

First-Ever All-Wheel Drive and XSE Nightshade Edition Highlight Changes for 2021 Toyota Avalon

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PLANO, Texas (July 15, 2020) – What would a premium midsize sedan look like if it covered an incredibly wide gamut of customer choices, from the silken yet spirited character of a 301-horsepower V6 to the manufacturer-projected EPA-estimated range rating of 44 miles per gallon fuel efficiency of a hybrid version, and from the traction of available new all-wheel drive to the track-tuned handling of a model developed by the motorsports division?

It would look exactly like the 2021 Toyota Avalon. The Avalon line offers all of those variants in a striking, coupe-inspired design with cavernous interior room, coddling luxury, and Toyota Safety Sense driver-assist technology with automatic emergency braking.

Toyota introduced the fifth-generation Avalon for 2019 and continues pushing the boundaries on this flagship sedan. The first-ever Avalon TRD performance model debuted for 2020 for drivers who want more aggressive road grip and arresting style. Now, for 2021, Avalon's first-ever all-wheel drive option arrives for drivers who want more grip and driving confidence in slippery driving conditions.

In the Avalon Hybrid, which recently accounts for about a third of Avalon sales, a new Lithium-ion (Li-ion)

battery pack replaces the previous Nickel-metal hydride (Ni-MH) battery. In addition, a new Vehicle Approach Noise system helps to alert pedestrians of the car's presence at low speeds. The Avalon Hybrid achieves a remarkable manufacturer-projected EPA-estimated range rating of 44 combined MPG.

The 2021 Avalon also joins a growing list of Toyota models that offer a Nightshade Edition, a kind of factory custom without the custom price. No other sedan in Avalon's class offers such a wide range of choices.

The 10 Avalon variations for 2021 include:

- **V6 gas engine:** XLE, XSE Nightshade, Limited, Touring and TRD grades
- **Hybrid:** XLE, XSE and Limited grades
- **All-Wheel Drive:** XLE and Limited grades

Since the model was launched 26 years ago, the Toyota Avalon deftly balances premium midsize value with genuine luxury. The current Avalon mixes a bevy of Toyota-firsts such as available Dynamic Auxiliary Turn Signals and aluminum and authentic Yamaha wood cabin accents.

Athletic handling imbues the Avalon with a sporty demeanor while preserving its luxury feel. This combination is made especially vivid with Adaptive Variable Suspension (AVS), standard on the Touring grade model.

Going for A Custom Look

For the Avalon's fifth generation design, Toyota steered its flagship sedan down a more emotional road, with taut lines and a sleek, coupe-like silhouette made possible by the low-slung TNGA platform architecture. Compelling colors bring out the design's natural yet sophisticated drama.

For the Avalon TRD performance model, a two-tone paint option features a black roof paired with either the Windchill Pearl or new Ice Edge body colors. Ice Edge replaces Supersonic Red, which now becomes available for the other Avalon grades. Midnight Black Metallic continues as a third choice for the 2021 Avalon TRD.

Elsewhere in the Avalon line, the new Blueprint color replaces Parisian Night Pearl. Colors continuing for 2021 include Opulent Amber, Harbor Gray Metallic, Celestial Silver Metallic, and Ruby Flare Pearl. New interior colors include Cognac with Black in the XSE Hybrid and Touring, and, in the Limited, Black replaces Beige.

Avalon drivers seeking a more extroverted look will find it in the new-for-2021 XSE Nightshade Edition based on the sporty 2020 XSE grade. To the XSE black grille, mirror caps, rear spoiler and name badges, the 2021 XSE Nightshade Edition adds black-painted 19-inch alloy wheels, black window trim and door handles and a black shark fin antenna. The Avalon XSE Nightshade is available in conjunction with the Midnight Black Metallic, Wind Chill Pearl and Celestial Silver Metallic exterior colors.



Avalon All-Wheel Drive Gets A Grip on Slippery Conditions

The 2021 Avalon debuts the first all-wheel drive option in the model's history, and Toyota estimates that it will account for 20 percent of Avalon sales. Available as a standalone option on the XLE and Limited grades, Dynamic Torque Control AWD is combined with the 2.5-liter Dynamic Force four-cylinder engine and teamed with an eight-speed Direct-Shift automatic transmission. This powertrain, with dual exhausts, produces 205 hp.

