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Special pullout section

## ROAD TEST

# Limited edition Scion tC turns heads on a budget

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Metroland Media



The 2015 Scion tC benefits from classic coupe proportions, amped up by the RS 9.0 package that adds two-tone paint, blacked out badging, Cartel Customs aero kit and black finish alloy wheels.

Some would call it a poor man's sports coupe.

I'd say the Scion tC is one sweet-looking ride – and a fair bit of fun – starting just under \$22K.

I've reviewed it a couple of times, and have appreciated the gritty exhaust note and reasonably robust 2.5-litre four-cylinder engine, not to mention a lengthy content list for its all-in base price.

And like all Scions, the tC can be personalized with no shortage of accessories, although thrifty buyers can still be content without upgrading the audio, adding leather upholstery or slapping on a spoiler.

For 2015, the company teamed up with Jeremy Lookofsky of Cartel Customs, to create the Release Series 9.0. Worldwide production is limited to 2,000 units, with only 100 coming to Canada.

The package comprises \$4,270 in factory mods, bumping the tC to \$25,980 and turning as many heads as cars costing two and three times the price.

The tC RS 9.0 starts with a two-tone paint job – black over “magma” orange – along with blacked out badging, black alloy wheels

and a TRD centre exhaust. Enhancing its ground-hugging look is a Cartel Customs aero kit and high-profile rear spoiler.

These items pimp an already sporty exterior that features the parent company's large signature

grille, fronting a long bonnet, high beltline and aggressively cut C-pillar. Even without 9.0 upgrades, the base tC is edgy for a Toyota.

RS 9.0 also adds some dazzle to the interior. Bright orange door handles, steering wheels spokes,

vent accents and instrument rings really pop against their black surroundings. So do the orange seat belts and stitching. The orange push-button start with Cartel logo is a nice touch.

My only gripe is the abundance

of hard plastic throughout the passenger cabin. To Scion's credit, it's low-gloss and nicely grained, but a little more padding wouldn't hurt.

I suppose you have to cut back somewhere when even the base ride is equipped with 18-inch alloys, panoramic glass roof with power/tilt front panel, eight-speaker audio with 6.1-inch touchscreen, and the usual stuff like air conditioning, power locks and windows.

Also standard are grippy sport buckets, a thick, flat-bottomed steering wheel, and an intuitive centre stack (with big knobs for HVAC) that is angled towards the driver.

The RS 9.0 package is mostly about appearances, but the centre exhaust does add a few ponies and pounds-feet to the DOHC 16-valve four cylinder's output of 179 hp and 172 lb/ft of torque.

These aren't big numbers, but are more than adequate to propel this 1,377 kg vehicle briskly to highway speeds, and allow for responsive and safe passing.

The powertrain in my tester included a six-speed manual transmission, which offers precise action and smooth clutch takeup.

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