

# TOYOTA GT86 SHELBY

By Jim Mc Cauley

With the GT86, Toyota returned to the classic sportscar ingredients of front mounted engine, light weight and rear-wheel drive, a layout that had been used in earlier models with great effect. And it



was on the track where this layout was seen to be most effective under the management of legendary American racer, Carroll Shelby. Turn back to the 1960s and the company wanted to highlight their new, and very beautiful, 2000GT for the North American market. Under Shelby's management two cars were entered against potent competition in the production class of the SCCA (Sport Car Club of America) Series. Driven by Scooter Patrick and Dave Jordan, the cars finished the series in second and third places overall behind the winning and much more powerful Porsche 911.

The Toyota is built in collaboration with Subaru and the power unit is the classic 2.0 litre Subaru flat-four with Toyota upgrades. The Shelby tribute car is further modified with ECU remapping, 40mm lowered suspension, wider low profile tyres and sports exhaust. Fire up and there is a dominant sporting exhaust note far removed from that of the standard car. Move up the gears and action takes place earlier in the rev band with much more linear progress than in the standard car. Hugging the road surface on the lower ride height, the car exudes a greater confidence while the steering remains direct and precise. Even over uneven undulations, the car holds its line exceptionally well, and it is very obvious that the Shelby tribute is much more than a cosmetic statement.

While the bodywork remains standard, the Shelby blue bonnet, coach lines and rear panel complement the assertive lines of the original, and even without the graphics increase the appeal of the car.

The interior remains as the original with a practical control layout and supportive seats, while a digital duplication of the analogue speedometer is easy to read. No performance figures are given for the revised model, but its benchmark acceleration to 62 mph (100km/hr) appeared to be quicker than the 7.7 seconds of the standard car. With regards to active safety



provision, the car's rear wheel drive system is well protected electronically to maintain driver confidence with Vehicle Stability Control, while passive safety provision includes seven airbags adding driver's knee protection to the front, side and curtain units.

Overall equipment levels are high, and include dual-zone climate control, cruise control, satellite navigation with DAB radio and Bluetooth connectivity. However, there are no weighty additions which helps to keep the overall weight of the car to a performance-conscious 1,700 kgs.

While the Toyota GT86 Shelby is owned by Toyota GB and not for sale, it nevertheless lays down a prototype for anyone wishing to copy the modifications and give their standard GT86 that little bit extra street cred. The standard GT86 is listed at £25,000 and is in Group 33E for insurance purposes.

(Driven April 2016)