

# Behind the Blueprint: The People of CALTY Design Research

February 22, 2024

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For 50 years, the people of CALTY Design Research (Calty) have come together to create some of the most innovative Toyota and Lexus vehicles, including the 2024 Toyota Tacoma.

For the Tacoma project, designers, engineers, and specialists in other disciplines transported themselves into the desert <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ultimately channeling their vision and creativity into a truck with an authentic off-road feel. Working with the theme, “Badass Adventure Machine,” it’s a truck designed for rugged, outdoor fun.

Read on as a few of the designers and specialists who helped reimagine the legendary truck share the best parts of working on the Tacoma project, their favorite Calty vehicles, and more.



**Name:** Yeongmin Kong

**Title:** Senior Lead Designer

**Office Location:** Ann Arbor, MI

**Favorite Caltly design:** Lexus LC Coupe Concept

**Did you have a favorite part of the Tacoma design process?**

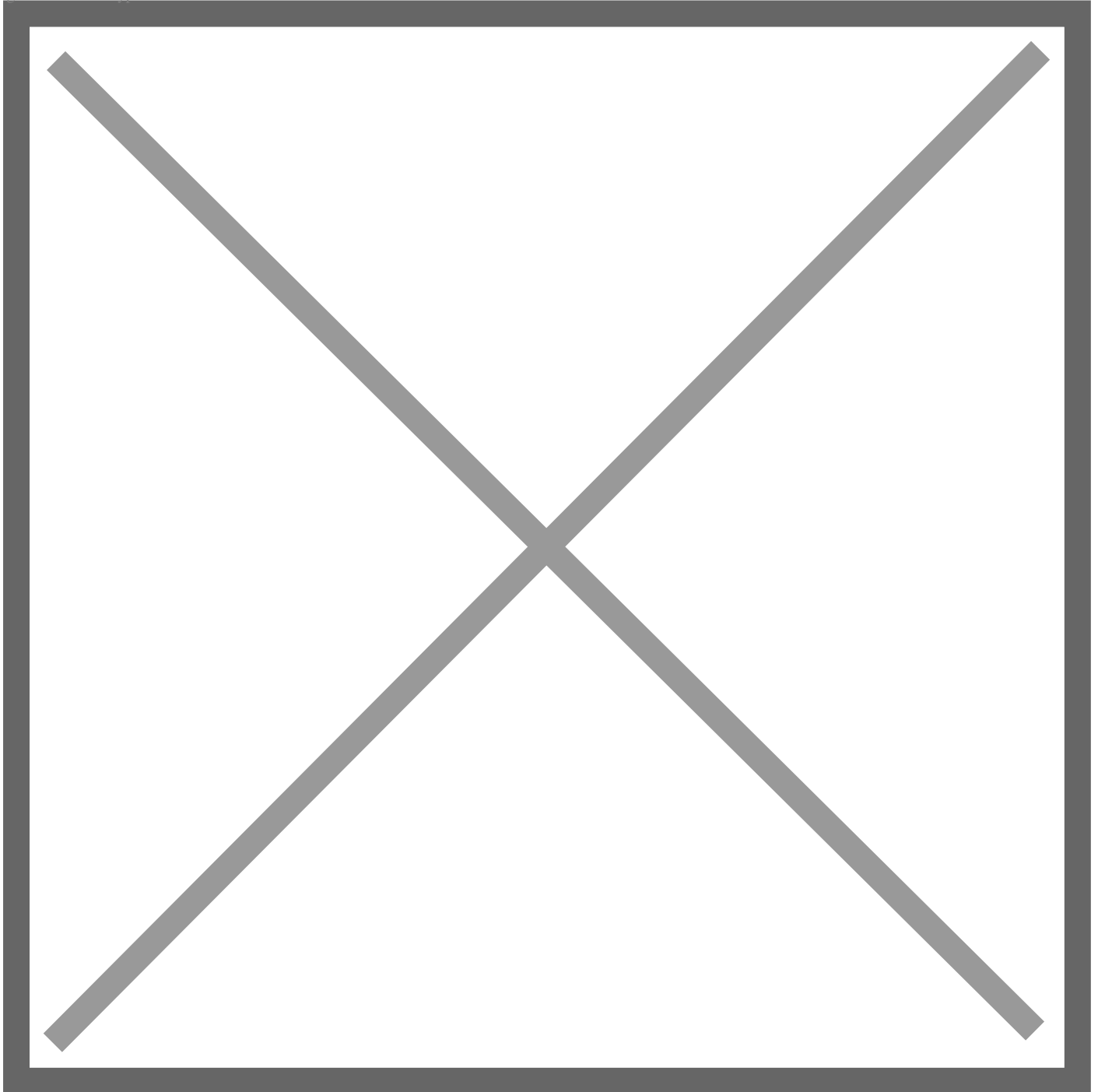
As the Exterior Design Lead on the Tacoma project, I've enjoyed every step of the design process. After a long model development process, the new Tacoma has been refined to the right direction. Getting to work with a

