

SHIFT

AUTOMOTIVE PUBLICATION OF The Daily Star



AG AUTOMOBILES Tejgaon I Uttara
HOTLINE: 01678693673
ford@anwargroup.com
Ford Go Further

TEST DRIVE

2015-16 TOYOTA RAV4



What is it?

The Spice Girls came onto the scene in 1994 screaming at you to "Tell me what you want, what you really, really want." Car consumers didn't know but Toyota did. Unlikely as it may sound, the RAV4 appeared in '94 as a true trendsetter. It was the first SUV crossover and the ingredients have not changed since. It combined roominess and ride height of an SUV with the efficiency of a sedan. That formula still continues.

Does it look right?

RAV4s are pretty popular here in Bangladesh. Our review unit is the fourth generation highlighting the current design language of Toyota. The profile is immediately sporty with that hawk-like beak of a slope up front. It has the sharp profile of a car that can carve through air.

There's plenty of Gundam warrior influences with the squinty headlights and the gaping maw of a bumper air dam. The lines flow neatly along the sides breaking up the large slab into two visually appealing creases. The top crease carries on and out toward the taillights creating a bit of a shelf where you rest your elbow and pose against your new car for that standard selfie. Quite convenient actually. Gone is the rear mounted spare wheel which once carried on the pretence of a big SUV without being visually pleasing. It was an eyesore and good riddance.

What's it like inside?

Couple years ago Toyota thought fake embossed stitching on plastic would fool people into thinking it was upmarket. Plastic feels like plastic. Things like stitches are so basic in functionality they should never appear as plastic copies. Kind of like Megan Fox. So the plastic stitch was ditched in favour of the real thing. Yes, you can poke them and feel them move. This may verge on nit-picking, but it goes all out making the previously plasticky interior of the last three gens a forgotten memory. We got the black and terracotta red interior that looked smart and felt good with the soft touch surfaces. Simplicity and solid construction was

probably on the designers agenda. It's not a work of art but it works and it feels solidly constructed to last forever.

Can you have a board meeting in there?

There's acres of space inside, so much so that my sub-Editor felt there was just too much space; he drives an oversized Camry. But there's no such thing as too much space which you will appreciate here. Rear passengers have enough space to stretch out while browsing their laptop and occasionally dropping it. Yet, the dimensions on the outside aren't that big. This is great packaging making a compact crossover feel large on the inside.



How does it ride?

Despite the tall ride height, the RAV4 exhibited moderately tight handling. From my experiences with all three previous generations, I expected much more body roll during fast cornering. It's no racecar but it showed as little bodyroll as much lower sedans. Most people here will be used to Premios and Allions. The RAV4 makes those cars feel like boats which is quite surprising. Road noise does creep in but it never gets loud enough that you have to shout. At speed over our typically jittery roads, it provides composed movement and subdued thumps of those 17 inch wheels. There's a good balance between

handling and ride comfort.

How does it drive?

The car is quick to move forward and those magical CVT ratios do their abra-cadabra so you don't really feel anything other than linear movement. There's a sport mode but don't let it fool you into thinking this becomes an Evoque. Engaging Sport seems to sharpen up the throttle response a little unless you start using the manual mode to hold the engine speed to a higher ratio. The CVT makes good use of all the 145bhp and 138lb/ft of torque to help push the bigish car to triple digit speeds. Navana is only bringing in the feature laden 2WD and these soft roaders will

wants to avoid lawsuits over someone getting whacked on the nose by a quickly rising gate. But it works, just be patient. There's an aftermarket head unit that also acts as a rearview camera and is apparently voice operation enabled. Safety comes from a huge assortment of front, side and curtain airbags.

SPECS: 2015-16 Toyota RAV4

Engine: 2.0 liter 4 cylinder 3ZRFE VVT-i engine (143hp, 187NM of torque).

