

# WHEELS

## Almost every part on seventh generation Toyota Celica is new

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METROLAND STAFF

It was only a decade ago when Japanese (mostly) super sports coupes could, and did, humble many a muscle car with their han-

dling and turbo- or supercharger-assisted acceleration.

Starting with the rabidly fast (for the time) Honda CRX, we soon had cars like Toyota's Celica, the VW Corrado, Honda Prelude and Eagle Talon.

But high-tech meant high cost and the young, mostly unmarried, buyers who wanted these cars simply couldn't afford them and turned elsewhere, especially after the recession dug in.

But nothing seems to change faster than

trends in the auto industry and performance coupes are back.

Look at the Honda Civic SiR, the Integra R, even the VW New Beetle Turbo and the evidence is clear — young people are once again ready to pay for performance.

Toyota has never abandoned this segment and with the model year 2000 it brings on the seventh generation Celica on which virtually every part is new.

Gone is the plumpish styling from the ample front fenders to the Ruebenesque rump.

This has been replaced with a more razor-edged persona that bears some resemblance to Ford's New Edge concept down to the Mustang-like central air scoop.

There's no question this is a much more brash look.

It's the kind of hard-edge styling found in a Bang and Olufsen CD player that appeals to the Celica median buying age of 30 of whom 65 per cent are male and

only 40 per cent are married. Toyota cleverly markets two versions of the Celica that look the same but have very different personalities under the skin — the Celica GT and the GT-S.

Regardless of grade, all Celicas get alloy wheels, air conditioning, AM/FM audio system with CD and a very handsome interior with one of the most comfortable (and adjustable) shell-style bucket seats I've ever tried.

You have to try these at the dealership yourself to see what I mean.

A 1.8-litre inline, four-cylinder engine powers both Celicas. In the GT it is a twin overhead cam. Both engines get Toyota's improved VTE-i (for Variable Valve Technology with intelligence).

Proof that this technology increases efficiency is the fact the 1.8 makes 140 horsepower with little effort or lack of low-end breathlessness common in early multi-valve fours only 10 years ago.

In the GT-S, the engine gets VTE-i or Variable Valve Lift with intelligence developed in co-operation with Yamaha.

Simply put, the system employs two-stage lift and duration times for the intake and the exhaust cams. The faster the engine turns, the longer the opening for mixture to get in and exhaust to be scavenged.

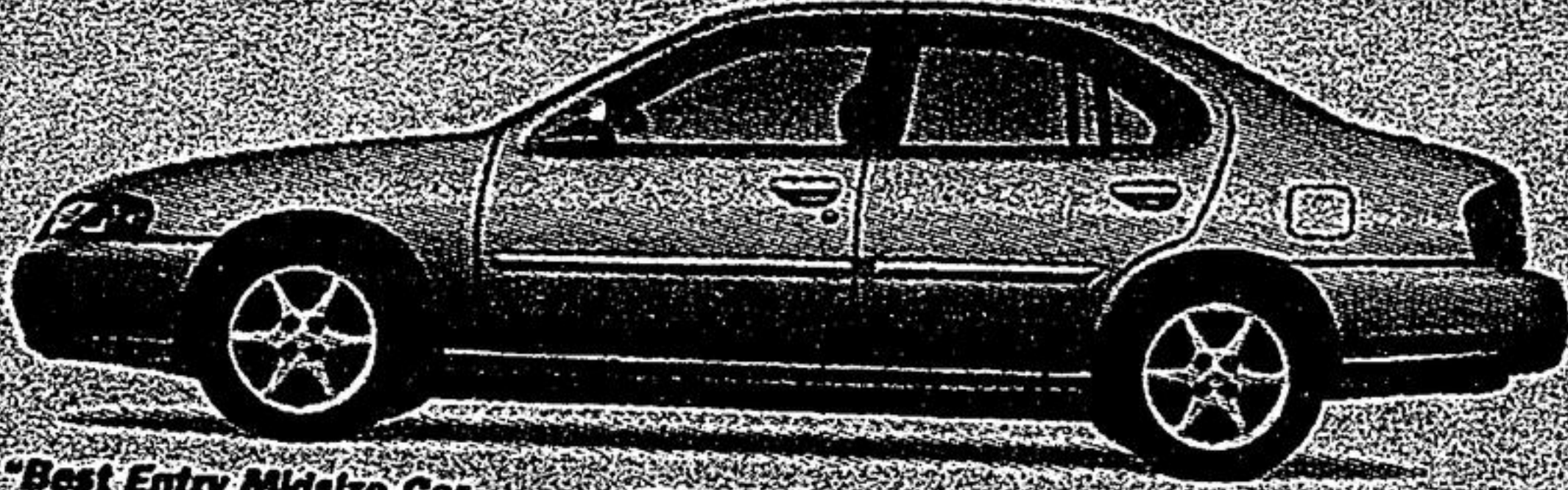
The bottom line is 40 more horses (180 hp and 130 ft/lb of torque) and an engine that produces the magic 100 hp/litre, the current theoretical maximum attainable from a naturally aspirated engine.

Theoretical or not, the GT-S can

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