Dynamic Torque Control AWD provides effective traction for inclement and slippery weather while minimizing AWD's typical drag on fuel economy. The system can direct up to 50 percent of engine torque to the rear wheels in response to acceleration from a start or slippage at the front wheels.

When AWD isn't needed, the electromagnetically controlled coupling on the rear drive axle can disengage the propeller shaft to prioritize fuel efficiency. The AWD is designed to re-engage in an instant when needed, with operation that is transparent to the driver and passengers.

Fuel economy for the Avalon AWD is exemplary, with manufacturer projected EPA-estimated range rating of 25 city / 34 highway / 28 combined MPG. Suspension tuning, wheels, and tires that differentiate the FWD Avalon model grades carry over to the AWD versions. Critically, the addition of AWD does not affect Avalon's passenger space, trunk room, ride comfort, cabin quietness, or agility.

The XLE AWD adds a leather-wrapped heated steering wheel, which is already standard on Limited. The Avalon AWD is a North America-only model developed in the U.S. and is assembled exclusively at Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky.



TRD: Racy Personality for the Road

TRD, short for Toyota Racing Development, first made its name in off-road truck racing and then also amassed a long string of victories and championships in rallying, IMSA GTO and GTP road racing, NASCAR, and NHRA Funny Car racing. The Avalon TRD model exemplifies TRD's holistic approach to performance development, which it has applied to all types of competition vehicles for 40+ years.

The Avalon TRD is as refined and comfortable in its road manners as it is quick and agile. It's powered exclusively by Toyota's direct-injected, 301-horsepower DOHC 3.5-liter V-6. The Direct-Shift eight-speed automatic transmission features sport mode and paddle shifters. A TRD-tuned cat-back dual exhaust system expresses a more aggressive idle and acceleration sound.

The engineers developed the Avalon TRD's dynamic characteristics through extensive testing. Thicker underbody braces increase torsional rigidity, and unique coil springs lower the Avalon TRD by 0.6 inches for a reduced center of gravity.

The chassis is further enhanced with stiffer coil springs and stabilizer bars that increase roll stiffness by 44% in the front and 67% in the rear. Exclusive TRD shock absorbers complete the suspension modifications that enhance body control, handling agility, and steering precision.

Special lightweight 19 x 8.5-inch matte-black alloy wheels typify the thoroughness of TRD chassis tuning, reducing unsprung mass by 18 pounds compared to the 19-inch wheels on the Avalon XSE grade. That makes a difference through the corners. New for 2021, the TRD offers the choice of summer-only tires for even greater handling capability.

Avalon TRD's front brakes are larger with 12.9-inch diameter rotors and dual-piston calipers, compared to 12.0-inch rotors and single-piston calipers on the Avalon XSE. Brake performance is tuned to provide more direct feedback.

The exclusive TRD aerodynamic body kit, which includes the front splitter, side aero skirts, trunk lid spoiler, and rear diffuser, blends bold styling elements while also improving high speed vehicle stability. Available exterior colors include new Ice Edge (exclusive to TRD), Wind Chill Pearl, and Midnight Black Metallic. Red pinstriping on the aero body elements complete Avalon TRD's design transformation.

Inside, Avalon TRD features black Sport SofTex-trimmed heated front seats with Ultrasuede inserts and red accents. Exclusive touches include red-stitched TRD embroidered headrests, a leather-wrapped steering wheel with red stitching, red seatbelts, a shift knob with an embossed TRD logo, and unique TRD floor and trunk mats.

In addition to the new Ice Edge exterior color, black roof and available summer tires, the TRD adds a dramatic new startup animation in the multi-information display for 2021.

Rewarding the Eyes, Cheating the Wind

As sleek and slippery as the Avalon looks, the design is also highly functional. For example, the lateral vents at the front, the rear spoiler, and the substantial underbody panel coverage help to optimize aerodynamic efficiency and give Avalon a wind-cheating 0.27 coefficient of drag. That translates into higher fuel efficiency and lower wind noise. Connected, three-dimensional "aero fin" style LED taillamps emphasize the vehicle's width and "planted" stance.