Transmission: CVT with manual mode

Layout: Front engine, Front wheel drive

Brakes: Ventilated discs front, Solid discs rear, ABS, EBD and Traction Control.

Features and options: Immobiliser and alarm anti theft system, projector headlamps, natural leather seats, automatic climate control air-conditioning, steering mounted audio controls, optical meters, foldable rear seats.

Price: 65 LAKH TAKA.

For details, contact Navana Limited.

VERDICT

I used to love the first generation RAV4. It was tiny and the handling was agile for what it was. Then it bloated and became a bit of a bumbling city cruiser. They fixed a lot of that with this new RAV4. It feels more lithe and light despite having grown to full-on SUV proportions. The steering feel is diluted in typical Toyota fashion but it is light to the touch. It isn't a GT86 but it is still fun to drive around town although most owners will likely be driven all the time. Here, the huge space inside means you can sit in our famous traffic jams all day as you must and revel in the dual zone air conditioning.

The RAV4 has a strong presence in this market and will hold its value well. The Spice Girls may have faded away but the RAV4 has built on the original formula with good looks, decent handling, superb interior space and fuel economy. It's a little formulaic, but it works.

WORDS: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY
PHOTOS: RAHIN SADMAN ISLAM

COLLECTIBLES

Mercedes C63 AMG by Kyosho

The Kyosho AMG range covers a delectable selection of Mercedes AMG models, from the SLS to the DTM race-cars to this, the last generation C63 AMG.

I have a huge fascination for Mercs, and recently got into collecting classic Mercedes of various scales and models. However, when a fellow collector put this C63 up for sale, I could not resist it.

The detail and paint quality is exquisite, a demure AMG silver that makes the sleek yet sporty lines of the supercar slaying sedan pop. The exhaust tips are separate and the headlight detail even replicates the projectors on the real car.



Just compare with the below 1 thousand taka BMW 5 series in the picture. That is by Welly, and comes with generic wheels and solid white for headlights, solid red for taillights. By contrast, the Merc comes with genuine OEM wheels and as mentioned, the light detail is incredible. Plus you get a base-plate so you can display it easily.

If you're a stickler for details, paying upwards of 1 thousand taka might seem worth it. Just don't tell your friends, because they will remind you that there are starving children in Africa.



WORDS AND PHOTOS: SHAER REAZ

DEFENDERS OF NATIONS

Infographic: Shaer Reaz



The Land Rover Defender has to be one of the most iconic vehicles in the world of automobiles. Since 1948, this venerable workhorse has served everyone and everything from the fire service in Bangladesh to the United Nations to the Queen of England, who was so fond of hers she would drive it herself. This week, the last Land Rover Defender rolled out of the factory, and the world is a darker place for it.

DEFENDER 90 1990



First one called "Defender" due to the introduction of the Discovery. It got modern suspension and a jump in the amenities, like air-con. The 90 name refers the short wheelbase.



SERIES I 1948

The original Series I came with just a 50 bhp 1.6 litre engine, and was meant for light industrial use. Inspired by the Jeep Willys, the Land Rover was exceedingly simple to operate, and use of steel and aluminium with solid build quality meant it lasted forever. LR estimates around 70% of them are still running like new.



SERIES III 1971

440,000 Series III models were made, making it very common. It had more power and was made sturdier, but at the same time the creature comforts were updated, with proper upholstery and padding. With the Range Rover, another legend, it took over the world.

DEFENDER 110

Same as the 90, with a longer wheelbase. It was used in every form possible by the military.



SERIES II 1958

The Series II received a mild facelift, along with more power: 70 bhp. The Royal Air Force put tank tracks on it to turn it into a bomb disposal machine. The Series II also came in "cab forward" versions which was used in civil defense services.



The last Land Rover Defender is a throwback to the originals: its green, has classic wheels, badges and design cues from the original. The last one, H166 HUE, is all set to be a collector's item in the future, and we won't be surprised if it fetches a ridiculous (but warranted) sum of money later.