

Toyota Tries To Make tC More Sporty

The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Scion, the brand that Toyota created 10 years ago to attract young buyers, is trying to evoke a sportier image with a new version of the tC coupe.

The 2014 version of the car was unveiled Thursday at the New York International Auto Show. The tC coupe accounts for 40 percent of Scion's sales.

Toyota says the new tC's styling is more aggressive. The old coupe looked sporty but wasn't viewed as a much of a performance car.

The engine stays the same, but the tC gets an updated six-speed automatic transmission that changes gears almost twice as fast as the old model, Scion says. The suspension also gets stiffer with stronger stabilizer bars for better handling.

The median age of a Scion buyer was 37 last year, the lowest in the U.S. and far below the industry norm. The average buyer of a new car in the U.S. last year was 52, according to the TrueCar.com auto pricing site.

Scion is still a relatively small seller for Toyota. Sales of Scion's six models rose to almost 74,000 last year. By comparison, Toyota sold more than 400,000 Camrys. Through February, Scion sales were up a healthy 17.3 percent, according to Autodata Corp.

Here are some highlights of the new 2014 tC:

UNDER THE HOOD: The same engine as the previous model, a 2.5-liter, four-cylinder with 179 horsepower. Two transmissions available, a six-speed automatic and a six-speed manual.

OUTSIDE: New headlights, a lower hood and a more open, muscular-looking grille. There's a blacked-out section of the rear bumper that looks like Scion's FR-S, a 200 horsepower sports car. New LED tail lamps and 18-inch (45-centimeter) alloy wheels. Two new paint colors: red and blue streak metallic.

INSIDE: Interior materials are upgraded with softer materials and lighter color fabric on the seats and roof. The car gets a 6.1-inch (15.5-centimeter) LCD touch screen that will go in all 2014 Scion models. There's also a new audio system with Bluetooth capability. Auto-off headlights also were added.

FUEL ECONOMY: About the same: 23 miles per gallon (10.2 liters per 100 kms) in the city and 31 mpg (7.5 liters per 100 kms) on the highway.

PRICE: Will be announced closer to when the car arrives in showrooms in June.

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Current model starts at \$20,480 with an automatic transmission.

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