

BRACKETS

BY JOE SAGE

We've been duly intrigued by the Toyota 86, going back to when it was sold as in the US as the Scion FR-S, a notably sporty entry from a brand that had been concentrating on economical, youthful, sometimes odd-ball vehicles. At that time, few knew that the Toyota 86 existed worldwide, nor in fact noticed that the Scion carried an 86 badge on its flanks and steering wheel, a bit stylized and maybe or maybe not surprisingly easy to overlook.

The Scion brand's uniqueness had started blending in with an overall market in which smaller and quirkier vehicles were becoming ever more broadly common, to the point that their lineup comprised a rebadged global Toyota, a Canadian rebadged Mazda and the FR-S. We had even suggested in our pages that Scion's reason for being had perhaps passed, and it was later that same month that Toyota did indeed vacate the brand. Redirecting their rebadged cars was easy. And it turns out that redirecting the FR-S was also easy—it simply became the Toyota 86, as it always had been everywhere else.

That not-so-seismic shift was in early 2016. It was not for another three years, until its simultaneous reveals at Barrett-Jackson in Scottsdale and the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, that the Supra name (and product) came back to life as a new 2020 model, after being absent here since 1998 (and having continued as a limited run in Japan just through 2002).

This was also the point at which the Gazoo Racing name entered the main-

stream, in the form of its initials, GR. The name had its roots in 2007 with an in-house engineering and driving group, loosely called Team Gazoo, as they had initially been forbidden to reveal the Toyota name publicly (or the participation as a driver of Toyota then-VP Akio Toyoda, now president). Within a couple of years, the name and mission were formalized as Gazoo Racing.

It's a term both potent and fun, perfect for a high performance brand born as a renegade skunkworks. For those who alphabetize a lot of records and materials, it became important to note that the new Supra would fall under "G," as its official name would be the GR Supra (although we've noticed, not surprisingly, that if you just say "Supra," people do know what you mean).

The GR Supra followed suit to a couple of inviolate principles of (most) classic Supra heritage. It would be a two-seater, and it would bear an inline-six engine, something Toyota did not currently build, thus bringing them into partnership with BMW for that key element.

We got our hands on the original 2020 Toyota GR Supra 3.0 in stages—for a leg of NWAPA's Run to the Sun road event in Oregon that fall, for a midwinter track session at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park, and finally in the spring of 2020 for a full week wherever we pleased. Looking back, we note that we had invoked the Toyota 86 right from GR Supra's early days, saying "they've hit the nail on the head for price and performance, to a point. Perhaps hitting it on the head kept them from covering some ground above and below this price. For this, there's still the 86—or see what's coming for 2021." What was coming in 2021 were several things. First they would bump the GR Supra 3.0 up by al-

2022 TOYOTA GR 86 LINEUP

Engine on all: 2.4L 4-cyl boxer: 228 hp	
base	6-spd manual \$27,700
"	6-spd auto 29,200
Premium	6-spd manual 30,300
"	6-spd auto ▼ 31,800

2022 TOYOTA GR SUPRA LINEUP

Transmission on all: 8-spd Z-F8 automatic w paddle shifters	
GR Supra 2.0	2.0L inline-4 turbo: 255 hp \$43,290
GR Supra 3.0	3.0L inline-6 turbo: 382 hp \$51,640
GR Supra 3.0 Premium	" ▼ 54,790
GR Supra A-91 CF Edition	" 63,280

most 50 horsepower. They would deviate from their own inline-six core principle by introducing a four-cylinder GR Supra 2.0, closing the price and performance gaps with the Toyota 86. And at that time, they also anticipated a GR Supra GT4 straight-to-track model to arrive in summer 2021, though the many global disruptions of the past two years seem to have put that one on hold.

We were intrigued. Sure, the Toyota 86 is a 2+2 coupe, while the GR Supra is a two-seater, but the sanctity of the inline-six as being a mandatory element of any Supra had been set aside. Could the Toyota 86 become a GR Supra 1.0?

