.0-liter inline-6 engine coupled to an 8-speed automatic transmission. A low center of gravity, launch control mode, active differential and grippy Michelin Pilot SuperSport tires ensure that all the power gets to the ground exactly when it needs to.

Toyota had slotted our group's track time into an already-scheduled National Auto Sport Association (NASA) event at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park, which meant our time was closely cal-



Photo: James Lee, SixSpeedBlog.com

culated. I saddled up with my helmet securely fastened and with a professional driver in the passenger seat. The Supra launched me around the 1.6-mile track with speed and agility.

It took a couple of laps until I got comfortable actually pushing the vehicle to such an aggressive extent without feeling like I needed to apologize to it. I remembered thinking to myself a couple of times, "I have never driven my own vehicles this hard," as the right-seat pro driver yelled at me, "BRAKE HARDER!"

The Supra left me feeling impressed. Even with a helmet on, I had ample headroom to pivot and oversee my surroundings. Acceleration was responsive and rapid, and the car's lack of body roll was confidence-inspiring. With each lap, I shaved time off—thanks to being increasingly comfortable with the car, with the track and with my skills.

Of course I'm thinking I need just one more session to really fine-tune my expertise. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

SEATING	.....two
ENGINE	.....3.0L inline-6 dir inj w twin-scroll turbo
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....11:1
HP/TORQUE	.....335 hp / 365 lb-ft
DRIVETRAIN	.....RWD
TRANSMISSION	.....8-spd automatic
SUSPENSION	.....F: double-joint type MacPherson strut, 23.5mm stblzr bar; R: multi-link w five-arm construction, 18mm stblzr bar
STEERING	.....elec power steering
BRAKES	.....F: vented 13.7" disc w Brembo 4-piston fixed caliper; R: vented 13.6" (3.0 Premium & Launch Edition) or 13.0" w single-piston floating caliper
WHEELS	.....forged aluminum: F: 19x9.0; R: 19x10.0
TIRES	.....Michelin Pilot Super Sport: F: 255/35R19 96Y; R: 275/35R19 100Y
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....172.5 / 97.2 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....34.1 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....4.5 in
HEADROOM / LEGROOM	.....38.3 / 42.2 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....not stated
WEIGHT	.....3397 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....premium / 13.7 gal
MPG	.....24/31/26 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE (3.0 Premium, right page)	.....\$53,990
PREMIUM INCL: 8.8" wide-format touchscreen w AM-FM-sat-nav, Supra Connect telematics, wireless Apple CarPlay, premium 12-spkr 500w JBL audio, wireless phone charging, color heads-up display, 13.6" rear brakes.	
DRIVER ASSIST PKG: Dynamic radar cruise, blind spot monitor, rear cross traffic alert, parking sensors w emergency braking	.....1195
OPTIONS: First aid kit (30), emergency kit (59), cargo tote (49), carpet cargo mat (80), wheel locks (65)	.....293
PAINT PROTECTION FILM	.....395
CARBON FIBER MIRROR CAPS	.....925
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....955
TOTAL	.....\$57,743
[OTHER MODELS]: Supra 3.0	.....\$49,990
Supra Launch Edition	.....\$55,250

Author Tyson Hugie is greeted at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park by Faye Hadley, IG @pistonsandpixiedust, YouTube.com/fayehadley

Latest evolution

By Joe Sage

The new-for-2020 Toyota GR Supra, introduced just a few weeks into 2019, has danced its way in our direction in stages. First were the simultaneous reveals at NAIAS in Detroit and at Barrett-Jackson in Scottsdale (we did Scottsdale), a first chance to see it in the flesh, but not drive it.

It started to appear on the horizon for a week in our fleet, but would get delayed. Last September, we finally got to drive it during NWAPA's Run to the Sun in Oregon, a 24-vehicle, 24-leg open road event, though for us the Supra fell on a stretch on Interstate, not on the two-lane twisties or high desert blasts. Come November, we had track time in the car at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park (left page). And through it all, it would also appear on our weekly schedule but then get postponed again. Finally, in late April, it arrived! We'd had the basic drive experience, and we'd had brief orientation to its ergonomics and controls, but this time we could go for days, on all manner of roads, and we'd unavoidably get into features in depth.

The car falls above the Toyota 86, at twice its

price (we'll be driving that again in the next issue). Toyota VP Bob Carter had told us at Barrett-Jackson that Supra goes against Asians starting at \$50k and Europeans at \$59k—such as 370Z NISMO, Porsche Cayman, BMW M2 and Audi TT. Supra's engine in fact was developed with BMW, a faster path to maintaining Supra's inline-six heritage.

The engine has great acoustics, perfect really, which is kind of rare—neither overdone nor underdone as a match to its performance and style. The car always delivered what we needed in tight traffic challenges, both in power and maneuverability, although automatic (only) shifts did not always match desires. Manumatic mitigated this, though it's the type that stays where mandated, even if you get distracted and really need it to revert to automatic behavior.

They've hit the nail on the head for price and performance, to a point. Perhaps hitting it on the head kept them from covering some ground above and below this price. For this, there's still the 86—

or see what's coming for 2021 (sidebar). ■

SUPRA FOR 2021

While we're all still getting acquainted with the new 2020 Toyota GR Supra, guess what: there's big news for 2021.

[1] The biggest surprise—given their deep emphasis on keeping the marque's storied heritage of an inline-six powertrain—is that they will be bringing a four-cylinder to market for 2021, the GR Supra 2.0.

The GR Supra 2.0 turbo-4 has 255 hp, 18-inch wheels, simpler suspension and differential, smaller brakes, and weighs 200+ lb less than the GR Supra 3.0 turbo-6. Comparisons have developed between the less expensive Toyota 86 two-plus-two and the 2020 GR Supra; the new four-cylinder will slot between the two (price unknown).

[2] To clarify the new stairstep, the 2021 GR Supra 3.0 moves from 335 to 382 hp.

[3] Arriving in August is the GR Supra GT4, a straight-to-track model developed by Toyota Motorsport GmbH, with 430hp, 7-speed paddle-shift trans, performance exhaust, splitter and wing, and more, all weight less than 3000 lb.

The new Supra 2.0 and 3.0 were slated to arrive in June, the GT4 in August. Given the pandemic, we'll see. ■