Differences among the Avalon grades are clear. A dark gray front grille with chrome border identifies the XLE and Limited versions. Both also feature machined-silver-colored LED headlight bezels, and body-color rearview mirror housings. Exclusive-design wheels range in diameter from 17 to 19 inches, plus chrome badges and dual exhaust tips.

The XSE and Touring show a sportier character with a piano-black mesh grille, machine-finish and gloss-black wheels, as well as black outer mirror housings, headlight bezels, trunk lid spoiler, and exterior badging. For XSE, Touring and TRD, a grade-specific lower diffuser is set above and between quad tailpipes.



Cockpit and Cocoon

Since its introduction a quarter-century ago, Avalon has specialized in providing outstanding outward visibility and interior roominess, and the new-generation design does not sacrifice those qualities. Thin pillars and the broad windshield create the wide, open feeling for passengers in the front and back. Rear seat roominess, long an Avalon hallmark, is illustrated by generous shoulder room (57.1 in.), leg room (40.3 in. for V-6; 40.4 in. for Hybrid/AWD), and head room (37.5 in. for V-6; 37.1 in. for Hybrid; 37.1 in. for AWD).

Elegance emerges from simple and purposeful placement of amenities and controls, along with authentic materials including Yamaha-sourced wood trim, plus aluminum pieces for the arm rests accents, center console, and instrument panel. Soft-touch materials abound, along with piano-black and satin chrome-finish trim elements. Rear passengers are provided with air vents, available seat heaters, and USB charging ports.

Cabin trim choices reflect each model grade's persona. The XLE features engineered wood trim, while Limited has genuine Yamaha wood trim. Aluminum trim adorns the TRD, Touring and XSE cabins. A combination of luxurious perforated SofTex and Ultrasuede wraps the seating in Touring and XSE and TRD; the XLE's SofTex -trimmed seats feature artistic vertical stitching, and Limited adds a special perforation and two-color stitches – both unique to Toyota – plus a distinctive quilt pattern to its premium leather seats.

High Tech, Low Learning Curve

The Avalon integrates advanced tech with elegantly crafted luxury. A slim center stack houses the 9-inch Toyota Audio system, displaying audio and navigation and also integrating the automatic climate control system. Satin chrome-finish trim surrounds the center cluster panel that “floats” above the instrument panel.

Below the panel, passengers have easy access to the slide-open eBin containing a 12-volt plug and wireless Qi mobile device charger (Qi available on XLE grades and standard on all other grades. New for 2021, two versatile USB-C power ports replace USB-A ports in the front and rear console box. Supple padding lines both sides of the console’s lower tunnel at knee height for additional comfort and bracing.

Avalon’s three-spoke steering wheel features smooth, satin chrome-finish accents and conveniently placed multifunction controls. The wheel can be wrapped in a two-tone leather-surface when outfitted in Cognac or Graphite interior colors.

In the driver’s line of sight, a 7-inch Multi-Information Display (MID) shows vehicle information, turn-by-turn navigation, and various vehicle settings. These include TSS-P functions and available Intelligent Clearance Sonar, Blind Spot Monitor with Rear Cross-Traffic Alert, and Head-Up Display.

Avalon Hybrid grades feature the same central 7-inch screen, but to its left is a Hybrid System Indicator showing the vehicle’s regeneration status in real time.

Limited and Touring’s standard color 10-inch Head-Up Display (HUD), the largest in the segment, projects critical information such as vehicle and engine speed, turn-by-turn directions, audio settings, and current drive mode onto the lower portion of the windshield.

Start Your Engine – with a Smartwatch

Avalon XLE, XSE and TRD grades come with a standard Toyota Audio Plus eight-speaker system with Connected Navigation App and App Suite, featuring new in-vehicle third-party applications. The system’s nine-inch capacitive touchscreen operates using smartphone-like pinch and flick gestures and features SiriusXM® with 3-month All Access trial.

For 2021, Android Auto compatibility joins Apple CarPlay, which was already standard on all grades. Toyota Premium Audio with JBL, standard in Limited and Touring and optional for others, features a sonically stunning 1,200-watt, 14-speaker sound system, the most speakers in the segment. Both systems can be equipped with embedded Dynamic Navigation.

