



Toyota News In Brief

27 April 2005

Handling enhancements and leather option for Prius

RAV4 Granite gains diesel power

PRIUS WITH ADDED POISE

You might have thought a rack of international awards, acres of positive press and soaring sales would have been rewards enough to convince Toyota that it had achieved an all-round success with Prius, a car that's steadily reshaping the way people think about environmentally-aware motoring.

Such an assumption ignores the principle of *kaizen* – continuous improvement – a philosophy that is at the heart of everything Toyota does. So despite the fact Prius has claimed both the 2005 European Car of the Year title and the International Engine of the Year award, and achieved excellent market performance in the UK and around the world, Toyota engineers have focused on how they can make it an even better car.

The result is a number of small but effective adjustments that improve Prius's all-round dynamic performance with better roadholding and steering feel and lower levels of noise, vibration and harshness (NVH).

Body rigidity has been increased and the springs and dampers have been tweaked, delivering greater straight-line stability and ride comfort. Fine-tuning of the electric power steering system and stiffer wheel construction yield improved steering feel for the driver.

Travelling in a Prius has never been a nerve-jangling experience, but now NVH levels are lower than ever before thanks to the adoption of an acoustic windscreen, which has a special noise-absorbing film between the layers of glass, and improved insulation materials in key areas around the dashboard.

From 1 May, owners can also indulge in extra luxury with the addition of black leather as an upholstery option, in addition to the Alcantara suede-effect trim that's already available. The price for both is £1,350, including VAT and fitting.

TOYOTA RAV4 GRANITE 2.0 D-4D: THE HARD CHOICE

Toyota RAV4 customers face tough decisions this spring. In the past, if you wanted the high-style and great value RAV4 Granite model you didn't have to consider engine choice, as all were equipped with Toyota's 2.0-litre VVT-i petrol power unit.

Now the Granite is additionally available with diesel power, courtesy of the Toyota 2.0-litre D-4D engine that's well-established as a strong seller in the RAV4 range as a whole.

This unit produces 114bhp and a maximum 250Nm of torque from 1,800 to 3,000rpm, endowing the RAV4 with impressive driveability. Three and five-door models can achieve 39.8mpg in combined cycle driving and carbon dioxide emissions are 190g/km – performance statistics that neatly counter any argument that SUVs are gas-guzzling high-polluting monsters that should be banned from the road. The engine is matched to a five-speed manual transmission.

The Granite stands out from the crowd with its 17-inch alloy wheels, chrome sidebars and rear light protectors and front fog lamps. On the inside there are aluminium scuff plates, a six-disc CD autochanger and carpet mats, plus air conditioning and electric windows, all provided as standard. Three-door versions come with a neat roof-mounted spoiler (optional on the five-door) and the five-door has an electric tilt/slide sunroof.

Safety features include front, side and curtain airbags and ABS with Electronic Brakeforce Distribution.

On-the-road prices are £18,750 for the three-door model and £20,250 for the five-door. In addition to adopting the diesel engine, the Granite range has also been extended to offer customers the full choice of RAV4 body paint finishes.

ENDS