

Toyota Siennas Storm into One Lap of America Race

April 25, 2016



Torrance, Calif., April 25, 2016 — Everyone has a “bucket list,” those things we just have to do... no ifs, ands, or buts. For automotive enthusiasts everywhere, competing in Brock Yates’ One Lap of America is squarely on that list.

This year, though, the competition will get a real taste of the unexpected. It’s one thing to bring a sports car to the event; people see that coming. But what if you could really make people do a double-take?

To that end, two Toyota Sienna concepts will take to tracks all over the Mid-West and East Coast to shatter the perception of what it means to own a minivan. One Lap is the ultimate road trip, and Sienna the ultimate road trip vehicle, with its comfort, utility, and versatility.

The Siennas will primarily be driven by *Top Gear* host, Rutledge Wood, and Grand-Am Rolex GT Champion, Craig Stanton. Andrew Lund, Sienna chief engineer, and drag racing specialist, Sean Morris, will also take part in the action.

“When Toyota asked if I wanted to go on the trip of a lifetime for One Lap of America, I said heck yes,”

exclaimed Wood! “We’re taking not one, but two Sienna minivans...it’s going to be awesome.”

Furthering the One Toyota message, Toyota will also field an Avalon and FR-S piloted by a team of production engineers from Toyota’s North American Headquarters.

This is the second year for the Toyota Engineering Motorsports team to compete in the race. They modified the TRD FR-S and Avalon for the race in their own shop, and driving will be shared between six engineers during the eight-day event.

“The Toyota Engineering Motorsports team has been racing since 2008, primarily in the 24- Hours of Lemons series, said Michael Seavers, Toyota production engineering manager. We firmly believe that teamwork, problem solving, vehicle safety, and performance lessons learned on the racetrack make our engineers better, and better engineers make better cars.”

The race is the successor to the Cannonball Sea-to-Shining-Sea Memorial Dash, and served as inspiration for the *Cannonball Run* movies, becoming a pop culture staple. As in recent years past, this year’s event has competition taking place on racetracks around America with non-competition transits happening on the highways and byways.

This year’s race covers nearly 3,000 miles across a dozen states, as competitors compete on the road course, autocross course, drag strip, and skid pad. In total, there will be 17 timed race competitions at eight unique venues. Perhaps more staggering is the fact that this all will take place in eight consecutive days, with competitors racing during the day and driving all night to the next track.

“What could be a better test of our amazing Sienna minivan than putting it through the rigors of one of the ultimate endurance races,” said Lund. “It’s really the best of both worlds to drive on public roads and then compete on so many unique courses.”

The R-Tuned Sienna, introduced at SEMA last November, was an instant hit, and proved to the world that Sienna could run shockingly fast on a bona fide sports car course. Powered by a stock engine and automatic transmission, Toyota put an exclamation point on the performance, driving home the point that overall vehicles dynamics are what really count.

The never-before-seen SE + concept will make its public debut in South Bend, Ind. The SE + takes the sporty flair of the SE and adds a little more spice with a decidedly dark and stormy treatment.

The SE + gains additional presence and personality with revised treatments to the front and rear bumpers, headlights, taillights, badges, bezels, and door handles. Black satin outside mirrors, Laser Black 19-inch wheels shod with Pirelli P Zero tires, two-tone roof rails, and a spoiler extension round out the unique look.

The R-Tuned will compete in the Truck/SUV class and will also earn points toward the overall standings, while the SE + will compete in an Exhibition class.

“I’ve always loved this race, and this was the perfect opportunity for us to challenge perceptions...we’re already seeing a huge increase in the number of Millennials buying minivans,” explained Kibo Kitahama, national manager, vehicle marketing and communications. “Toyota started the whole ‘Swagger Wagon’ phenomenon with Sienna, and our recent Sienna REAL Performance program took that swagger to a whole new level. This is going to be one epic adventure, and I think we just may shock some people along the way.”

The Siennas, Avalon, and FR-S will compete in a field of nearly 75 vehicles driven by hundreds of unique drivers from all over the nation.

The race begins on the skid pad at Tire Rack headquarters in South Bend on April 30 and concludes on the skid pad on May 7.

More information on the Sienna One Lap program and the Toyota Engineering Motorsports team can be found at www.SiennaOneLapofAmerica.com and toyotaengineeringmotorsports.com. In addition, fans can follow along via Toyota's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram channels.

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