



Rugged styling updates give the 2024 Honda Passport a more adventurous look, hinting at its off-road potential and spacious, utilitarian interior.

Adrenaline Injection

Toyota Creates a Thrilling Performance Machine in GR Corolla

By Derek Price
CARGAZING.COM

The Toyota GR Corolla is a testament to automotive alchemy, transforming the traditionally staid Corolla into a fire-breathing hot hatch that will leave enthusiasts grinning from ear to ear.

After a week behind the wheel of the Premium trim, it's clear that Toyota's GAZOO Racing division has created something truly special.

At the heart of this pocket rocket is a turbocharged 1.6-liter three-cylinder engine that defies expectations. Despite its diminutive size, this powerplant churns out a whopping 300 horsepower and 273 pound feet of torque, figures that would have been impressive in a V8 not too long ago. The low-end grunt is particularly astonishing, with boost coming on strong and early, catapulting the GR Corolla forward with startling urgency.

Paired exclusively with a six-speed manual transmission, the GR Corolla delivers a visceral, engaging driving experience that's becoming increasingly rare in today's automotive landscape.

The shifter action is precise and satisfying, with well-defined gates that make rowing through the gears a joy. An automatic option is not available, thank goodness. It would undoubtedly dilute the raw, connected feel that makes this hot hatch so special.

On twisty backroads, the GR Corolla comes alive. Its rally-derived all-wheel-drive system, which can split power between the front and rear axles in various configurations, provides tenacious grip and allows for impressive cornering speeds. The steering is direct and communicative, giving you the



The 2024 Toyota GR Corolla's subtle yet aggressive styling belies its potent performance capabilities, making it the ultimate sleeper hot hatch.

confidence to push harder with each successive bend.

Visually, the GR Corolla strikes a balance between aggression and subtlety. In the neutral gray paint of my tester, it doesn't scream for attention like some of its more extroverted rivals. Instead, it's a sleeper that will surprise unsuspecting sports car drivers at stoplights.

Functional vents and a subtle rear spoiler hint at its performance potential without crossing into boy-racer territory.

Inside, the GR Corolla is more focused on function than luxury. The supportive sport seats hold you firmly in place during spirited driving, and the digital gauge cluster provides all the necessary performance information at a glance.

While not as plush as some competitors, the interior feels well-built and purposeful.

Surprisingly, the GR Corolla isn't as punishing in daily driving as one might expect from such a performance-focused machine. The ride is firm but not brittle, and road noise is kept reasonably in check. That said, it wouldn't be my first choice for long highway slogs or if comfort is your top priority.

Fuel economy, rated at 21 mpg city and 28 mpg highway, is respectable given the performance on tap. However, enthusiastic driving will quickly see those numbers plummet.

At \$42,132 as tested, the GR Corolla Premium represents strong value in the hot hatch segment. It undercuts some European rivals while offering comparable (or superior) performance. Standard features are generous, including a premium audio system and advanced driver aids.

The GR Corolla isn't without faults. Some interior plastics feel a bit cheap, and the infotainment system, while improved, still lags behind the best in the class. Rear seat space is also tight, a reminder of the Corolla's compact roots.

But these are minor quibbles in the face of the GR Corolla's overwhelming charm. It's a car that makes you seek out the long way home, that begs to be driven hard, and that proves Toyota can still build thrilling driver's cars when it puts its mind to it.

For enthusiasts lamenting the demise of affordable performance cars, the GR Corolla is a beacon of hope. It's a hot hatch that punches well above its weight, delivering supercar-rivalling thrills in a practical, relatively affordable package.

The fact that it wears a Corolla badge makes it all the more remarkable.

A CLOSER LOOK



AT A GLANCE

FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

What was tested?

2024 Toyota GR Corolla Premium (\$39,920). Options: Special color (\$425), carpet floor mats (\$289), door sill protectors (\$179), frameless HomeLink mirror (\$175), cargo net (\$49). Price as tested (including \$1,095 destination charge): \$42,132

By The Numbers:

Wheelbase: 103.9 in.
Length: 173.6 in.
Width: 72.8 in.
Height: 58.2 in.
Engine: 1.6-liter three cylinder (300 hp, 273 lbs. ft.)
Transmission: Six-speed manual
Fuel economy: 21 city, 28 highway

RATINGS

Style: 9
Performance: 10
Price: 6
Handling: 9
Ride: 6
Comfort: 3
Quality: 8
Overall: 9

Why buy it?

