

The New Toyota Hilux has a Surprise or Two

by Ian Lynas

Should you ever have the opportunity to travel to the USA and in particular to the Southern States, one vehicle rules- the pick-up. In fact around the world this vehicle continues to rise in the popularity charts and I am never quite sure why.



One of the most highly rated is the Toyota Hilux and in its many forms it has been a popular choice for almost fifty years, a dominant presence in the global pick-up market. To date sales have topped the 18 million mark and it is Europe's best-selling pick-up. I rarely get the chance to test this type of vehicle, however a Hilux did come my way and for me it turned out to be a vehicle of many surprises. The biggest surprise was it shares the creature comforts of a well appointed car or SUV and as you drive it; believe it or not it grows on you with its commanding

stance amidst the traffic.

Hilux is famous for its quality, durability and reliability and continues to demonstrate an unstoppable character, conquering the North Pole, the slopes of live volcanoes and Antarctica, as well as claiming podium finishes in the gruelling Dakar Rally-Raid. Now we have the new, eighth generation version which follows its predecessor in offering customers a choice of body styles: Single Cab, four-seat Extra Cab and the five-seat Double Cab.

The latest version builds on the model's established strengths, redefining toughness for business users with its new, stronger ladder chassis, a reinforced deck structure, improved all wheel drive capabilities and a greater towing capacity.

Now for my second surprise it is ideal for leisure activities, offering a contemporary design, higher comfort levels, advanced equipment features and improved safety, making it more stylish and stress-free to drive than ever before.

The Toyota designers and engineers have both a hard-wearing business workhorse





and a comfortable leisure 4x4. Once onboard you discover comfort, a more spacious interior that combines practicality. Safety is paramount more than ever and the new Toyota has a high-strength, impact-absorbing structure and is available with Toyota Safety Sense, equipping it with a Pre-Collision System with pedestrian detection function, Lane Departure Warning and Road Sign Assist.

Its comprehensive braking and control systems include ABS, Electronic Brakeforce Distribution, Vehicle Stability Control and Trailer Sway Control; these are the items found on any well equipped car. There is a new, tougher ladder chassis and a reinforced deck structure; add Active Traction Control, Downhill Assist Control and Hill-start Assist Control which raises 4x4 capabilities to Land Cruiser levels. Especially for business users there is a larger, stronger and more practical cargo deck and an improved towing capacity of up to 3.5 tonnes. Right at the heart of the new Hilux is a new 2.4 litre D-4D engine with improved fuel economy. Allied to my test example an automatic transmission and for peace of mind a new fiveyear/100,000-mile warranty and surprise number three-I am a Hilux fan, never thought I would say that.

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