

On test: Toyota GR 86. Looks, beauty and presence

 By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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The Toyota Gazoo Racing 86 is one of those cars that everywhere you go, it sparks interest. The overall look of the GR86 exposes a car that is built for speed. But at the same time, I enjoyed very comfortable drives on the tarred surfaces in KwaZulu-Natal. It's all about having fun in a car that entices you to do just that. It handles remarkably well. At launch in November 2022, I particularly enjoyed the 'slalom' part of the media experience at the Aldo Scribante track in Gqeberha. I literally threw the car around a somewhat limited area and enjoyed the 'fish-tailing' like never before. The 'Phoenix Red' colour is a stand-out!



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj

Gazoo Racing

The new GR86 coupe is the third global Toyota GR model, developed with technical expertise from Toyota Gazoo Racing. It's designed for pure driving pleasure, an "analogue car for the digital age", an evolution of the qualities that defined the acclaimed GT86 coupe, retaining a classic front engine/rear-wheel drive drivetrain, naturally aspirated 2.4l naturally aspirated boxer engine delivers significant increases in power and torque. The GR86 embodies all the qualities that defined its acclaimed GT86 Hachi-Roku predecessor, this new model stays true to that original "Waku Doki" fun-to-drive brief - and that is to offer pure, unadulterated driving pleasure.

Aerodynamic

Sticking to the classic front engine/rear-wheel drive formula and kitted with the now-familiar naturally aspirated boxer engine, the newcomer ups the ante in three significant areas: a boost in performance courtesy of a bigger displacement 2.4l powerplant; enhanced dynamics thanks to increased body rigidity, lighter weight and a lower centre of gravity; and sharper aesthetics aka 'functional beauty' as a result of adopting motorsports-sourced aerodynamic features.

Power

Just as with the GT86, the horizontally opposed boxer engine is a defining element of the new GR86, the heart of its performance and a key contributor to its low centre of gravity. But in its current execution, the capacity has increased from 2.0- to 2.4ls, for extra power, more torque and faster acceleration, as we experienced with the on-track racing.

Naturally aspirated, the engine gives a smooth acceleration feel, right from the bottom to the top of the rev band. The engine output has risen from 147kW to 174kW.

The GR86's maximum speed is 226km/h when mated to the manual box; 216km/h for the auto. The auto turns the tables when it comes to fuel consumption, however, consuming 8,8ls per 100km in the combined cycle, while the manual settles for 9,5/100km.

Drive modes

To fully exploit the car's performance potential, the driver can switch to Track mode, or switch off the Vehicle Stability Control. The electronically controlled, six-speed, intelligent automatic transmission features paddle controls for the driver to take manual control of gear shifts. Its performance can be adapted in four different drive modes: Normal, Sport, Snow and Track.

In Sport mode, the transmission automatically selects the optimum gear in line with the driver's use of the brake and throttle and the vehicle's dynamic behaviour. To ensure smooth harnessing of the engine's higher power, additional clutch discs and a new high-capacity torque converter have been introduced.

Exterior design and colours

The GR86's exterior design is an evolution of the taut, low-slung look of the GT86, expressing its classic front engine/rear-wheel drive set-up. Short overhangs add to the agile look, together with a wide and low stance, while the front and rear wings and cabin are individually accentuated, generating the dynamic feel of an authentic sports car.



Image credit: Naresh Maharaj



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The exterior colour choices for the GR86 include three GR-specific finishes inspired by Toyota Gazoo Racing's famous white, red (Phoenix Red) and black (Night Shadow) competition livery. Other hues include Storm Blue, Magnetite Grey and Bright Blue.

Pricing

- GR86 6MT – R698,100
- GR86 6AT – R733,700

Peace of mind

All GR86 models are sold with a six-services/90,000km service plan (intervals set at 15,000km) and carry a three-year/100,000km warranty. Service and warranty plan extensions can also be purchased from any Toyota dealer (220 outlets).

ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

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