

# Corolla's new look could be a world-wide game changer

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But it was bland, bland, bland and slowly, Canadians shifted to more stylish offerings such as Elantra and Mazda3. Increasing consumers were seeking a compact sedan that offered a dash of panache along with economy and reliability.

The first hint of design mojo was seen in January at the Detroit Auto Show with that Corolla Furia Concept. Looking very smart on the stand, I admit I dismissed it as a nice design exercise but too daring for the core Corolla buyer. I was wrong.

All the styling cues from the Furia can be found on the 2014 Corolla from the deep and large trapezoid grille to the standard LED highlights set far back on the fenders to give a swept back line to the car.

Folks, this is one car you have to see in the flesh, especially beside an older model.

There will be four models: CE, LE, S and the new Eco with starting prices of \$15,995, \$19,215, \$19,500 and \$20,250 respectively.

Buyers can choose from two versions of its 1.8-litre DOHC inline four-cylinder with 132 hp and 128 lb/ft of torque on the CE, LE and Sport and 140 hp and 126 lb/ft of torque on the Eco, which Toyota calls its most fuel efficient and powerful Corolla ever.

Also new on the LE, S and Eco is a new Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) that Toyota calls the CVTi-S (I for intelligent, S for shift). The CVT is the first pulley-style unit in North America.

The base CE has a four-speed automatic or six-speed manual transmission.

The Eco is a new trim model that uses the engine tuned for fuel economy and underbody panels plus low rolling resistance tires for greater overall efficiency.

The new Corolla's suspension uses a Macpherson strut design for the front with a new, more rigid control arm design.

A torsion beam arrangement is used for the rear. Both suspension layouts have been designed to take advantage of the additional body rigidity to provide improved handling responses and steering control.

While the spring rates on Corolla have been optimized for ride comfort, the S-model features unique coil, damper, and bushing tuning to help offer a sportier driving characteristic.

When journalists came back from driv-



Perhaps the greatest improvement in this 11th generation of the Corolla is the interior that looks like that of an entry-level luxury car instead of an under \$20,000 compact. The S trim model is shown.

whistling through some back roads north of Quebec City.

In manual shift mode, the CVT has seven speeds actuated by paddle shifters. With the engine on full song, and the paddle shifters being played like a ragtime piano, crisp shifts up and down were felt through the steering wheel and the seat.

This is the first CVT I've come across that's fun to use and, unbelievably, in a car costing under twenty grand.

But while most people will never take the Corolla on the Nurburgring, they will use it for just about everything else a family needs.

While the 2014 Corolla is slightly lon-

ger, wider and lower which accounts for its small appearance, most of the volume is set aside for five adults.

With the front passenger seat all the way back, I rode in the rear during the afternoon and can report there was more than enough legroom to the point I actual dozed off for a few minutes such, was the smoothness of the ride and that on potholed Quebec roads.

I have to mention the front seats, that while larger, have a new thinner back that is supportive for those in front while gaining precious knee room millimeters for those in the back.

Trunk space is larger than the 2013 model at 369 litres (13.0 cu ft) primarily due to the higher deck lid. That in turn makes ordering a version with the backup camera something to seriously consider.

And of course I cannot stress how important the Corolla is to the Canadian and Ontario economies.

How it is built is a direct reflection of what this country can do and I challenge anyone to find a misaligned body panel or shut line on this car. Believe me, I looked at each and every one at the press launch.

The Corolla is more than the start of Toyota's avowed goal to become the best selling compact car in Canada it could be a game changer for the brand around the world.

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