

Toyota returning to truck roots at this month's Detroit show

Toyota Motor Sales returns to its compact pickup truck roots with its latest concept vehicle A-BAT. The environmentally advanced A-BAT provides modern versatility, roominess and style in a compact pickup architecture. The A-BAT will be on display at the Toyota exhibit in Detroit at the 2008 North American International Auto Show beginning Monday, Jan. 14.

The A-BAT concept was developed by the TMS Advanced Product Strategy group and Caltly, Toyota's North American-based, research and design center located in Newport Beach, Calif.

The team created a new genre of compact vehicle with good fuel economy, advanced functionality, maneuverability, unique styling within its segment and a durable package suitable for an active lifestyle. Advanced styling was also key in making the A-BAT appropriate for today's market.

The A-BAT concept rides on a unibody platform for car-like handling when navigating city streets and crowded parking lots, and smooth ride quality for highway trips and the everyday commute. In addition, its lightweight package coupled with Toyota's Hybrid Synergy Drive technology is designed to deliver excellent fuel economy. Translucent solar panels in the top surface of the instrument panel capture sunlight and convert it into energy, showcasing the vehicle's "green" character.

Positioned below the Toyota Tacoma, A-BAT integrates truck features with car fundamentals for an efficient and modern package.

The A-BAT's unique aerodynamic exterior

or was crafted by Caltly Project Chief Designer Ian Cartabiano and Creative Designer Matt Sperling. They integrated Toyota's design philosophy, "Vibrant Clarity" into the exterior by keeping the design forward-looking, crisp and functional.

The concept's unique look is a combination of the large body surfaces, intersecting tight surface planes, crisp lines and the trapezoidal profile. The A-BAT's 19-inch wheels sit at the vehicle's corners creating a tough and ready stance.

The A-BAT features a four-foot bed, but has more flexibility than the standard pickup truck. A translucent roof panel slides open to allow for tall cargo in the cab. When the pass-through midgate is folded down into the cab the bed lengthens an additional two feet. An open tailgate provides an additional two-foot of bed length. The A-BAT offers customers the versatility of hauling a standard 4x8 sheet of plywood one day, then taking a family on a camping trip to the lake the next.

The bed has features perfect for work and play. These include tailgate lighting for illuminating the load in the bed, a first aid kit and flashlight integrated into the tailgate, sliding tie downs, and an AC power outlet. Items such as sports and leisure equipment can be stored in the lockable drawers in the bed walls. The concept also has additional storage that is accessible through sliding doors conveniently placed in and outside of the truck bed. For even more storage capacity the A-BAT comes with a large sliding drawer beneath the bed, accessible without opening the tailgate.



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(NC)-We've all been overtaken by speed demons trying to make it through the next light without stopping. They pick up the pace, put the pedal to the metal and screech out in front hoping to gain that minute or two advantage. Sometimes, for all their speeding, those same drivers arrive at the light at the same time as we do. Have you ever wondered what the real cost of speeding is? According to Natural Resources Canada, speedy and aggressive driving burns excessive fuel and money and only saves a matter of minutes. **If someone told you you could save two minutes of time by burning 39 per cent more fuel would you do it? Would it be worth it?** With gasoline prices at over a dollar per litre in many Canadian cities, and with the growing concern for the environment, does it really make sense to speed and drive aggressively?

Reducing your speed from 120km/hour to 100km/hr can save drivers up to 20 per cent in fuel costs while aggressive driving (rapid acceleration and braking) can cost up to 39 per cent more in fuel use and cost (as well as increasing the wear and tear on the vehicle). More money-saving driving tips are available online at ecoaction.gc.ca/vehicles.



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