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## AUTO NEWS

# ALL-NEW TOYOTA YARIS



The Yaris is a hot seller for Toyota almost everywhere in the world in some form or the other. The Japanese automaker looks to build on the impressive European sales figures of the Yaris by adding more Euro-centric design elements into the small hatchback and replicating those updates across all of Toyota's markets. That basically means the European Yaris will look and be equipped exactly the same as the Japanese market Vitz.

Outside, the Yaris looks fresh, modern and sharp, with none of the lumpy design elements that were present in the last generation, during Toyota's design transition period. Now the front fascia has the distinctive Toyota nose, bring the small hatch into the family. Toyota's making personalising options a priority, since this segment pretty much rides on that.

Under the hood there's an all-new 1.5 litre motor which is supposedly more efficient and has a better power figure per litre than before.

Will the Yaris come to Bangladesh? Probably in sedan form, since Bangladesh isn't huge on hatchbacks. Definitely expect to see the grey market start importing recon units in a year or two though.

## PROJECT CA

# RESCUING A SAVANNA

The idea behind the Wankel rotary has been around as a patent since the early 30's and as a working prototype since the late 50's, and Felix Wankel's rotary design has been adopted by a myriad selection of manufacturers, even powering motorbikes and jet-skis. However, say the words "rotary powered" to any petrolhead and the name Mazda will automatically spring to mind. The Japanese manufacturer's love story with the Wankel rotary has birthed some of the most desirable high performance machines the world has ever seen, from the Cosmo of the 60's to the tuner legend that is the RX7, introduced in 1978 and produced through three generations all the way to 2002.

The RX7 was a replacement for the RX3, a car that now has cult status in Australia, New Zealand and Japan. When it came to developing a successor to the highly capable RX3, Mazda looked to take the rotary sports car into the future, giving the design brief to Matasaburo Maeda. What Maeda-san designed would go on to influence a decade of Japanese technical and aesthetic dominance, and the final product would be the SA22/FB series Savanna RX7.

In Bangladesh, there are only a handful of Savanna RX7s, with some estimating only 5 remaining units in the country. One of them belongs to Azwad Anwar, who has owned his 1978 Savanna for a good three years.

Bought as a disfigured and broken shell of a car from a garage in Chittagong, Azwad recounts his tale of how this

Savanna was brought back from the brink of rotting and how at least some of its past glory has been restored.

"The most difficult part of restoring a Savanna is making sure the bodywork lines up. A whole host of parts had to be imported from Japan and it wasn't cheap sourcing parts for the Mazda, but I'm glad I did it," says Azwad.

While the bodywork can still be sorted properly, it's the powertrain that seems to



be the issue. The original 12A rotary was long gone, and Azwad had to find a suitable replacement so he could at least drive his precious Mazda instead of waiting for years for a period correct or even a modern rotary motor – they're not exactly cheap and finding a good one can take years. It might seem sacrilegious, but the heart beating inside this candy red Savanna is not from Mazda – it's powered by the 1.8 litre 7K inline-four from the Toyota Noah, utilising a 7K 5-speed man-

ual gearbox with modified bell-housing and shifter. Power stands at around 80 HP and 103 lb-ft of torque, close to the 12A's 100 HP power figure. It's sprightly enough, the low weight of the RX7 and rear wheel drivetrain making it a lively car to drive. Under the sleek lines of the Mazda are aftermarket coilovers to stiffen up the suspension and OEM refurbished brakes with genuine replacement parts. It certainly has gotten back some of its



sports car pedigree. As our photographer Farhan reports, the RX7 is slightly tail-happy even with the relative lack of power, and the chassis is poised and fun-loving, like a carpet dog who still wants to play fetch like the big dogs.

As Azwad says, it's not an impossible task for someone to take an old RX7 and have some fun with it, provided you have the funds: "I want to go for a turbo rotary in the future. This car definitely needs more power, but even then I'm quite

satisfied with the way it drives and handles now, plus the rarity of the car makes it quite special. This is the oldest car I've owned so far, and I love driving vintage metal because of this Savanna."