It offers blistering performance, rally-bred all-wheel-drive grip, and surprising daily usability in a package that won't break the bank.

Adrenaline Injection

Toyota Creates a Thrilling Performance Machine in GR Corolla

By Derek Price

CARGAZING.COM

The Toyota GR Corolla is a testament to automotive alchemy, transforming the traditionally staid Corolla into a fire-breathing hot hatch that will leave enthusiasts grinning from ear to ear.

After a week behind the wheel of the Premium trim, it's clear that Toyota's GAZOO Racing division has created something truly special.

At the heart of this pocket rocket is a turbocharged 1.6-liter three-cylinder engine that defies expectations. Despite its diminutive size, this powerplant churns out a whopping 300 horsepower and 273 pound feet of torque, figures that would have been impressive in a V8 not too long ago. The low-end grunt is particularly astonishing, with boost coming on strong and early, catapulting the GR Corolla forward with startling urgency.

Paired exclusively with a six-speed manual transmission, the GR Corolla delivers a visceral, engaging driving experience that's becoming increasingly rare in today's automotive landscape.

The shifter action is precise and satisfying, with well-defined gates that make rowing through the gears a joy. An automatic option is not available, thank goodness. It would undoubtedly dilute the raw, connected feel that makes this hot



The 2024 Toyota GR Corolla's subtle yet aggressive styling belies its potent performance capabilities, making it the ultimate sleeper hot hatch.

hatch so special.

On twisty backroads, the GR Corolla comes alive. Its rally-derived all-wheel-drive system, which can split power between the front and rear axles in various configurations, provides tenacious grip and allows for impressive cornering speeds. The steering is direct and communicative, giving you the confidence to push harder with each successive bend.

Visually, the GR Corolla strikes a balance between aggression and subtlety. In the neutral gray paint of my

tester, it doesn't scream for attention like some of its more extroverted rivals. Instead, it's a sleeper that will surprise unsuspecting sports car drivers at stoplights.

Functional vents and a subtle rear spoiler hint at its performance potential without crossing into boy-racer territory.

Inside, the GR Corolla is more focused on function than luxury. The supportive sport seats hold you firmly in place during spirited driving, and the digital gauge cluster provides all

the necessary performance information at a glance.

While not as plush as some competitors, the interior feels well-built and purposeful.

Surprisingly, the GR Corolla isn't as punishing in daily driving as one might expect from such a performance-focused machine. The ride is firm but not brittle, and road noise is kept reasonably in check. That said, it wouldn't be my first choice for long highway slogs or if comfort is your top priority.

Fuel economy, rated at 21

mpg city and 28 mpg highway, is respectable given the performance on tap.

However, enthusiastic driving will quickly see those numbers plummet.

At \$42,132 as tested, the GR Corolla Premium represents strong value in the hot hatch segment. It undercuts some European rivals while offering comparable (or superior) performance. Standard features are generous, including a premium audio system and advanced driver aids.

The GR Corolla isn't without faults. Some interior plastics feel a bit cheap, and the infotainment system, while improved, still lags behind the best in the class. Rear seat space is also tight, a reminder of the Corolla's compact roots.

These are minor quibbles in the face of the GR Corolla's overwhelming charm. It's a car that makes you seek out the long way home, that begs to be driven hard, and that proves Toyota can still build thrilling driver's cars when it puts its mind to it.

For enthusiasts lamenting the demise of affordable performance cars, the GR Corolla is a beacon of hope. It's a hot hatch that punches well above its weight, delivering supercar-rivalling thrills in a practical, relatively affordable package.

The fact that it wears a Corolla badge makes it all the more remarkable.

AT A GLANCE

What was tested?

2024 Toyota GR Corolla Premium (\$39,920). Options: Special color (\$425), carpet floor mats (\$289), door sill protectors (\$179), frameless HomeLink mirror (\$175), cargo net (\$49). Price as tested (including \$1,095 destination charge): \$42,132

By The Numbers:

Wheelbase: 103.9 in.
Length: 173.6 in.
Width: 72.8 in.
Height: 58.2 in.
Engine: 1.6-liter three cylinder (300 hp, 273 lbs. ft.)
Transmission: Six-speed manual
Fuel economy: 21 city, 28 highway

RATINGS

Style: 9
Performance: 10
Price: 6
Handling: 9
Ride: 6
Comfort: 3
Quality: 8
Overall: 9

Why buy it?

It offers blistering performance, rally-bred all-wheel-drive grip, and surprising daily usability in a package that won't break the bank.