



Soaring To New Heights

1990 TOYOTA SOARER Z220

The first time I came across the Toyota Soarer was in an ad for its Lexus clone, the SC400, in a crumbling issue of Road and Track magazine from 1992 that I borrowed from my cousin in 2002. Then in its third generation, the Z30 SC400/Soarer was proclaimed to have a shape that “computers can’t draw”—designed by Californian Erwin Lui, reportedly using a sack of plaster and some balloons, the end product was a seductive blend of curves and bulges that struck home quite effectively.

While all this madness was going on, however, the Soarer badge—signified by the use of an untamed griffin rearing on its hind legs in a menacingly grand manner—was stuck on a piece of definitively 80s CAD enabled design.

The first two generations of the Soarer—ultimately entering the global psyche of auto enthusiasts via the aforementioned Z30 SC400 as Lexus’ premier luxury coupe—were less curves and more razor sharp edges, with the Z20 generation being the coolest of the two. As a sport-luxury coupe powered by a range of inline six engines (with the range topper being the 7MGTE 3.0 litre turbo), the Soarer was an extremely capable JDM gem that took underpinnings and engines from the A70 generation Toyota Supra and wrapped it up in a brilliantly executed luxury trim.

The Z20 Soarer you see here exudes a 80s charm that is certainly present in the owner as well. Emrul Kamal, for lack of a better description, would fit in perfectly into any retro themed picture of badassery—crop of unruly hair, aviator



shades, tangle of wristbands on one hand and a mechanical watch on the other, with a job that personifies coolness as a freelance photographer for the CNN International news network. He is as 80s cool as synth-pop, neon lights and his metallic bottle green Z20 Toyota Soarer. The only piece of this generation in Bangladesh, as it so happens.

Emrul’s Soarer might be a unique piece in Bangladesh, but it goes beyond that. This particular generation, despite sharing powertrain with the much more commonly known A70

Supra, is one of those cars of unique disposition that interests bearded auto enthusiasts the world over—a mix of oddly futuristic tech sitting alongside largely ancient methods, a mish-mash of luxury and sporting priorities, alongside odd details that would thrill the likes of Doug DeMuro and salivating JDM fanboys the world over. These are features you notice right away—like the criminally cool electronic gauge cluster that glows with green and evil intent, or the stubby automatic gear knob that looks more like the thrust lever of a rocket—as well as the minute



details like the lettering below the climate controls that proclaim it to be a “Microprocessed Automatic Air Conditioner” (Doug would be proud of such a quirk). The impossibly long doors, the bucket seats with squared off bolsters, the round jet-like climate vents on either side, the sharply raked front end and the squared off rear—featuring “Soarer” and “GT Turbo” lettering across the middle—all add up to a car that is chalk full of details that you discover only upon multiple encounters.

I won’t forget the first time I got a ride in Em-

rul Kamal’s Soarer. Quite removed from the vicious surge of power that comes from turbo cars with manual gearboxes, the automatic 2.0 litre 210 HP 1GGTE turbo six is instead a demonstration of what a good Grand Touring car should be. The Soarer builds power in discernible levels, never rushing the delivery but always promising more if you persist with the throttle—made clear by a steady whine from the twin turbos singing on boost. Triple digit speeds are easy, and the Soarer makes you believe you’re eligible for more if you behave and stay in control.

My editor, Ehsanur Raza Ronny, was fortunate enough to drive it—“Imagine piloting a battle cruiser on land, except it handles sharply and rewards you for throwing it into the corners instead of messing about like you expect it to. It’s stupidly awesome, so stupid in its impracticality that you end up wanting one so bad it hurts,” he says.

Restored at Machinam (shout-out to Tushar and Ananda!) with the help of a very purple CKD (thanks to Salekin & Abid) imported from Japan, the Soarer now has a home with an owner who matches it in every way—personality, coolness and all.

Head to our online edition at www.thedailystar.net/shift to read the full feature of Emrul Kamal’s Soarer.

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SEMA 2019: our top picks



Liberty Walk Lamborghini Huracan: If you think owning a Huracan isn’t flashy enough, here’s a brightly coloured tricked out widebody Lambo is sure to catch some glances.

HASEEB CHOWDHURY

HKS Toyota Supra A90: SEMA 2019 was a big showcase for the tuning potential of the new 2020 Supra, and the HKS A90 presents a purely functional race-car build, a good refresher from the show car builds of SEMA.



Vibrant Performance BMW 2002: At first glance, one would probably say the wildest thing about this 1972 2002 are the insanely wide arches. That is, until they see the S55 ripped out of a brand new M3 tucked neatly in the engine bay.

Toyo Tires Mercedes-Benz G-class: Ah yes, it’s classy, it’s flamboyant, it’s boujee, it’s... slammed? That is exactly what this bad boy G-wagen is.



Ringbrothers Chevrolet Camaro Valkyria: High horsepower muscle cars are hardly a rare sight these days, but the insane attention to detail this 890 horsepower resto-mod Camaro is nothing short of amazing.



Bisimoto Porsche 935: This 935 style build blows most “over the top” SEMA builds out of the water with its monstrous electric motor tucked under the hood and insane aero. Bisi entering the electric age?



Honda NS600: This 12,000 RPM Honda motorcycle swapped N600 won the Super Tuner Legends Series and is soon to be turned into an official Hot Wheels car. And then you can own it.



“Evil Evo” Mercedes-Benz 190E: Holy racecar Batman! This DTM esque LS Swapped Mercedes 190E has everything it needs to be a full-fledged track machine, and then some. How does 1300 HP sound?