As with the demise of Scion, it turns out Toyota product planning was again on the same page we were, or vice versa. Almost. Rather than renaming the Toyota 86 as a GR Supra 1.0, to make it part of the Supra family, they renamed it the GR 86, to make it part of what had suddenly become a broader Toyota Gazoo Racing family.

It was a version of the same principle, to a large degree. Maybe even bet-

(cont'd)

SPECIFICATIONS

	GR 86 Premium	GR Supra 3.0 Premium
ASSEMBLY	Ota, Gunma, Japan	Graz, Austria
SEATS	four (2+2)	two
ENGINE	2.4L 4-cyl boxer, alum/alum, DOHC 16v w dual VVT	3.0L inline-6 24v turbo, DOHC, chain drive, VVT
HP/TORQUE	228 hp / 184 lb-ft	382 hp / 368 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	12.5:1	10.2:1
TRANSMISSION	6-spd auto (6-spd man avail)	8-spd automatic
DRIVETRAIN	RWD	RWD
SUSPENSION	F: sport-tuned indep MacPherson strut, 18.3mm stblzr bar	F: dbl-joint type MacPherson strut, 23.5mm stblzr bar, light-weight alum braces from strut tower to radiator
	R: sport-tuned indep dbl wishbone style multi-link; 14mm stblzr bar	R: multi-link w five-arm construction, 18.0 stblzr bar
STEERING	electric power steering	electric power steering
BRAKES	F: 11.6 vented; R: 11.4 vented	F: 13.7 vented w Brembo 4-piston fixed caliper
		R: 13.6 vented, single piston
WHEELS	(Premium) 18x7.5 alloy	F: 19x9.0; R: 19x10.0 forged aluminum
TIRES	215/40 R18	F: 255/35ZR19
	Michelin Pilot Sport 4	R: 275/35ZR19 Michelin Pilot Super Sport
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	167.9 / 101.4 in	172.5 / 97.2 in
TURNING CIRCLE	35.4 ft	34.1 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	37.0 / 33.5 in	(2-seater) 38.4
LEGROOM (F/R)	41.5 / 29.9 in	(2-seater) 42.2
CARGO CAPACITY	6.26 cu.ft	10.2 cu.ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	5.1 in	4.5 in
WEIGHT	(Premium, AT) 2868 lb	3400 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	premium / 13.2 gal	premium / 13.7 gal
MPG	(auto) 21/31/25 (city/hwy/comb)	22/30/25 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	\$31,800	\$54,790
(GR 86 PAINT: Track bRed (on 86)	425	
(GR SUPRA) DRIVER ASSIST PKG: dynamic full speed radar cruise, blind spot monitor, rear cross traffic alert, parking sensors w emergency brake function	1195	
DESTINATION CHARGE	1025	1025
TOTAL	\$33,250	\$57,010

2022 Toyota GR Supra 3.0 Premium in Turbulence Gray
2022 Toyota GR 86 in Track bRed



ter, once you take into account the next announcement—which arrived on the second day of our recent week with the Toyota GR 86—that there will now be a GR Corolla hot hatch for 2023, as well (see sidebar).

Having most recently had the GR Supra 2.0 here for a week last summer, Toyota recently brought us the new GR 86 and GR Supra 3.0 basically back-to-back—the two models (in the absence of that rumored GT4) that bracket the combined GR 86 and Supra sports coupe lineup.

The affordable little Toyota GR 86 2+2 has received more than just a new badge—its engine output has also been upped about 11 percent, from 205 to 228 (with torque up 18 percent in the manual-shift model). Our GR 86 was an automatic, though you do have a choice on the 86. The pricier and more potent GR Supra is automatic-only—though there is news on this, too (see sidebar).

