

PROJECT CARS

SILVER SURFER

1989 Toyota Supra A70



There was a time, a long time back, when Toyota was an adventurous sort of manufacturer. The Japanese were riding the high of a technological boom in the 80s—everything from tape decks to calculators to washing machines carried the “Made in Japan” tag, and were valued for it. Toyota was free from the load of keeping up the title of “World’s Largest Automotive Manufacturer” that they carry at present, and took the chance of good fortunes to develop some of the most desirable sports cars on the planet. The MR2, Celica and Supra were instant global hits, with a cult following that would last decades and make the childlike motor-heads of today froth at the mouth.

It was a different time, free of the controversy and the “boring” image that followed the brand around for much of the 2000s and 2010s. Back then, Toyota had enough mettle to bring together different elements to create a car that stood its ground—not just a badge engineering exercise, as evidenced by the 2020 MKV Toyota Supra/BMW Z4.

The story of the A70 MKIII Supra is one of new beginnings and the path to greatness. While the world may have collectively gone off the rocker after the launch of the A80 MKIV Toyota Supra and its fame from Hollywood, racing games and (much later) social media, it’s easy to trace the elements of greatness that began in the A70, just one generation earlier.

For one, just look at it. The A70 is the perfect

genesis of 80s wedge design and Japanese design thinking. Long, low and sleek, but with a subtle sense of restraint and compactness. If a Japanese zen garden had wheels (and pop-up headlights!), this would be it. In photos it might be difficult to understand, but standing next to it, you get the distinct feeling that the car promotes aggression in a wholly unobtrusive way, without any direct attempt at screaming itself hoarse like the A80 or A90 does.

Open up the wide, mile long door and you’re met with a cabin that tries its best to wrap you in a cocoon of 80s Grand Touring style comfort. The wide leather bucket seats sink beneath your weight, the controls are within easy reach and the wrap around dash, while reflecting a layout similar to lesser Toyotas of the era like the E90 Corolla and V30 Camry, invites you for a drive. It’s quite different from the fighter jet cockpit of the A80 and the BMW sourced cabin of the A90.

Under the hood is a 2.5 litre twin turbo straight six. The 1JZGTE might be a familiar motor thanks to the widespread popularity of X-chassis projects in Bangladesh, but back when the A70 was introduced, the parallel twin-turbo 1JZGTE was a range topping option in the Japan only JZA70, offering 276 HP as opposed to the twin turbo 1G-GTE motor in the GA70, which offered 207 HP. When this particular Supra started life however, it was as a GA70 (with no more than a shell of a car with

no engine) that was eventually upgraded to a JZA70 with the help of a CKD and its previous owner, Nasib Newaz. With the help of close friends Tanweer Zaman, Munir Chowdhury Sakin and Bony Hasan, the MKIII was restored



to near-perfection at the now famous Anwar’s garage. Nishat Newaz, Nasib’s younger brother, as well as his friend and current owner of the Supra, Partha Das, played a crucial role in putting the Supra together.



Partha loves Supra ownership. “Driving an older car is a big source of pleasure and pride for me. It’s comfortable as a sports GT and reliable since it’s a Toyota. It’s very fun to drive and push, but it’s getting increasingly difficult to enjoy it in Dhaka since the road condition is deteriorating every day. The police aren’t very cooperative either,” Partha says.

The non-VVTi 1JZGTE packs quite the punch, especially coupled with the R154 5 speed manual gearbox. The shifter clicks into place with the shortest throw (possibly) of any car you will ever get to drive, with sharp, dynamic response from the steering. Despite being a big, heavy RWD GT car, the Supra is surprisingly nimble and stable darting in and out of traffic. On boost, the Supra turns into a cruise missile that barrels down the road in a frenzy of fuel and fire that seems to have only been perfected over the years and across subsequent generations of the nameplate. One of only two (with rumours of a third example unconfirmed as yet) units in the country, this car shows that the MKIII is truly the start of greatness of the Supra nameplate.

Head to our web edition at www.thedailystar.net/shift for an in-depth look at this Supra—including photos, driving impressions and more.

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MOTORSPORT NEWS



Team Primus wins two categories at FSUK19

Team Primus, a student engineering team composed of 28 members from varying disciplines at Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology (AUST), has won two categories at this year’s edition of the Formula Student UK (FSUK), a motorsport competition for engineering students worldwide, held at the UK’s Silverstone Formula 1 circuit.

With a car powered by a 600 cc motorbike engine developing 84 HP at 11,500 RPM and 40 lb-ft torque at 10,500 RPM, and a curb weight of approximately 300 kg, Team Primus faced multiple challenges in sourcing parts and funding the project. They won Race Tech’s Spirit of Formula Student 2019 category for displaying tenacity and creativity in the face of such hardships. For their technical ability at designing and building the car, they also won the Allan Stainforth Award for Best Newcomer 2019.

More exciting projects coming out of AUST soon!

Affan Sadat clinches third at Canadian Sport Compact Series race

Bangladeshi race driver Affan Sadat recently competed in a time attack race at the Canadian Sport Compact series and placed third in a field dominated by stiff competition, by having consistently good lap times over two days. He raced in the Production RWD class with his 205 HP Subaru BRZ, with the class limiting his car to factory spec but allowing minor upgrades like the air-intake, exhaust and clutch. In competition, he faced Nissan 350Zs, BMW M3s and more, making his podium finish all the more impressive.



Avik Anwar finishes third at VW Ameo Cup race

Following a first place finish in July, Avik Anwar has now clinched yet another podium finish at the Volkswagen Ameo Cup in India. Considered to be India’s national motorsport event, this is the second time Avik got a place on the podium.

Avik got his third place on 22nd July, 2019, at Madras Motor Raceway in Chennai, India. The track features prominently in the Ameo Cup and was originally designed by Formula One legend Sir Jackie Stewart.

A three time Rallycross Champion, Avik Anwar will continue to make Bangladesh proud, no doubt.

AUTO NEWS

Corvette C8 Stingray, dissected

It is only in the last decade and a half or so, that American sports car entered the market with a similar passion and drive that matched the contemporary European and Japanese sports cars as true performers. The new Corvette C8 received mixed reactions; it is certainly a contentious topic and has been presented with an abundance of opinions.

Let’s address the elephant in the room. It no longer follows a front-engine rear wheel drive layout. In fact, it is the very first mid-engine Corvette. It has the LT2 V8 making a mighty 488 HP and a Tremec sourced 8 speed Dual Clutch gearbox. There is a redesigned central tunnel that makes for a light, but stiff chassis. The mid engine layout means that it can go from 0-100km/h in under 3 seconds. Even a decade ago, that was supercar territory. In modern context, that’s Ferrari beating performance at less

than a third of the price. It now features a dry sump lubrication system as standard and boasts thrice the amount of radiators as my Corolla (my Corolla has one, in case you can’t math).

For the negatives, first, there’s no likelihood of a manual becoming available. Second, the classic proportions of a beautiful sports car has always been a long hood and a short deck. This one extends further from the rear wheels towards the back than it does at the front end. And don’t even get me started on the vents. Purists disagree that it’s not a “true” Corvette because of how different it is from the entire lineage. Ask the Shift team, they’ll give you explanations that range from riced out McLaren GTs to a very confused love child of an F430, a Camaro and a blender.

HASEEB CHOWDHURY

