

Avalon TRD Pro Concept Drifts, Grips and Attacks the Track

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PLANO, Texas (November 5, 2019) – The 2020 Avalon TRD Pro Concept shatters any and all preconceived notions about full-size family sedans at Toyota’s **2019 Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) Show** display.

“Avalon has been an amazing car for Toyota, but let’s face it, it’s never really shed its family sedan image...until now,” said Ed Laukes, group vice president – Toyota Division Marketing. “For this Avalon TRD Pro Concept, our intention was to do some serious perception-busting. It’s a street car for the race track. Sports cars beware!”

After recording a blistering 1:25.3 lap time at the 1.8-mile Streets of Willow Springs in Rosamond, California, the 2020 Avalon TRD Pro Concept proves that it is far greater than the sum of its parts. According to fastestlaps.com, this full-size, front-wheel drive sedan outpaced such sports cars as the Porsche 911 Carrera and Audi R8.



Just like the TRD Pro trucks and SUVs, this Avalon TRD had to earn the coveted “Pro” badge. To achieve that goal and celebrate TRD’s 40th Anniversary, the concept was developed between Toyota, Toyota Racing Development (TRD) and performance outfit Dan Gardner Spec (DG-Spec). From drifting with Ken Gushi at Road Atlanta, to hot lapping with Michael and Darrell Waltrip at Sonoma, the finished product delivers ridiculous amounts of speed on the racetrack while retaining everyday drivability.

DG-Spec treated this project like a professional race program, which needs to retain reliability while delivering ridiculous amounts of speed on the racetrack. This process involved getting a solid baseline for both the Avalon

XSE as well as the Avalon TRD before beginning modifications. The development process saw the team take to the track no less than ten times at four different racetracks, unheard of for a SEMA car.

The Avalon TRD Pro Concept's 3.5-liter 2GR-FKS V6 engine breathes easier thanks to a DG-Spec cold air intake and 3-inch exhaust fabricated from Burns Stainless components, bumping output to an estimated 330 horsepower. To limit wheelspin, DG-Spec enlisted the help of long-term partner OS Giken in Japan. Together, they developed a custom Super-Lock limited-slip differential. A Tundra factory transmission cooler with custom lines and an electric pump was also fitted to help with heat management at the track. To get more air to the cooler, the front grille was opened up as well.



To navigate the technical portions of the track, DG-Spec Motion Control Suspension (MCS) coilovers with remote reservoirs and 3-way adjustability replace the factory units at each corner, while adjustable DG-Spec/Progress rear camber arms with a Progress adjustable rear stabilizer bar complete the suspension formula.

Grip comes by way of meaty 275/35R18 Goodyear Supercar 3R tires at all four corners. Modified aluminum uprights sourced from a RAV4 replace the heavier Avalon components, reducing the weight on each side by four pounds. This weight reduction contributes to sharper handling and improved feedback.

With attention focused on quick lap times, making short work of the straightaways calls for improved braking and greater heat capacity. To this end, a Stoptech ST40 big brake kit was adapted to the Avalon. These four-piston, billet aluminum calipers squeeze Hawk Performance DTC-60 pads that apply friction to the large, two-piece 355mm Stoptech slotted rotors to reign in the speed.

Light certainly makes right, and the Avalon TRD Pro Concept employs lightweight body components to help reduce weight. To distinguish the Pro Concept from its peers, a composite duck bill spoiler was designed to sit atop the trunk lid. In keeping with DG-Spec's form and function philosophy, it adds 100 pounds of downforce at 100mph. A bespoke DG-Spec vented carbon-fiber hood lends to weight reduction while releasing heat trapped in the engine bay. Under the wheel arches, custom made 18×9-inch Lacks wheels fill the wells. These wheels feature full carbon-fiber barrels with billet aluminum wheel faces, offering a healthy weight savings, and tipping the scales at a feathery 15 pounds per wheel.



By way of upgraded components and carbon-fiber pieces, the Avalon TRD Pro Concept managed to shed nearly 150 pounds and impress all who got behind the wheel. Said best by Michael Waltrip, “I love the Avalon TRD Pro Concept, it behaves as a performance car should. You turn the wheel and the car turns, you get on the brakes and the car stops, you get on the gas and the car goes! I could run laps around Sonoma all day in this car!”

“At DG-Spec, we’re always taking on platforms that most people don’t typically think of as track-worthy. We’ve been around enough talented Toyota engineers to know that they create amazing canvases, regardless of the intended target. It’s been our honor over the years to help Toyota turn the volume up to 11. It’s safe to say this

really is the quickest FWD full-size sedan on the planet,” said DG-Spec’s Dan Gardner.

The 2020 Avalon TRD Pro Concept—along with other Toyota specialty vehicles—can be found in the Toyota display booth (#24800) in Central Hall and on the Patio Annex of the Las Vegas Convention Center, November 5 – November 8, 2019.