

REVIEW The City Car Revisited

2008 Toyota Passo tested



Interior has cheap plastics, but what else did you expect?

Despite the blocky, city car looks, the Passo looks smart and modern.

Next up in our series of hatchbacks is this cute little supermini from Toyota, called the Passo Racy. The Passo is no rare sight in Dhaka, with its 996 cc (1.0) liter engine, it sits at the rock bottom of Toyota's range in terms of price and has sold rather well for being one of the cheapest Toyotas in the market. The particular car we tested is one that my friend's dad came across while purchasing his son's first car, and has wanted one for himself ever since. I wouldn't blame him for it, as it turns out, this is the Passo "Racy" edition, in a very metallic shade of black. It is surprisingly good looking, quite desirable and costs peanuts to run.

The "Racy" badge comes with an upgraded set of body parts all around. The front and rear bumpers are lower and have a different shape altogether, slightly boxy with a larger lower grill opening, large rally-esque fog lamps up front and stylish reflectors, a neat spoiler and a fat round exhaust tip at the back. Wheels are genuine 14 inch Toyota

alloys sitting on a healthy amount of rubber for great comfort. A keen eye will also notice that the front and rear lights are black-housed. The wheels sit at the very wide ends of the car for a good stance and better handling dynamics.

Inside you'll find a regular Passo with a fancy RPM gauge sitting on top of the dashboard. Standard Passos don't come with an RPM gauge, hence the separation. All else is clearly the usual plastic in a layout as basic as it gets, a standard factory CD player, a working air conditioner and nothing trying to look like something it's not. The amount of space in this tiny little car really is astonishing. You'll be able to fit four and a half full sized adults comfortably, and still have space to keep a few bags between your legs.

The inline three-cylinder engine is no brute but provides excellent fuel economy. It is the same unit from the Vitz we drove two weeks back, except that this has a three speed automatic

gear box instead of the CVT. Throttle response is damp as expected of such a small engine, but peak torque is at the low end of the RPM range meaning, you can get on the power

instantly for manoeuvring in traffic. Small engines do tend to be a little noisy and jittery; however, the overall ride is quite smooth and cushioned. It's a fun and easy car to drive around town, it'll go as fast as you'll ever need it to go, gets into tight spaces and has character all the while. You



always know you're driving a compact, good looking car. Similar to a lot of the cars we've previously driven, the Passo is manufactured by Daihatsu and sold under many names such as the Subaru Justy, Daihatsu Boon, Toyota Passo and Perodua MyVi, the Perodua being the best selling car of its kind in Malaysia. There is an entire culture dedicated to these great little hatchbacks all over Asia, where they're souped up, swapped for bigger engines or slammed as close to the ground as possible on wheels that are (literally!) more expensive than the car. Parts should be easy to find, be it for service or modifications. Swap a 1500cc engine with a manual transmission into it if you're in the mood to fly!

Should you be in the market for a Maruti Suzuki or a similar subcompact as your first car, what you really should be looking at is this. This particular Passo Racy is priced at 12.5 lacs and is available for sale at Car House Limited.

SPECS

2008 Toyota Passo "Racy"

Engine: 1.0 litre VVT-i 1KR-FE inline-3.
Transmission: 4-speed automatic.
Curb weight: 980 kg

Prices:
12.5 lakh at Car House Ltd.
Older, 2005-06 year secondhand models go for sale at around 7 lakhs.

AADNAN ZAMAN

PIMP MY BIKE

We have all seen that cycle on the streets of Dhaka - rigged with wedding day LEDs and motorcycle side-view mirrors - cruising the roads in all its rainbow glory. The awesome people who own these can be seen all over Dhaka, mostly in Mohammadpur, in a gear too low, pedaling away furiously while even rickshaws - even the ones without motors - overtake them. But cycle overhauling does not necessarily have to be about pink lights and horns which play Hindi music tones. And for those new to cycling, here's a general idea of how to go about it.



Brakes:

Frequently overlooked, brakes mean everything between stopping in time and your face plastered on the rear windshield of a Toyota Corolla. At the very least, depending on the cost of your cycle, chances are the stock brake pads are not of the best quality. Get them changed. Decent ones like those from Gub cost around 500 per pair and they can make all the difference.

Secondly, if the fork of your cycle supports it, you can opt for a complete overhaul from traditional rim brakes to disc brakes. The latter gives you better stopping power. But when it comes to disc brakes, try going for the moderately good ones rather than cheap ones, even if they are more expensive.

Forks:

On the roads of Dhaka, especially in parts of Mirpur, you never know when the next bump will hit you right up your posterior. Forks can help dissipate that shock and the better the fork, the smoother the ride. Forks can be costly, but one which has a travel distance of at least 120mm, like the RockShox XC 28 (costing around 9000 taka), really makes a difference. Go for ones with a turnkey lockout so that on smooth roads where the coil will absorb your pedalling force and slow you down, you can lock the fork.



And a word from the experienced...

