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# SHIFT

Automotive Publication of The Daily Star

## TEST DRIVE

# TO INFINITY AND BEYOND

## 2014 Infiniti Q50



Increasing demand of European prestigious cars has encouraged a lot of auto dealers to import top of the range models. But dreary truth be told, all are the same- Mercedes, BMW or Audi with the occasional Porsches and Volkswagens. A few months back, something very different caught my wife's attention - an Infiniti Q50. Yes, that's correct- my wife was lured away by the bold presence of the Q50. Soon enough, I fixed a date with the sport sedan that made me momentarily go green.

The Q50 has an aura of lurid charisma around it. It defies my logic how a Nissan in disguise of a European built brand can have such a dynamic presence. It has a bit of almost everything you want a sport sedan to have from the outside- sleek shoulder and waist lines that accentuate the robust design of the car, arched roofline with a tinted sunroof that meets the crescent cut C-pillar, large wheel arches to fit the massive 19 inches of grip, sharp distinctive head and tail lamps that almost suggest a human look, Infiniti's signature double arch trunk lines and wave patterned detailed textured double arched grille at the front that gives the car a decidedly aggressive stance. You will not find a single angle from which the car looks ordinary, thanks to the meticulous attention to detail.

The interior of the Q50 is created to similar extraordinary standards. The interior environment offers a powerful blend of three dimensional elements, highest craftsmanship and premium quality, combining modern luxury and user-focused advanced technology. The difference between Nissan and Infiniti is more than the variation between Toyota and Lexus; and this is very obvious when you step into the Q50. The firm and low positioned leather hugging seats are electronically adjustable with memory options to make life easier for you and the roomy interior space gives ample head and leg room that allows easy entry and exit for both the front and rear passengers. There's a myriad of sense stimulation elements such as brushed aluminum, textured magnesium, supple leather, textured fabric and maple wood trim that make the Q50 experience not

only indulging but also intuitive for both the passenger and the driver alike.

I'll be honest- the Q50 is one of the most driver engaging vehicles I've come across with. Offering a sense of "my car knows me", the i-Key can recognize each driver and automatically engage pre-set preferences for driving position, heating and cooling, premium audio "Studio on Wheels" by Bose, navigation and telemetric. For example, up to 96 optional set-

up key and the 2.0 liter I4 turbo grows to life with the optical tachometer and dual touch screens' welcome display. Pushing the leather clad gear lever to D, I went on a quick stroll towards the Airport. I focused on the standard mode, as honestly, it makes most sense to drive in this form mostly. The engine builds up revs very quickly, distributing the decent power of 208hp from 5,500 onwards. There is minimal turbo lag, thanks to the

brisk through the sparse traffic of a laid back Friday noon Dhaka while I flicked up the magnesium paddle shifters and right foot rooted on the firewall. This precise handling is provided by a two way steering system- electronic during the standard mode and mechanical while at sport. The 4-wheel independent multi-link suspension is comprised of double wishbone at the front and multi-link coil spring shock absorbers with stabilizer bars in the rear. This reduces the steering effort of the driver while increasing the road surface feedback significantly. I had to be twice as alert while at sport mode, but I was having four times more fun I was having in standard. Confident braking is granted by ABS and EBD embedded 4 wheel power assisted vented discs with 4 large piston calipers on the front and twin pots at the rear.

The split second gear changes in auto mode throws the car from 0-100 at around 7 seconds. The seven-speed automatic is the true magic of the Q50- despite the heavy chassis, the RWD platform provides a brilliant power to weight ratio that makes the Q50 so nimble. I paddle shifted my way into Dhaka traffic, down shifting at swerves, the gear re-matching a notch down instantly and ready to convey the boost from the 2.0 turbo. Yes, I have driven faster cars, but the way the power and torque is delivered into the road and the agility of the Q50 makes it so special.

It is pricey. At 1 crore 11 lacs taka, the Infiniti Q50 is an insane proposition if you compare to the luxury of a BMW or Mercedes at similar range. But luxury and engineering performance are the only focus of these European brands. So why should you compare the Q50 to them, when it offers so much more? Besides performance and modern luxury, the Q50 is endowed with exceptional value for money options and technological trickeries compared to its big name competitors. Infiniti has brought a true game changer in the luxury sports sedan segment.

For more information and test drive, contact Car House Limited.



tings in are offered in the custom mode alone. Easy setting or changing of settings is accessed through the innovative dual touch-screen displays and steering mounted soft touch controls. In addition, by using the drive mode selector located on the center console, engine, transmission, handling and steering adjustments of up to four types can be instantly tuned, for example, for sport, standard or touring settings.

What about the drive train? Push the

snail kicking in at low RPM of 1,250 and thus sending in a remarkable torque figure of 236 lb-ft from 3,000 RPM onwards. Handling and braking is noteworthy, but it is when I made the U-turn at Airport and engaged the sport mode, that the true beast of a thing the Q50 unleashed on me.