talented and dedicated team and seeing our efforts result in a quality outcome were the most fun and rewarding moments as a designer.

**What do you think is the coolest part of the Tacoma?**

The Tacoma has been a segment leader for decades and it has a unique stance and statement: From the overall vehicle look and gesture to the small details, all elements have its own authentic Tacoma-ness. I think the coolest part of the Tacoma in its Tacoma-ness is its high-lift vehicle gesture with a modernized rugged shoulder.

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**Name:** Tyler Stepp

**Title:** Paint Specialist

**Office Location:** Ann Arbor, MI

**Favorite Calt design:** Lexus LC 500

**Did you have a favorite part of the Tacoma design process?**

I have always liked being a part of and watching the development process through all its stages, from style selection all the way to the final review process. I also enjoy working with all the different teams to achieve each improvement on each model as they develop.

**What do you think is the coolest part of the Tacoma?**

The coolest part of the Tacoma for me is having watched a sketch turn into a real vehicle right in front of my eyes. So many different people are involved in making these vehicles a reality and when you sit back and think about it, it's incredible what we are all able to achieve when working together. I love the fact that you can jump in your car and take a drive anywhere and see a familiar face, and see a car on the road that at one point was the sole focus of the studio and a huge part of your life. It's an honor to be a part of that.



**Name:** Luke Lauth

**Title:** CAD Team Leader

**Office Location:** Ann Arbor, MI

**Favorite Caltly design:** 2024 Toyota Tacoma

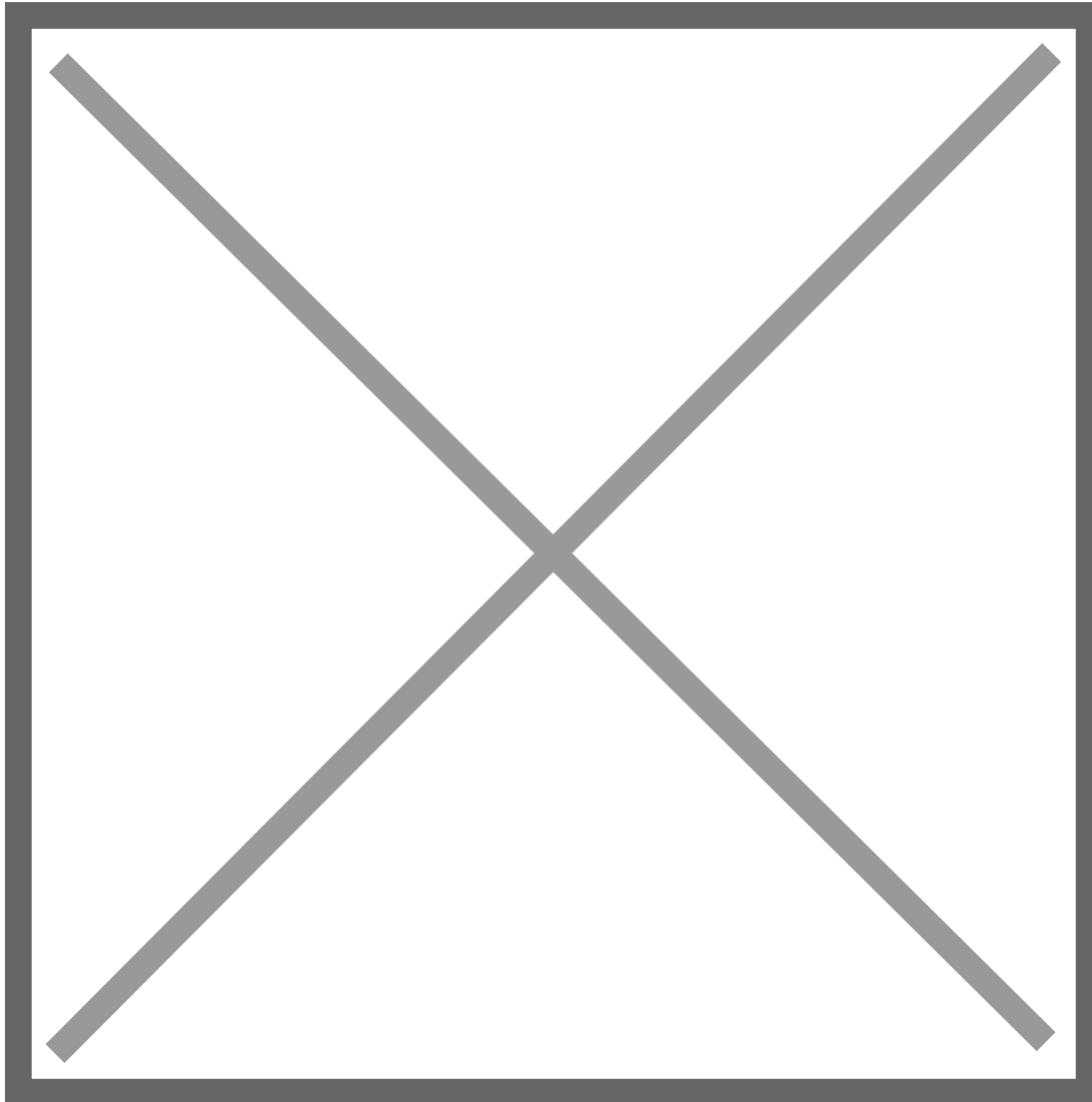
**Did you have a favorite part of the Tacoma design process?**

I really enjoyed the team aspect of this project. Working closely with the team here at Caltly, along with the engineers and suppliers to solve complex issues. It felt like everyone involved had one goal in mind, which is to

make this the coolest most capable Tacoma ever!

**What do you think is the coolest part of the Tacoma?**

Everything about this truck is cool, but what sticks out to me the most is probably the aggressive stance. The truck looks like it's ready to take on any terrain in its way. This Tacoma is probably my favorite design. Being a part of the team that developed this truck makes me biased for sure, but because we achieved and overcame many different challenges makes this truck even more impressive.



