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While it still has a ways to go to match the exterior styling of Toyota's Venza crossover, the 2011 Toyota Avalon has been upgraded with revised sheet metal and more bright-

work outside. The Avalon sports a revised front grille with more chrome and new high-tech projector beam headlamps with light pipes.

## Toyota's flagship sedan gets a facelift for 2011

By **LORNE DRURY**  
*Carguide Magazine*  
*Metroland Media Group*

ST. JOHN'S, NL.: The Avalon is Toyota's flagship sedan, but you'd be hard pressed to find many people on the street who could pick one out from a Camry.

That's because there aren't many of them sold here and because it does look somewhat similar to a Camry and has a wheelbase only 45 mm longer.

Toyota has found that most of its Avalon customers (280 were sold in Canada last year) are from the senior age bracket. And even many of the more elderly drivers (including an 83-year-old named Iris) said during focus group sessions that the car could

do with a bit of updating in the styling department.

So, Toyota has tried to remedy that with a refreshed look both inside and out for 2011. In fact, all the body panels except the doors and roof are new for this year.

Toyota executives say they would like to attract a younger audience (35-55 year olds) with the refreshed Avalon so they added a bit more flash and brightwork on the outside, but not too much as to take away from the elegance that this full-size premium sedan attempts to convey.

"The Avalon has always been the epitome of elegance," said Sandy Di Felice, director of Toyota Canada. "The Avalon is for people who do not want a flashy car but at the same time want to indulge

themselves."

So did they succeed?

Well, the new Avalon offers a better overall package than before at a more reasonable price (\$41,100). Toyota describes the new exterior look as having "dynamic and expressive lines," but it may still lack the pizzazz needed to catch the eye of a younger crowd and grow sales significantly. Still, Toyota Canada has fairly modest expectations for the car, hoping to sell between 350 and 500 for this model year.

Nevertheless, the new look takes the Avalon down a more exciting design road with what chief engineer Randy Stephens calls "significant changes for this time in the model run."

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