It might not be the cleanest or the most authentic restoration job in the country, but Azwad's resto-mod Savanna is definitely a good base to work on. These restoration jobs take years and sometimes decades to pull off properly, but who



wouldn't want to drive and enjoy their project car in the meantime? All we know is, this little red sports car has had some life breathed back into it and we're glad it's out there on the road, ruining people's hearing with its custom Shakotan-inspired exhaust. Just imagine the racket it'd make if it had a turbo rotary, then.

WORDS: SHAER REAZ  
PHOTOS: FARHAN AHMED

## 10 mil hybrid vehicle sales for Toyota

Toyota Motor Corporation announced that their cumulative global hybrid vehicle sales has surpassed the 10 million units mark, standing at 10.05 million units sold as of January 31st, 2017.

Toyota, one of the pioneers of hybrid vehicle technology in production cars, has led the crusade of environmentally friendly, fuel efficient hybrid vehicles worldwide. This two decade long crusade of making cars less dependent on fossil fuels started with the launch of the Prius and Coaster Hybrid EV in 1997, the Prius going on



to be a household name and poster-child for environmentally friendly vehicles thanks to continued celebrity endorsements and widespread support from environmental activists. It's fitting that the milestone achievement comes about on the 20 year anniversary year of the launching of the Prius, the world's first mass produced hybrid vehicle.

The Prius is already in its fourth generation, and its fortunes, along with Toyota's, has skyrocketed in recent years as environmental consciousness reaches new heights. Following in Toyota's footsteps, other manufacturers are also investing heavily in hybrid vehicle technology, creating the kind of tidal wave of change that has long lasting impacts on history.

For 2017, Toyota has 8 hybrid car models on sale globally, ranging from the Prius C hatchback to the Avalon full-size sedan, as well as medium and full-size SUV's like the RAV4 and Highlander, respectively. It's not just the Toyota hybrid lineup that's doing well either, as the luxury arm of Toyota, Lexus, has hybrid versions of almost every single model in their range, indicating the luxury car market is also showing a strong lean towards eco-friendly cars both at home and abroad.

Toyota had the vision and the will that only a truly global corporation can have to follow through with their idea of the future and now it's paying off for them. Toyota has successfully steered the global market to eco cars and the numbers are showing they're nowhere near slowing down.



# SUPERFAST: FERRARI 812

Ferrari's V12 engine turns 70 this year, and the Italian supercar manufacturer has decided to celebrate by launching the successor to the V12 powerhouse that was the F12 and F12tdf. They're calling it something ridiculous in typical Ferrari fashion these days – Superfast.

Unveiled at this year's Geneva Auto Show, the 812 Superfast is slated to be the fastest, most powerful Ferrari production car ever made. Under the hood is a 6.5 litre V12 producing 800 HP at 8500 RPM and 530 lb-ft of torque available from just 3500 RPM. All that power and torque translates to a claimed 0-60 MPH sprint time of just 2.9 seconds, and the top end power means the 812 will do a 211 MPH top

speed, easy. That name doesn't lie, then.

The Superfast is essentially a more powerful, highly tuned and upgraded version of the F12. Its built on the same chassis and the dimensions roughly stay the same, although the list of improvements make it a completely new car. It's the first Ferrari ever to come with electronic power steering and also incorporates an updated version of Slide Slip

Control, a sort of electronic nanny that keeps all the power in check and saves the lives of hedge fund managers and oil barons.

How much will the Superfast cost? Ferrari is still pretty tight lipped about the pricing, and it's going to be limited production anyway, meaning all of them will be sold off before mere mortals get a whiff of price-tag. Might as well call it

Superexpensive.

At the end of the day, the 812 Superfast might be one for the history books, as rumours are circulating that this will be the last of the marque's 70 year-long history of legendary naturally aspirated V12s. From now on, it'll all be turbochargers and hybrid powertrains powering the most desirable cars on the planet.



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