

# Akio Toyoda, President and Member of the Board of Directors, Toyota Motor Corporation: 2019 NAIAS Remarks

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As prepared for:

Akio Toyoda, President and Member of the Board of Directors, Toyota Motor Corporation

2019 NAIAS

2020 Toyota Supra Reveal

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Akio Toyoda drives onto stage in 2020 Toyota Supra:

**(Akio)**

I like it in there so much, I almost didn't get out! Hello Ladies and Gentlemen! It's great to see you again and to introduce you to one of my closest friends, the new Toyota Supra, also known as the worst kept secret in the industry!

What do you think? It been 17 years since the last Supra rolled off the line, and it famously beat that Ferrari in *The Fast and the Furious*, but affection for the Supra is as strong as ever.

I'm sure for each of you there's been at least one car in your life that you have a particular attachment to, one car that holds a special place in your heart and for me the Supra is it.

Back in the day my old Supra and I spent countless hours together as I learned to become a master driver. But you can imagine the teasing and stares that I got from all the other manufacturers at Nurburgring., who were driving their beautiful new prototypes while I'm out there driving what felt like an automotive version of Charlie Brown's Christmas tree. I mean it was a great car but you know, a guy can only take so much!

So even though Toyota had no plans to make a new Supra, just like a lot of other die hard Supra fans around the world I secretly wanted to make it happen. So did a small group of our designers at Caltex it turns out.

A few years ago they showed me a concept they called the FT-1 and as if I needed any more persuading they managed to get their prototype put into the Gran Turismo video game.

Here's me driving it in their studio. By the way, I recommend this approach to any designer out there trying to get his boss to sign off on a concept car. Because for me it was Game Over.

At that moment I knew my old friend was coming home. But I also knew there would be high expectations for this new Supra, and it would have to be even more awesome than the original, which is why I turned to our Gazoo racing team to help create the driving dynamics for this new Supra.

Our Gazoo team actually began as a kind of skunkworks that we put together to test cars at Nurburgring

beginning in 2007, because as all manufacturers know, there is no more perfect or challenging place to test a car than the Green Hell.

We didn't start out as an official Toyota race team though. In fact, the original Gazoo team wasn't even acknowledged by Toyota. We were more like a bunch of friends who thought it would be cool to hang out with the big boys and eat bratwurst.

Anyway, little by little, year over year, we learned and got better, and soon we became a real team. In fact, in 2018, Toyota's Gazoo racing division won the World Rally Championship, and also Le Mans.

So the new Supra was born out of this hands-on testing at Nurburgring, and as a result, I can honestly say that this new Supra is not just fun to drive, it's totally LIT! According to my son this means amazing or super excellent! The new Supra builds on its heritage and then some.

In both design and performance, it bears a strong connection to our '67 Toyota 2000 GT. Take a look at some of the key design and engineering highlights that make this Supra a car that everyone will enjoy no matter what your skill level.

### **(ROLL PRODUCT SPEC VIDEO)**

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The first Supra off the line will actually be painted in a special matte grey metallic that I think will really appeal to the race car driver in all of us.

### **(MATTE GREY SUPRA DRIVES OUT / FERNANDO JOINS AKIO ON STAGE)**

**(Akio)** Fernando! Welcome! I like your ride.

**(Fernando)** Me too! It's totally lit.

**(Akio)** I know, right? And thanks for winning Le Mans for us! It was an honor to have you in a Toyota.

**(Fernando)** My pleasure.

**(Akio)** Now I hear you've had a chance to drive the new Supra. What do you think? And don't feel like you have to say nice things just because I'm standing right here.

**(Fernando)** Okay boss. But seriously, I did drive the Supra in Japan and I can tell that your fingerprints, Akio, are all over this car. The tuning you and your team did at Nurburgring paid off. It really handles like a race car. I thought the cornering was great. It's got a quick gear shift, fast acceleration, nice braking performance, the electronics are quite sophisticated, it's like a race car you can drive quite comfortably every day. I think people are gonna love it, and I want the first one!

**(Akio)** Well actually the very first new Supra off the line is going to be auctioned off for charity at Barrett-Jackson this Saturday. It will look like this one, but with some special red accents and a red leather interior.

**(Fernando)** And I heard that you personally signed the engine cover?

**(Akio)** I did, but I think it would probably get a better price if you signed it! So, we should talk about that later! And hey, good luck driving that other car at Daytona, even though it's not a Toyota! Fernando Alonso, Ladies and Gentlemen!

**(FERNANDO EXITS)**

Racing really does allow us to learn from the road and improve our cars ... and that's why the Supra will be joining the upcoming Nascar Xfinity series. Driver Christopher Bell will be doing the honors for us, although I think I need to make sure he's old enough to drive. You know, SUVs are nice, but at the end of the day, is there anything better than a tight, rear wheel drive sports car?

In fact, between you and me, I hope this isn't the only sports car you see with a Toyota badge in the future! Ladies and Gentlemen, they say all good things come to those who wait, even a really long time. And now, finally, the next chapter in the story can begin!

Today, the legend has returned. Supra is back, better than ever! Thank you very much!