

2012 Toyota Avalon Blends Luxury, Elegance and Efficiency in the Full-Size Segment

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The Toyota Avalon, redesigned and made more efficient for the 2011 model year, moves into 2012 unchanged, still offering a unique combination of full-size room with understated luxury.

Given an elegant, more substantial presence in the 2011 redesign, Avalon evokes a time when travel was sophisticated, elegant and comfortable. Fully in tune with the times, the 2012 Avalon offers a compelling combination of performance and fuel economy. Its standard 268-horsepower V6 engine, teamed to a six-speed automatic transmission, yields both impressive acceleration and merging power with an EPA highway MPG estimate of 29 MPG.

Avalon's 106.9 cubic feet of passenger space and 14.4-cubic foot trunk put it in the EPA's "large car" category- (versus Camry, Fusion, and Sonata, Avalon is about nine inches longer). Generous rear seat roominess includes 40.9 inches of legroom.

A distinctive exterior style and a roomy interior rich with premium touch points and practical technologies make the Avalon a standout in its class. The 2012 Avalon is available in two grades, Avalon and Avalon Limited. Both are well-equipped with leather-trimmed interior, eight-way power driver's seat, back-up camera, dual zone automatic climate control with air filtration, moonroof and 17-inch alloy wheels.

The Avalon Limited in addition features heated and cooled front seats, an eight-way front passenger's seat with lumbar support, driver's seat cushion extension, rain-sensing windshield wipers and Smart Key. Additional standard features the Limited has over the base grade are: HID, chrome outer door handles (versus color-keyed,) outer mirrors have memory and puddle lamps, memory driver's seat and wood-grained steering wheel/shift knob/rear armrest box lid. The Avalon grade can be upgraded with a JBL Synthesis sound system and heated front seats, and Navigation is optional for both grades. Base grade options also include memory package (outer mirrors and driver's seat.) Base grade customers can get heated seats alone, or with memory package.

Restyled primarily at Caltex Design Research in Newport Beach, Calif., and Ann Arbor, Mich., the Avalon is assembled at Toyota Motor Manufacturing Kentucky (TMMK), a "zero landfill" facility that also assembles the Camry, Camry Hybrid and Venza. This model was developed at the Toyota Technical Center (TTC) in Ann Arbor.

An available touch-screen navigation system with real-time traffic (requires subscription), and Bluetooth® hands-free phone capability with music streaming to the audio system are among Avalon's easy-to-use technologies.

Performance

The Avalon is powered by a 24-valve, dual-overhead cam (DOHC) 3.5-liter V6 engine that produces 268 horsepower at 6,200 rpm and 248 lb.-ft. of torque at 4,700 RPM. The engine is equipped with the dual VVT-i electronic valve-control system that ensures a broad powerband. The six-speed automatic transmission provides an engaging driving experience and helps optimize fuel economy. Uphill/downhill shift logic selects the proper gear for driving conditions and helps provide moderate engine braking during downhill driving.

The 2012 Avalon's EPA ratings of 20 MPG in the city 29 MPG highway match or even exceed those of midsize six-cylinder models, a testament to Toyota's technology. The Avalon is certified as an Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV).

The Avalon's MacPherson strut coil spring independent suspension delivers a sophisticated blend of smooth ride quality and precise driving control. Rack-and-pinion steering combines with front-wheel-drive and optimized steering gear for an easy, natural handling feel.

Exterior Design

The Avalon projects an elegant, outgoing presence. A wide, substantial grille ties into projector headlamps. These blend with the broad hood to emphasize the Avalon's wide stance. The headlamps, which combine multi-reflector halogen high beams with halogen or HID (only available on Limited grade) low beams, use "light pipes" to create a signature night-time appearance. The front fog lamps, integrated into a trapezoidal front bumper, provide wide illumination. Glare-resistant side view mirrors (Limited grade has both outer mirrors glare resistant, Avalon grade only has driver's side glare resistant) feature integrated turn signals.

The Limited grade adds 17-inch wheels with a 10-spoke design with mirror finish. Dual exhaust tailpipes are integrated into the cutaway trapezoid shape of the lower bumper. Reshaped taillights reduce turbulence at the rear, helping also to reduce the car's coefficient of drag. The lights integrate stop, turn and side marker lighting functions in one combined lamp. LED light pipes with dark aluminized sides and both clear and red lenses project a modern appearance.

