

# SUB-SUPRA FUN by Joe Sage

We drove both the Toyota Supra 3.0 and GR86 for a week each last year (see May-June 2022), then the new Supra 3.0 finally with a manual transmission for a week earlier this year (see March-April 2023). Whether we drive both or just one, we always seem to find ourselves thinking whether the GR86 amounts to what could be called a Supra 1.0, all the moreso since Toyota introduced the turbo-4 Supra 2.0 (which also diluted Supra's long-inviolate status as a six-cylinder). We've pondered this when the GR86 was the Scion FR-S and then when it was simply the Toyota 86 (as it long had been in the rest of the world). When Toyota added the Gazoo Racing initials to the 86, we took that as a nod to our line of thought. There are, of course, notable differences. The GR86 is a four-seater; the Supra a two. Power is

certainly higher in the Supra, though the gap has been narrowed via both a bump in power for the GR86 and the addition of the mid-powered Supra 2.0, while horsepower also increased on the Supra 3.0 at that time. The 2.0 also lowered Supra's entry price point. Suspension, brakes, body and platform overall are much more advanced in the Supras, which, despite being two-seaters, are some 300 to 500 pounds heavier than the GR86. GR86 is shorter than Supra, but with a longer wheelbase—advantage Supra for a tighter turning circle, advantage GR86 for smaller overhangs. With higher ground clearance and without Supra's clamshell roof, the GR86 offers easier entry and exit. The 86/GR86 has always had the advantage of offering a manual transmission, adding a fun and/or control factor that could make it enticing or even

irresistible to an otherwise-Supra buyer. But the new manual Supra eliminates that comparative. As for four seats versus two, the tight rear seats will likely go unused by most people, typical for a very small sports coupe at any price, and they give the GR86 a smaller trunk capacity, though GR86 has more useful stash points in-cabin. As freestanding specs, 228 horses in a 2833-lb car is good. Horsepower has increased so much industrywide, we refer back to a gen-one Porsche Boxster for reference—201 hp and about 2750 pounds. That was taken at face value as a decent little performer worthy of its badge, and the GR86 has a stronger power-to-weight ratio than that. As in the past, we found the GR86 very responsive, with solid steering and brakes. The manual transmission is (for us) a winner in itself. And the more aggressively you shift, the better it shifts. Rev-matching (which we don't much care for) is

not needed. Running up a freeway ramp, we were able to accelerate, shift through a few gears and take a big van before the merge, nice but using about all the oomph it has. On surface streets, as a light turned green and we gave the GR86 a healthy kick, we were dusted by both an American muscle car and an EV. But referring back to that power-to-weight comparison, we know your drive experience can be sporty without being super powerful or super fast. It's not a performance race-car, at least not stock, but it is fun. How this stacks up for you will depend upon your own thrill thresholds and perhaps how competitive the streets are in your neck of the woods. The GR86 is generally unchanged for 2023. The only thing different is availability of a 10th Anniversary Edition (which ours is not), in Solar Shift orange with black stripes, matte black wheels and GR cat-back exhaust. When you come down to it, Toyota GR86 is not quite a baby Supra. Yet that comparison persists. It's probably best bearing its own name, admitted-



Fun interface epiphany: we were annoyed by what seemed like a hypersensitive volume knob on the audio system, which was changing our radio channel (AM-FM-Sat) every time we tried to just turn it up or down. Turns out it was our knuckles hitting some sensitive buttons to its right. Bad layout? Oh, wait—this is a native righthand-drive Japanese car. With the center stack to your left, it would be a non-issue. Start thinking about this more, and it has to be a common scenario.



ly below Supra in performance. But GR86 does deliver above average fun. And it can leave you with enough cash to buy something else, too. ■

Advantage, small cockpit: the cabin cooled very quickly and effectively during springtime temps in the 90s, which bodes well for our more extreme months.

## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	.....Ota, Gunma, Japan
ROWS / SEATS	.....two/four (2+2)
ENGINE	.....2.4L 4-cyl boxer, alum/alum, DOHC 16v w dual VVT
HP/TORQUE	.....228 hp / 184 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....12.5:1
TRANSMISSION	.....6-spd manual
DRIVETRAIN	.....RWD
SUSPENSION	.....F: sport-tuned indep MacPherson strut; 18.3mm stblzr bar; R: sport-tuned indep dbl wishbone style multi-link; 14mm stblzr bar
STEERING	.....elec power steering
BRAKES	.....F: 11.6 vented; R: 11.4 vented
WHEELS	.....(Premium) 18x7.5 alloy
TIRES	.....215/40 R18 Michelin Pilot Sport 4
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....167.9 / 101.4 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....5.1 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....35.4 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....37.0 / 33.5 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....41.5 / 29.9 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....6.26 cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....(Premium, MT) 2833 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....premium rec / 13.2 gal
MPG	.....20/27/22 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	.....\$30,500
PREFERRED ACCESSORY PACKAGE #1: carpeted floor mats, carpeted trunk mat, first aid kit, quick change cable pkg, key gloves	.....404
REAR BUMPER APPLIQUE - CLEAR	.....69
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1095
TOTAL	.....\$32,068

Prices have increased; see chart.

## 2023 TOYOTA GR86 LINEUP

	MT	AT
GR86	.....\$28,400	.....\$29,900
GR86 Premium	.....▼ 31,000	.....32,500