We've reviewed the Toyota 86 (and Scion FR-S) several times before, and the overall package remains the same—it's a lot of fun to drive and certainly delivers a lot for the price. The car is very responsive, with solid steering and brakes, more than sufficient power—all the moreso with its GR horsepower bump—for its size and weight (it's more than 500 pounds lighter than the Supra). Though four and a half inches shorter than the Supra, the wheelbase of the GR 86 is more than three inches longer, giving it a turning circle a foot and a quarter larger than that of the Supra, sometimes noticeable. This also

gives it shorter overhangs, though, which, combined with its longer wheelbase, seems to make it a little friendlier on rain troughs and speedbumps. The GR 86 is less track-oriented, but great for just sportin' around town.

As the GR 86 is currently available with a manual transmission, we'd be most inclined to buy one that way. That said, the automatic in our sample was quite flawless, as are the traction and the tire fitment. When you aggressively take a corner in town, there is no hesitation, driveline engagement remains solid (that rarest of things in so many automatics we drive), and its road adhesion remains strong, with no skittering, even when pushed.

Though the GR 86 has less nominal trunk capacity than the GR Supra, its rear seats can be folded down for a volume advantage—a gain with little loss, as the rear seats offer near-zero legroom and might not see much routine use, anyway. We did a supermarket run in the 86 without the fold-down add-on, and the trunk was plenty useful for quite a load, without taking those extra steps.

Though the GR Supra is closer to the ground (4.5 inches of ground clearance to the GR 86's 5.1), this makes the GR 86 easier for a tall person to step into and out of, all the moreso given the difference in window openings and roof-lines. Though nominally having more headroom once settled in, the GR Supra has a ballcap roof that extends down to low-profile windows (defining a more radical coupe daylight opening evocative of the classics Supras), making up for

that with a double-bubble roof design. Body dimensions are comfortable inside both cars, once settled in, but the 86 has friendlier entry and egress.

The interior of the 86 has more useful nooks and crannies than the Supra, which has a small console doubling as elbow-discomforting cupholders that can't accommodate much gear if you do have elbows. There are plenty of odd little comparisons in this realm you'll have to try on for size, yourself.

If all this sounds as though the GR 86 offers a lot at about 55 percent the cost of the GR Supra 3.0, we can't disagree, although that ignores the power and control of the Supra as a pure driving experience. The Supra benefits from a more advanced build throughout, from an extremely rigid body shell and structure to more sophisticated suspension. It's that track factor, plus the fact that Supra also approaches the shadow of another corporate cousin, the almost \$400,000 Lexus LFA supercar, in specifications as well as a bit of style. And this is a good time to recall the GR Supra 2.0, which falls neatly between the 86 and Supra 3.0 in price, while being a bit closer to the GR 86 in power, but bearing the chassis and structure of the GR Supra 3.0. Relativity is everything with our pair here, the two of which are fun to compare head-on, but it becomes most enlightening when comparing among the entire family.

So much has happened so fast under the Toyota GR umbrella. It's an apt metaphor for the powerful and fast-moving products they produce. ■



GR LATE BREAKING NEWS #1 : 2023 GR COROLLA

One day into our week with the GR 86, we attended an online reveal of a significant new addition coming to the Gazoo Racing lineup—the 2023 Toyota GR Corolla. This three-cylinder-turbo hot hatch will pump out 300 hp and bear all-wheel-drive with choice of 60-40, 50-50 or 30-70 power distribution (front-rear). With a nod to rally racing roots, and unlike the current GR coupes, the GR Corolla will come with a manual transmission only. A Core Edition (lower photo above) will arrive later this year, with a limited-run Circuit Edition (top photo above) joining it in 2023. See our *Automotive News Update* item on page 7 for more detailed information. Pricing is yet to be announced.

GR LATE BREAKING NEWS #2 : 2023 GR SUPRA M/T

Just as we were finalizing this issue—and noting that one significant apple 'n' orange difference between the GR 86 and the GR Supra was the availability of a manual transmission on the 86—Toyota announced that for 2023, the GR Supra would gain the option of a six-speed manual. ■

2022 Toyota GR 86 in Track dRed
2022 Toyota GR Supra 3.0 Premium in Turbulence Gray