Connected Services include: Safety Connect with a 1-year trial period, and Service Connect with a 10-year trial period and Remote Connect with a 1-year trial. Wi-Fi Connect Powered by Verizon trial with up to 2GB within 3 months is subscription-free.

Avalon also features Toyota’s first integration of smartwatch or Amazon Alexa-enabled device connectivity, as part of Toyota Remote Connect. The latter allows drivers to lock and unlock the car’s doors, start the engine, or check fuel level, all from the convenience of an Apple Watch, compatible smartwatch or Amazon Alexa-enabled device. It is voice controllable and compatible with select Android or Apple devices.

Premium Power, Exemplary Efficiency

The front-wheel drive Avalon's 24-valve, DOHC 3.5-liter V-6 engine features Toyota's D-4S fuel injection system, which combines direct injection with supplemental port fuel injectors. In addition, the engine uses a VVT-iW (Variable Valve Timing-intelligent Wide) system for the intake, with VVT-i on the exhaust. The VVT-iW system can switch the engine to the Atkinson cycle, which reduces pumping losses by delayed closing of the intake valves, helping to reduce fuel consumption.

Output for the V-6 is 301 horsepower at 6,600 rpm and 267 lb.-ft. of peak torque at 4,700 rpm. Thanks to Toyota's innovative engine tech, the powerful V-6 Avalon models return exemplary fuel efficiency: manufacturer projected EPA-estimated range rating of 22 city/32 highway/26 combined MPG for the XLE grade, and 22/31/25 for all other grades.

The XLE, XSE, TRD and Limited grades have a three-level drive mode selection (ECO, NORMAL, SPORT), while Touring grades feature four-level drive mode selection, including ECO, NORMAL, SPORT/ SPORT+, and CUSTOM.

With SPORT+ mode activated, occupants hear a concert of exciting, natural sounds conveyed through an exhaust system with sport-modified baffles, an Intake Sound Generator (ISG), Active Noise Control (ANC), and Engine Sound Enhancement (ESE). All can be switched off to enjoy the serenity of Avalon's serene interior.

That quietness is assured by the TNGA-K platform's expansive use of sound insulation, which includes additional seals where the front fenders meet the front doors and where the doors merge at the B-pillars. More sound absorption material is found in the engine bay, within the carpet pad, under the floor, and in the wheel well liners. The shape of the exterior rearview mirrors not only reduces aerodynamic drag, but also wind noise.

The new Avalon AWD option is teamed with the 2.5-liter Dynamic Force four-cylinder engine, which employs a very high compression ratio (13:1) and D-4S fuel injection. The engine is chock-full of Toyota's most advanced technologies, including Dual VVT-i Variable Valve Timing intelligent system by Electric motor (VVT-iE) and laser-clad valve seats. Output is 205 hp at 6,600 rpm and 185 lb.-ft. of peak torque at 4,600 rpm.

Eight Gears, Smooth Shifting

Avalon V-6 and AWD models are equipped with the Direct Shift eight-speed automatic transmission that delivers satisfyingly smooth, quick-shifting for a remarkable blend of performance and refinement. The close mid-range ratios improve passing performance, while the wide range of torque converter lock-up yields a more direct driving feel and contributes to fuel efficiency. Steering wheel-mounted paddle shifters are standard on TRD, XSE and Touring. When downshifting, the transmission automatically "rev-matches" for smoother shifts.

Avalon Hybrid: The Most Fuel-Efficient Avalon Ever

The 2021 Avalon Hybrid manufacturer-projected EPA-estimated fuel economy range rating is expected to be the envy of a subcompact car: 43 city/44 highway/44 MPG combined for XLE Hybrid (43/43/43 MPG for other Hybrid grades). The advanced Toyota Hybrid System (THS II) combines the output of a specially engineered version of the 2.5-liter Dynamic Force four-cylinder engine and an electric motor (MG1). That motor and a second motor (MG2) charge the hybrid battery pack.