Kafil Wara Rafid, Winner of the BDCyclist Qualifying Race (Under 16)

"Upgrading totally depends on the rider and his riding style. If he just commutes with his bike, a low-end Tourney will work too. But if he wants to ride off road where quick shifting is needed, he can upgrade the deras to Alivio or something better. But a properly tuned Tourney will work better than an un-tuned Deore. So keep your deras tuned to get quick shifting. There are two popular brands of drivetrain in the market, SRam and Shimano. Most the bikes in Bangladesh have Shimano components - some new bikes are getting SRam. Of the two, I prefer Sram if it's for a mountain bike, and Shimano for road bikes. SRam looks cooler than Shimano, but SRam components can be rarely found in Bangladesh."

Tires and tubes:
While fat, knobby tires are better for uneven roads, the added friction can slow you down. On the other hand, slicks will make you go faster. Take into consideration your frequent routes and upgrade. Stock tires, like those of most local brands, are heavy and weigh down the cycle. Sleeks like the Freedom Cruz costs around 2500

taka and are definitely worth the money. Good tubes on the other hand, can reduce the chances of a leak while you are whizzing over glass shards from yesterday's harta.

Bottom Bracket:

Bottom Brackets or BB's have to be the most overlooked part of the bike - most people don't know what they are until it breaks down. The BB is a cylindrical part



to which the pedals are connected and it is crucial to the smooth rotation of the crank. Now, a lot of people, me included, have found themselves in a position in the middle of the road, and the pedals wouldn't turn anymore - the bottom bracket finally dropped dead. Most stock bottom brackets are cheap and don't last very long, but a decent one like the VP will set you back around 500 taka and make your rides a whole lot smoother.

Groupset:

The groupset is a fancy term for a lot of cycle parts taken together - including the shifters, brake levers, derailleurs (deras), and cogs. Now, you can upgrade each of these individually, as most people do. For example, if you have a few thousands to spare, ditch the Tourney and Revo shifters and go for a Shimano EF-51.

Whichever part you are upgrading, find out first if that part of the group set will work with the other components. On the Shimano line up, components from Altus, Acera and Alivio series are decent while on the upper end you have Deore, SLX and XT.



MOYUKH MAHTAB



SITE REVIEW

Drivers Wanted

The site that takes care of your search for a new driver

Hiring a driver for your car used to be a tedious process. You had to ask people for a driver, they had to ask others and finally you would be interviewing a pool of candidates with range of experiences that is far from what you expected. Those days are long gone. In the age of LinkedIn and Glassdoor we give you: driverbd.com.

This plain looking site claims to hold information of more than 1000 drivers in the country. There are several categories from which you can actually find 'The One'; including



A driver on the site claimed he drove this previously:
one of the rarest, most expensive classics in the world, the Bugatti Type 35.

home district, living area, driven vehicle type and brand. So if you are biased by stereotypes, like a driver from Barishal causing more accidents, you can altogether avoid any candidate from that region.

The registration process is simple. Fill in the info and make a payment of BDT 2000/-

-After making the payment, you can make a shortlist of up to 20 drivers. After making the list you can submit to the site. Only then you can view their contact details.

This is our take on the site:

- Some drivers are guaranteed to give you out of the world driving experience because of their past experience with something called the 'Toyota ALIEN'.
- There are some drivers wanting to only drive BMWs and Audis. So never call them up and waste their valuable

time. P.S. Interestingly, their past experiences with cars are limited to Maruti Wagon-Rs.

- Don't hesitate to visit the site even if you want to hire driver for a CNG, tempo, bus or truck.

- Apparently NOAH is a brand now. [Go to the Search tab of the site to see it for yourself].

- We also found one driver who is driving a Bugatti Type 35, an extremely rare race-car built in 1926.

So seeing all these, we are a tad bit doubtful whether these information

Date of Birth	Jun 01, 1985				
Phone No	View Phone number				
National ID	View National ID				
PERMANENT ADDRESS					
Village	Shubab Nagar	Post Office	Beamer		
Thana / Area	Bulbari	District	Fazlpur		
PRESENT ADDRESS					
Address	View Phone Number				
Thana / Area	Zigatia	District	Dhaka		
PROFESSIONAL DETAILS					
Driving	Car	Brand	Bugatti	Model	Bugatti Type 35
License No	View License No	License Expiry Date	Jul 31, 2015		
Total Experience	9 Years(s)	Salary	₹ 12,000.00		
EDUCATION DETAILS					
Degree Name	BSC	Passing Year	2000		
Thana / Area	Bulbari	District	Fazlpur		
EXPERIENCE DETAILS					
Employer	Private				
Job Duration	Jul 01, 2007 To Jan 01, 2009				
Driving	Car	Brand	Toyota	Model	Altis

A typical driver profile.

How much of it is believable?

are accurate at all. Moreover, the verification process that the site admins went through are also questionable. Also, what happens when the driver hired from the site turns out to be a miscreant, are not clearly outlined.

Though there are some downsides to hiring from this site, it's still an appreciable initiative. If you are really in need of a chauffeur, now you know where to look.

SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

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