Interior Design

The 2012 Avalon shows off a contemporary style inside, as well. The generously spacious and elegant interior is fitted with comfortable seating and thoughtfully integrated amenities. Coordinated colors and rich new wood-grain style materials convey the rich elegance of a luxury sedan. The instrument panel incorporates visually attractive and easily readable Optitron gauges that use graduated white illumination with white pointers. These are set inside smoked lenses and deep chrome rings that add depth and a sense of luxury. The steering wheel provides fingertip control switches for Bluetooth hands-free phones, the audio system, climate control system and the vehicle information center.

The Avalon's rear seating area is configured to seat three passengers comfortably, with ample legroom (40.9 inches) and reclining seats that are unique in the segment. A convenient flip-down center armrest provides storage when the middle seat position is not in use. A power rear sunshade (available only on Limited) activated by a one-touch switch, filters sunlight coming through the rear window. The sunshade, which helps to protect rear seat passengers from unwanted light and heat, automatically retracts when the driver selects reverse gear. Beyond the luxury of its spaciousness and obvious amenities, numerous details throughout the Avalon enhance the driving experience and passenger comfort. For example: The dual-zone climate control system has nine airflow modes for more precise control of the interior environment, and a clean-air filter removes dust and pollen. The vehicle doors use three stop positions instead of two for easier entrance and exit; a lockable glove box has a pneumatic-door damper and inner box illumination.

The front-console box features a sliding armrest that moves 4.7 inches front-to-rear to accommodate a wide range of driver positions; the elegantly stitched top is padded with a double density cushion material for softness. Inside the console box, there is a 12-volt outlet in addition to the USB and auxiliary audio terminals.

The 2012 Avalon features a standard full-size spare tire on an alloy wheel — a rarity in any segment. Standard leather-trimmed front seats and seatbacks on the Avalon Limited are fitted with ventilation systems and an enlarged perforation area to help keep them cool.

Technology-Enriched Environment

The 2012 Avalon presents the driver and passengers with a comprehensive array of user technology for enhanced function and connectivity. Standard equipment includes Bluetooth[®] hands-free phone and music streaming technology to the audio system from a compatible device, SiriusXM[®] satellite radio capability (with a 90-day trial subscription to SiriusXM Select Package), USB and 1/8-inch auxiliary connections for iPod[®], and other audio devices. Each of the three available audio systems can control iPods seamlessly using switches located on the steering wheel and display track information.

The DVD navigation system features easy search and address input functionality. The navigation system also offers new displays for road icons and points of interest, as well as a keyboard screen arranged in the same way as a personal computer. The Avalon grade's standard nine-speaker audio system offers excellent sound quality, while the Limited grade features a standard 12-speaker, 660-watt JBL Premium Synthesis audio system with enhanced two-coil sub-woofer. The JBL system uses a 12-channel digital amplifier to deliver exceptionally rich, full sound to all seats of the vehicle.

A rear-view monitor function is standard in the rear-view mirror or with the available navigation system. The rear-view-mirror image includes on-screen back-up guides that help the driver to back into parking spaces or driveways.

Safety

The 2012 Avalon's occupant-safety strategy includes use of extensively tested energy absorbing structures, protective side impact beams and overhead structure, advanced belt systems and active front headrests as standard equipment.

Seven airbags, including a front knee airbag for the driver, and side curtain airbags for both rows, are also standard on the 2012 Avalon. Toyota's standard Star Safety System includes Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), anti-lock braking system (ABS) with Electronic Brake force Distribution (EBD), Brake

Assist and TRAC traction control system. TRAC and VSC functions can be disengaged if the driver needs to free the vehicle if stuck in mud or snow. Each wheel has its own pressure sensor to warn if tire pressure drops to critical levels, providing the driver with a warning.

Color and Trim

The 2012 Avalon is available in nine exterior colors: Zephyr Blue Metallic, Cypress Pearl, Sizzling Crimson Mica, Cocoa Bean Metallic, Blizzard Pearl, Classic Silver Metallic, Magnetic Gray Metallic, Black, and Sandy Beach Metallic. Avalon grade offers three leather-trimmed interior colors: Ivory, Light Gray, and Black; the Limited grade offers Ivory, Light Gray and Black Bordeaux perforated leather trims with accent-color trim on the vertical surfaces. Such a wide array of choices is more common in the luxury category.

Limited Warranty

Toyota's 36-month/36,000 mile basic new-vehicle warranty applies to all components other than normal wear and maintenance items. Additional 60-month warranties cover the powertrain for 60,000 miles and corrosion with no mileage limitation. Toyota dealers have complete details on the limited warranty.

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