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FUN FOR TWO - THE TOYOTA MR-S SPORTS CAR CONCEPT

Toyota, arguably responsible for starting the boom in two-seater sports cars with the introduction of the MR2 back in 1985, has shown a glimpse of the future with the MR-S concept car.

First displayed at the Tokyo Motor Show last year, the MR-S is a concept for a simple, fun-to-drive sports car in the tradition of the MR2.

The MR-S has a mid-mounted engine for perfectly balanced handling and a wheel at each corner for quick, stable manoeuvrability. The car is short at just 3850mm long - more than a foot shorter than the current MR2.

The engine is a new lightweight 1.8-litre with intelligent Variable Valve Timing (VVT-i) which changes the characteristics of the engine to give more power, better torque at low engine speeds and lower fuel consumption.

The gearbox is sequential and would enable changes to be made swiftly either via the conventional gear lever or buttons mounted on the steering wheel - as with racing cars - to allow the driver to keep both hands on the wheel at all times.

The interior of the MR-S has a simple and gutsy tightness, with a minimalist approach that echoes the sports cars of old. Practicality is not forgotten with luggage space provided behind the seats. But MR-S, should it ever go into production, is meant to be a car for people who want to drive, who travel light and love the wind in their hair.

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