

Twice the truck?

BY JOE SAGE

If TRD Pro makes you think Toyota Tacoma first, you may not be alone—while the full-size Tundra, all trims, sells about 115,000 trucks a year, midsize Tacoma sells a quarter-million. You may see a lot of Tacoma TRD Pro (and TRD Off-Road) trucks on (and off) the road, but the TRD Pro treatment has also been available on Toyota's big Tundra since 2015.

We've driven various models of both, many times. We've surely driven both on the same day, at a comparo event or two along the way. But this time around, we had both Tacoma and Tundra in our fleet, specifically back-to-back, for a full week each. Both were TRD Pro models, both in Army Green, both with the longer cab, both automatics.

You might think the difference between the two is just size. But there's much more to it.

We like full-sizers perhaps because of our personal height, easier to step in and out and bigger inside—but while Tundra's overall cab height is almost six inches greater than Tacoma, headroom is exactly the same in the front on both (and just a half-inch higher in the rear in the Tundra).

Cabs and beds between the two can make you a little crazy. First off, Double Cab is the shorter

one on Tundra but the longer one on Tacoma (the longer Tundra is CrewMax, while the shorter Tacoma is Access Cab). The bigger-cab Tundra has a 5.5-ft bed, the shorter cab a 6.5-ft bed. Tacoma's shorter cab has a 6-ft bed, its longer cab either a 5- or 6-ft bed. The wheelbase on either cab-and-bed combo of Tundra is the same—145.7 inches. Tacoma's short-cab-longer-bed or long-cab-shorter-bed wheelbase is just 127.4 inches, while the Tacoma-only longer-bed-longer cab's wheelbase is 140.6 inches—still shorter than Tundra, but then so is the bed, but only compared to the longer Tundra cab. Cab interior dimensions—and amenities inside, including a variety of storage bins and spaces—are noticeably greater in the Tundra.

If you're buying based on head count and bed loads, you have one set of tradeoffs.

If you're buying for off-road, the turning circle on Tacoma is about 3.2 feet tighter (unless you get the longest bed combo, in which case it's virtually identical to Tundra). Tundra's ground clearance is 1.2 inches more (on TRD Pro, which on either truck is higher than standard).

And if you're buying for all of the above—people, bed loads and off-roading? Choosing which

one may be your first big off-road truck adventure.

For drivetrain, however, the Tundra completely won us over. For one thing, its 5.7-liter V8 puts out 381 hp and a pro-rata even greater 401 lb-ft of torque—37 and 51 percent more than Tacoma, respectively—and at just a 13 percent higher price. If this sounds like a Tundra win across the board, it is—almost. One look at fuel economy numbers shows you have one more tradeoff to consider.

The engine is not everything, however. Our least favorite component on the Tacoma TRD Pro was its 6-speed ECT automatic, while the Tundra's ECT-i ("intelligent") 6-speed was always powerful and smooth. But another wild card—you can get a 6-speed manual on the Tacoma TRD Pro, not Tundra.

Brakes are also far stronger on Tundra—13.9-in vented discs front and rear, versus Tacoma's 10.75-in front discs and 10-in rear drum brakes. And yes, you can very much feel the difference.

Suspension is highly enhanced on both trucks, both exceptionally good off-road, though quite different. Live rear axle fans have a head start with Tundra, which also has far beefier stabilizer bars, front and rear. Both have big-sidewall off-road tires, but Tundra's bigger size allows this along with 18-inch wheels, for a bit more daily driver style and ride, at no expense to off-roading.

If your off-roading gets really tight—both in

body dimensions (the Tacoma is 5 inches narrower than Tundra) and maneuverability (four feet on most Tacoma builds is a huge difference in turning circles)—you may go straight to Tacoma (unless you do need to bring along more big people and/or more gear or need to tow more).

The Tacoma TRD Pro is an off-roader that shows off its status pretty much always, while Tundra TRD Pro may suit daily duty a bit better as just as a powerful and smooth full-size pickup.

If there's one thing that keeps the Toyota Tundra lineup overall from fully competing with other full-size pickups, it's their lack of a 2500/3500 heavy duty truck. The TRD Pro version goes a long way toward closing that gap. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

PLANT	San Antonio TX
ENGINE	5.7L DOHC alum/alloy 32v EFI dual VVT-i V8
ALTERNATOR	170A
HP/TORQUE	381 hp / 401 lb-ft
DRIVETRAIN	4x4
TRANSMISSION	6-spd ECT-i auto, uphill/downhill logic
TRANSFER CASE	electr contr, active traction contr, auto limited-slip differential; (hi/lo) 1.000/2.640:1
DIFFERENTIAL RATIO	4.30
SUSPENSION	F: indep TRD coil spring high-mounted dbl-wishbone w 2" lift, TRD Fox front shocks w piggyback sensor, 2" stblzr bar; R: live axle w trapezoidal multi-leaf w staggered outboard-mounted TRD Fox shocks w piggyback sensor, 1.42" stblzr bar
STEERING	rack & pinion hydraulic pwr w fluid cooler
BRAKES	13.9 vented disc, opposed 4-cyl calipers
WHEELS	18" BBS forged aluminum TRD
TIRES	P275/65R18
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	228.9 / 145.7 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	10.6 in
BED LENGTH	66.7 in
TURNING CIRCLE	49.0 ft
APPROACH-DEPARTURE	31 / 17°
HEADROOM (F/R)	39.7 / 38.9 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	42.5 / 42.3 in
WEIGHT	(approx based on Limited) 5680 lb
PAYLOAD	(range of other trims) 1440-1560 lb
TOW CAPACITY	(4x4 CrewMax) 9800 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	regular unl / 38.0 gal
MPG	13/17/14 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	\$52,780
SPRAY-IN BEDLINER	579
DOOR SILL PROTECTOR	70
MINI TIE-DOWN W HOOK (SET OF 2)	45
BLACK "TUNDRA" TAILGATE INSERT	99
SPARE TIRE LOCK	75
DESTINATION CHARGE	1495
TOTAL	\$55,143

(20) BUILDS IN (6) SERIES
ALL 5.7L V8 & 6-SPD AUTO INCLUDE:

SR : Double Cab only (shorter cab), 4x2 or 4x4	\$33,575 to \$36,955
SR5 : Double Cab or CrewMax, 4x2 or 4x4	\$35,245 to \$40,900
Limited : Double Cab or CrewMax, 4x2 or 4x4	\$42,270 to \$47,185
Platinum : CrewMax only, 4x2	\$48,775
CrewMax only, 4x4	\$51,825
1794 Edition : CrewMax only, 4x2	\$48,775
CrewMax only, 4x4	\$51,825
TRD Pro : Double cab, 4x4 only	\$48,655
CrewMax, 4x4 only	\$52,930

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