

TOYOTA URBAN CRUISER

- A new generation mini-SUV concept
- Created by Elvio d'Aprile at Toyota's European design studio
- Designed according to Toyota's Vibrant Clarity principles
- Interior inspired by contemporary furniture, styled by Yi Jeong Jae

The Urban Cruiser is a vehicle concept exploring the opportunity for a mini-SUV that could bring a new dimension to the segment.

It draws heavily on Toyota's strong SUV heritage with models such as the legendary Land Cruiser, the RAV4 – Europe's most popular 4x4 – and the ultra-tough Hilux. The Urban Cruiser's styling incorporates established Toyota design cues, but also exhibits its own dynamic flair and rugged originality.

The Urban Cruiser was created at ED2, Toyota's European design studio in the South of France, by chief designer Elvio d'Aprile. D'Aprile worked for Porsche and Pininfarina before joining Toyota in Japan in 1994, moving to ED2 when it opened in 2000. He was the chief designer of the Toyota Verso, a model that has earned particular praise for its dynamic and robust design.

"Typical mini-SUV customers are urban individualists," said d'Aprile. "They want a rugged look within a compact body and want to stand out from the crowd. The Urban Cruiser concept is a car that will allow them to freely express their personality."

The Urban Cruiser is the latest model to be developed according to the Vibrant Clarity design philosophy that defines current new Toyota products. Its principles combine Vibrant Form, which represents dynamism and energy, and Clarity of Function, which takes in more rational values, such as simplicity and logic.

Fresh, robust exterior

The Urban Cruiser displays clear design similarities with other models in the Toyota range and reflects the company's long-established SUV heritage. This is clearly seen in the trapezoidal design element in the front bumper, grille and lower door panels, and is also evident in the side window, evoking a design cue common to the Aygo, Corolla, Verso and new RAV4.

The SUV character is emphasised by the massive wheel arches, which converge towards the geometric centre of the car to give a compact, agile shape, while disguising the relatively long wheelbase, which itself ensures excellent interior space.

All the elements of Toyota's Vibrant Clarity design philosophy are captured in the Urban Cruiser, defined within the four P.A.S.S. principles: Proportion, Architecture, Surface and Special Touch.

- Proportion: the long cabin, offering excellent interior space, combines with short, powerful overhangs to create a perfect balance.
- Architecture: viewed from above, there is a pronounced V-shape to the front of the vehicle, created by the dominant wheel arches.
- Surface: distinctive use of the trapezoidal design element in the front bumper and freeform surface of the lower door panels.
- Special Touch: the crispness of the overall exterior design is complemented by sharply sliced surfaces in the front and rear bumpers.

In addition to these elements, the Urban Cruiser makes a significant break from conventional styling by using a satin finish body paint, rather than the usual gloss.

Fashion-led interior

Just as the exterior design of the Urban Cruiser breaks from the conventional, the interior adopts a new approach, too. The aim was to move away from the traditional look to introduce influences from outside the car industry, such as contemporary furniture.

The interior was created by Korean designer Yi Jeong Jae, who also created at the Toyota Motor Triathlon Race Car, shown at Geneva last year.

"I was inspired by the designs in modern, fashionable furniture," said Jae. "The interior features several different surfaces, which are treated as different, independent layers, for example in the seats, the door panels and the dashboard."

Inside the vehicle there is a sense of spaciousness, in keeping with the roomy but compact concept. The seats have a thin, elegant design that is both space-saving and comfortable and are finished in modern, premium quality materials.

Notable interior features include specially formed door handles for easier use and a transparent curved panel integrated into the centre console, through which the navigation screen is viewed.

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