The super-smooth inline four uses an even higher compression ratio (14:1) than in the AWD models and employs a variable cooling system, cooled exhaust gas recirculation (EGR) system, and a full variable oil

pump. Total hybrid system output is 215 hp. On the Hybrid XSE, Sequential Shiftmatic technology allows the driver to “shift” the electronically controlled continuously variable transmission (ECVT). It mimics a quick-shifting six-speed automatic transmission via paddle shifters or with the console-mounted shift lever.

The TNGA-K platform’s packaging allows the Lithium-ion battery pack to be installed beneath the rear seat for no sacrifice in trunk capacity over the gas Avalon models.

The Avalon Hybrid models feature NORMAL, ECO, EV, and SPORT drive system modes. SPORT mode livens the Hybrid’s performance feel by allowing quicker acceleration response.

Finally, for hyper-milers seeking the highest fuel efficiency, Avalon Hybrid includes the clever Auto Glide Control (AGC) system, which essentially gives the car a coasting feature. When activated, AGC limits the loss of vehicle speed through engine braking, acting more like a neutral gear to allow longer coasting. An AGC indicator light illuminates on the multi-information display to alert the driver of reduced engine braking.

Smooth Rider, Sharp Handler

The Avalon’s multi-link rear suspension is key to its positive performance attributes, such as a wider rear track, lower center of gravity, and an assertive stance. The XSE and Touring grades feature sport-tuned suspension, while the Touring also adds exclusive Adaptive Variable Suspension (AVS), an electronically controlled damping system usually seen on luxury models.

AVS helps to increase controllability and handling agility without sacrificing one for the other. The setup reduces Avalon’s posture fluctuations under hard or sudden directional changes, limits body movements, and yet absorbs road undulations for a comfortable, flat ride.

Levels of AVS damping force are continuously variable through a range of up to 650 steps. Changes in solenoid force on each shock absorber that restrict fluid flow and, thus, damping, occur in an incredible 20 milliseconds. The driver can adjust Avalon’s ride feel with the push of a button: NORMAL mode prioritizes comfort, while SPORT+ emphasizes tauter handling without diminishing ride suppleness. SPORT+ also amplifies Avalon’s driving spirit by quickening throttle response, increasing feedback in the Electronic Power Steering (EPS) and enhancing engine sound in the cabin.



Standard Toyota Safety System-P

All Avalon models come standard with the Toyota Safety Sense-P (TSS-P) suite of active safety systems that includes:

- Pre-Collision System with Pedestrian Detection
- Dynamic Radar Cruise Control
- Lane Departure Alert with Steering Assist
- Automatic High Beams

Blind Spot Monitor with Rear Cross Traffic Alert and Intelligent Clearance Sonar with Rear Cross Traffic Braking are also available.

In addition to the standard backup camera, Avalon offers the available Bird's Eye View Camera with Perimeter Scan. The system uses front-, side-, and rear-mounted cameras to display a composite view as seen from above.

All 2021 Avalon models are equipped with 10 standard airbags and Toyota's Star Safety System, which includes Enhanced Vehicle Stability Control, Traction Control, Electronic Brake-force Distribution, Brake Assist, Anti-lock Braking System, and Smart Stop Technology.

Assembled with Pride in Kentucky

The fifth-generation Avalon is a collaborative development by Toyota's U.S.-based design, engineering, and manufacturing entities at Caltex Design Research Inc. (Caltex) in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Toyota Motor North America Research and Development (TMNA R&D) in Saline, Michigan; and Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc. (TMMK) in Georgetown, Kentucky. The latter has been Avalon's sole manufacturing home for more than two decades. All Avalons sold in America and around the globe are assembled there by proud team members.

Limited Warranty and ToyotaCare

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. On the Avalon Hybrid grades, all HV components are covered under the Hybrid System Warranty for 8 years/100,000 miles. Additionally, the hybrid battery warranty is now 10 years/150,000 miles, whichever comes first. The Avalon also comes standard with ToyotaCare, a plan covering normal factory-scheduled maintenance and 24-hour roadside assistance for two years or 25,000 miles, whichever comes first.

You can find all 2021 [Toyota Avalon](#) and [Toyota Avalon Hybrid](#) materials and assets here.