

Extreme Car Makeover: Toyota Unveils Highlander XSE

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Toyota recently kicked off sales of the all-new [2020 Highlander](#) with a pretty adventurous [Super Bowl ad](#). So you might think now would be the time to pause and take a well-deserved victory lap.

Think again.

Toyota continued to press its advantage: Production of the hybrid version of the Highlander has already begun and there are plans to expand its reach with the addition of the Highlander XSE — due to go on sale as a [2021 model](#) this fall.

“The response to the all-new 2020 Highlander has been amazing,” said Ed Laukes, group vice president of Marketing. “Even though it’s only been out a month, we’re already taking it to the next level. And that’s the XSE.”

Practicality with a Punch

Like the XSE variants of Camry, Avalon, RAV4 and Corolla that preceded it, the newest addition to the

Highlander line aims to deliver styling and performance that quickens the pulse.

For example, its bold new exterior includes:

- A sportier grille with a unique insert
- Front and side rocker moldings
- Blacked-out accents
- A twin-tip exhaust
- 20-inch wheels exclusive to the XSE



Step inside and you'll find exclusive two-tone seats, as well as other distinctive XSE styling elements.

“This might be the boldest interior we've ever achieved in a Highlander,” said Laukes.

That being said, there's more to the Highlander XSE than pure aesthetics. Laukes also touted it as “the best-handling Highlander in the lineup,” thanks in part to an all-new sport-tuned suspension, as well as Dynamic Torque Vectoring for its all-wheel drive powertrain.

But That's Not All, Folks...

Though the Highlander XSE might have been the star of the show, it's far from the only newcomer for the 2021 model year. Toyota also shared that its body-on-frame models — Tacoma, Tundra and Sequoia — would get the Nightshade treatment, joining the 4Runner, as well as four other Nightshade models already at dealerships. And it announced the addition of special Trail Editions of Tacoma, Tundra and 4Runner.

The Nightshade package begins with the Limited grade for each vehicle, then adds black-painted wheels, a darkened chrome grille, blacked-out exterior badging and more.



The Trail Editions, meanwhile, introduce both distinctive design elements and practical comfort and convenience features to the mix. Some of the more notable examples include:

- Twin bed-mounted lockable storage boxes, including one that's insulated to make for the perfect mobile cooler (Tacoma and Tundra)
- All-weather floor liners (all models)
- 115-volt bed outlet (Tacoma and Tundra)
- Black seating with unique tan stitching throughout (all models)
- Removeable and lockable custom cooler (4Runner)
- Yakima LoadWarrior cargo basket (4Runner)
- Kevlar All-Terrain Tires (Tacoma)
- TRD Off-Road Wheels (Tacoma and 4Runner)

In addition, all three variations on the Trail Edition theme will be available in Army Green, Cement, Midnight Black Metallic and Super White.

“As you can see, it’s a very exciting time for Toyota trucks, SUVs, cars — you name it,” said Laukes. “We could not be positioned better for a successful 2020.”