

## TOYOTA GT86

By Jim Mc Cauley

With the GT86, Toyota has returned to the classic sportscar ingredients of front mounted engine, light weight and rear-wheel drive. However, in the case of the test vehicle it arrived with an automatic transmission which is rarely first choice in a classic sportscar chassis.

The Toyota is built in collaboration



with Subaru and the power unit is the classic 2.0 litre Subaru flat-four with some Toyota modifications. Both the Toyota GT86 and Subaru BRZ share the same coupé design with just minimal variation on the front bumper unit. The car is pleasantly if not excitingly designed and conveys the sporting image adequately, albeit without a resounding 'wow' factor.

The initial satisfaction comes on starting the car and listening to the tick-over burble of the flat-four engine, but should a sportscar be nursing an automatic transmission? Off the mark and it takes a little while to accept the automatic option but it performs well and offers the option of steering wheel mounted paddles for manual override, but the plastic wings feel flimsy and inappropriate to the 197 horsepower they are commanding. A Sport setting holds lower gears longer for increased response while a Winter setting is also available.

The attraction of the car is in its handling with the electronic support systems safely curtailing any unwanted response to enthusiastic throttle application in which case the rear end will merely twitch. Overall ride is,



as expected, firm while neatly contoured sports seats on the test car nip the hips to hold the occupants snugly up front. However, while there is the promise of two rear seats, they are really only practical for adults on short journeys and out of the question if the driver exceeds 6-foot in stature.

Instruments are clearly presented behind a no-nonsense 3-spoke steering wheel but the overall dash layout could flow better to reflect the exterior styling.

Performance-wise, the GT86 hits the benchmark 62 mph mark from rest in 8.4 seconds with the potential to top 130 mph and the automatic 'box neatly steps to the challenge, accompanied by the flat-four burble. On the economy front, Toyota claims a combined MPG of 39.8, and with a CO2 emissions of 164 gms/km, the car is in Band G for annual car tax. With regards to active safety provision, the car's rear wheel drive system is well protected electronically to maintain driver confidence while passive safety provision includes seven airbags.

Overall equipment levels are high, allowing the car to be used on a daily basis as opposed to being a track-day special with dual-zone climate control, cruise control,, satellite navigation with DAB radio and Bluetooth connectivity all standard as is a rear view camera.

The GT86 is priced at £26,495 with extras on the test car including black leather and Alcantara upholstery with heated front sports seats at £1,600 and metallic paint at £450. The car is in Group 29E for insurance purposes and is covered by Toyota's comprehensive 5-year / 100,000 mile warranty and 1-year full AA membership.