The relatively soft suspension went stiff, throttle response went crisp and the steering very agile. The slightest of steering twitch made the car change lanes and

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PHOTOS: TASDID CHOWDHURY

## COLLECTIBLES

### Kyosho 1/64 Skyline



Kyosho, makers of exorbitantly priced scale models which are beyond the reach of most of us mere mortals, is mostly synonymous with very high levels of quality. If you want some of the Kyosho quality at a price you can (mostly) afford, their 1/64 scale cars offer incredible details in a tiny package.

The Skyline R33 GTR has an extremely detailed interior with accurate design right down to the seat patterns. The paint and exterior/undercarriage detail are top notch, the only downside being a chipped rear wheel, which takes away from the experience of holding such a well detailed piece.

For a price of 1800 taka, its steep for 1/64 but worth it because you pay for exclusivity and the detail.

WORDS AND PHOTO: SHAER REAZ



### Modified HW Skyline

While Kyoshos and Autoart 1:64 are pricey for most collectors, Hotwheels occasionally releases beautifully detailed castings for the budget conscious. Case in point is this Z Tune R34 Skyline. It's one of the best realistic Hotwheels casting to come out in the last few years. Except for the wheels, everything else is spot on for the real model. With a little bit of work, this too can look even better. The one you see here are customized with detailing that add the ducts and window trim. Wheels have been made to look like the Nismo edition 5 spokes. The black one has been lowered and given a spoiler delete to make a clean, sleeper look. That is if Skyline can ever have the sleeper look. This R34 has been a big hit with customisers. If you've got any, show it to us and we will feature it on Shift Collectibles.



WORDS AND PHOTO: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

## AUTO NEWS

### Omera sponsored Ford Fiesta wins DMACK rally



It was last year when the rally spec Ford Fiesta with Omera livery was brought into the country and flaunted around by Mobil 1. Little did we know what this little devil was about to accomplish.

Out of the five event season held in Spain, 23-year-old Aasen and his co-driver finished on top at the final race, clinching the position at the top of the podium. Marius Aasen along with his co-driver Veronica Engan landed the biggest prize in rallying for Bangladesh as he won the Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy in style. Omera, a world-class lubricant brand produced in Bangladesh, sponsored the team.

Head to www.thedailystar.net/shift for the video clip.

MAHBUB HUSSAIN

## PROJECT CAR

# BOOST AND LIFT Supercharged 2006 Toyota Celica

The Celica was a hot selling car in Bangladesh, mainly because it's a 2 door coupe with appealing styling and the second reason being it's a Toyota. That meant that it's bulletproof reliable and parts for it are attainable locally.

I'm going to gather my thoughts on this one a little differently; because this is the first project car I've featured where the owner was cool enough to hand over the keys to me. Right when you enter the car, you notice only the driver's side got the Recaro bucket seat treatment. Once you're settled in, you immediately notice this car has been fine tuned to perfection, the short shifter is setup so that each and every gear falls precisely when you want it to and thanks to the super-short throws, quick-shifting is tremendously fun in this car. The aftermarket Fidanza clutch is quite friendly even when you're just cruising about, in-fact it feels no harder to operate than my stock clutch and that says a lot. When you have a car as high strung as this one you'd think it's hard to drive in the city, but it's really not, it's fine tuned and refined. It feels like any stock Celica when you're granny shifting and that on its own is an achievement as a small window into how much effort was spent behind the car. The interior has three Defi gauges and controller, which are cleverly integrated into the center console behind a tinted glass. The car has an automatic sunroof which tilts and slides, adding to the cool factor. Yes I have a sunroof fetish, probably because my car



doesn't have one.

This is no ordinary Celica GT-S. It has been fitted with a supercharger from Blitz Power Japan and is now running 9 pounds of boost through its VVTL-I, 2ZZGE heart. The car was also fitted with a set of coilovers and a stack load of bars and strengthening braces to improve handling. Getting up and driving this thing, it makes usable boost from 2500

RPM all the way upto the 8400 RPM redline. It feels like it's running on jet fuel (which it probably is) and when you're pushing this car you simply don't have the time to look at the clocks or the gauges, just guess the RPM from the engine note and upshift to the next gear. The blowoff valve chimes and you're in boost again; unlike a turbocharger, there is no lag; floor it in any gear, at any speed and the torque will carry you forward with no hesitation. You have to be a skilled driver to drive this car properly, and I was quite terrified to push it as there is just an endless amount of power going to the front wheels, not that you'd feel it with the amazing handling and road-holding capability the car has in its current form. Even at unspeakable speeds this car feels quite stable, it's deceptively fast and you really don't realize it until

you look at the speedo or guess the speed from the engine note (which I happen to be quite familiar with) and gear. The motor is built by Cosworth and has forged internals, the only thing stock about this car is the gauge cluster and steering.

Moving to the exterior, the hood is made out of super-light carbon-fiber, the front bumper is from the optional Toyota "Action pack" and the rear kit and skirts are by Veilside. The car sits low on a set of genuine 18" OZ wheels. The Blitz Nur Spec exhaust complements the powerplant.

This car gets away from its stock counterparts without even trying, it's just that agile. This is no Celica, this is a front-wheel driven rocket disguised under a Celica bodyshell and even with all the aggressive kits, you simply don't expect a 7th Generation Celica to go like this does, which in my mind makes it a sleeper.



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