**Name:** Dion Covelli

**Title:** Master Modeler, Exterior Team Lead

**Office Location:** Ann Arbor, MI

**Favorite Calt design:** Toyota FT-1 Concept

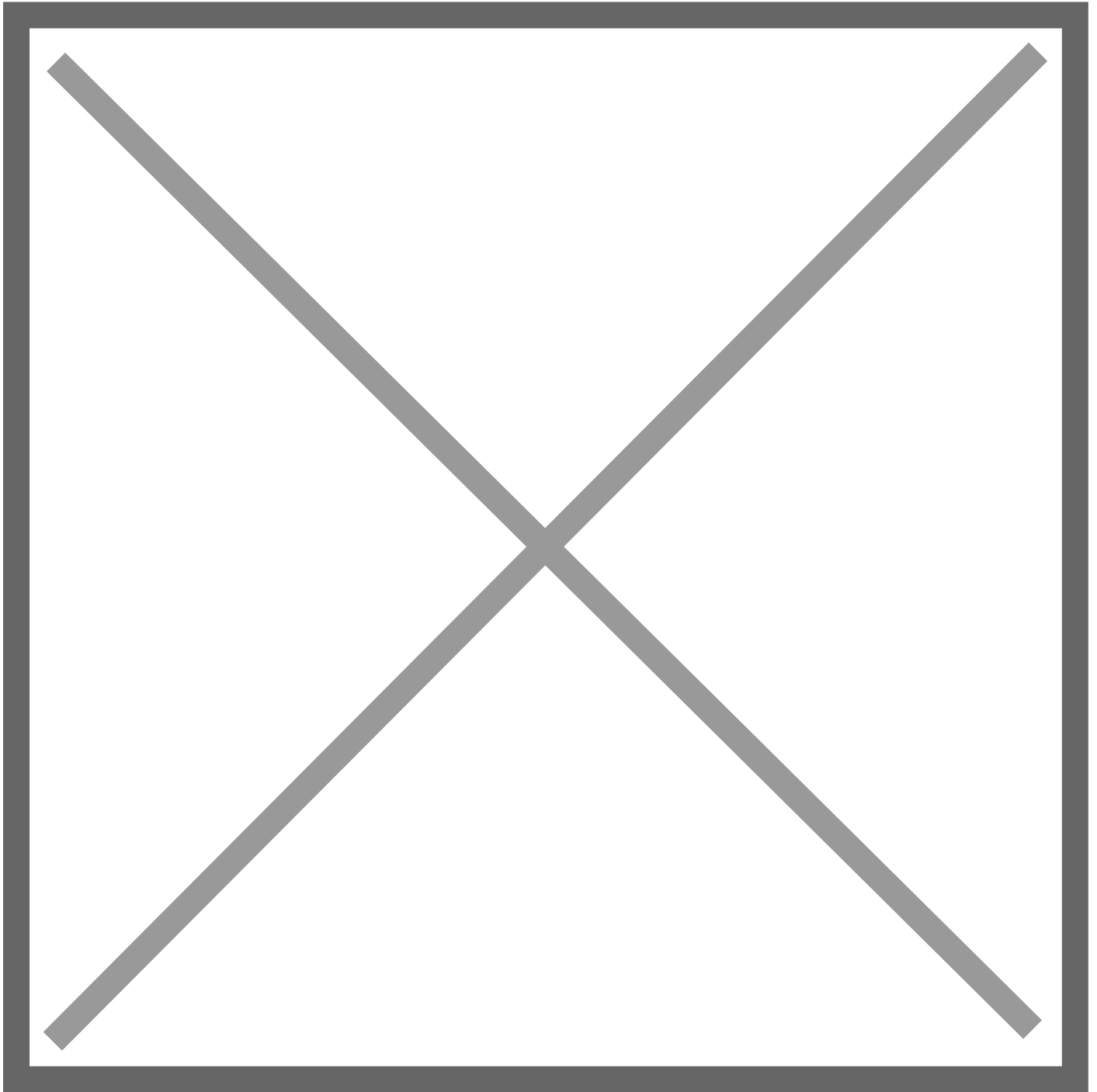
**Did you have a favorite part of the Tacoma design process?**

The best part of the design process is the struggle of ideas contrasted with the reality of what we are truly able to produce for production. I enjoy being part of the problem-solving team that connects design and engineering for

a usable product that people can enjoy.

**What do you think is the coolest part of the Tacoma?**

I love the appearance of the truck — the high lift, agile look. It just looks so capable even when it is sitting still.



**Name:** Ai Keskeny

**Title:** Lead Designer

**Office Location:** Ann Arbor, MI



**Favorite Caltly design:** Original Toyota FJ Cruiser

**Did you have a favorite part of the Tacoma design process?**

I was responsible for the CMF (Color, Material, Finish) design of the new Tacoma. My favorite part of the Tacoma design process was creating its own unique interior atmosphere for each grade/package.

**What do you think is the coolest part of the Tacoma?**

I think the coolest part of the Tacoma is, of course, the styling. But there are so many cool things about the Tacoma, from its powertrain to the many functions that this truck offers. Compact but mighty!



**Name:** Cristian Farcas

**Title:** Interior Senior Lead Designer

**Office Location:** Ann Arbor, MI

**Favorite Caltly design:** Lexus SC 300

**Did you have a favorite part of the Tacoma design process?**

It felt great to achieve two different consoles that accommodate both manual and automatic transmissions while maintaining an appealing style and a high level of usability to the customer. We had to overcome many technical

challenges throughout the process through deep investigation and collaboration with the engineering community, as well as Caltex's 3D CAD (computer-aided design) modeling team.

**What do you think is the coolest part of the Tacoma?**

The door and console include molded in Molle® panels, which help the offroad enthusiast in accessorizing their interior. This small consideration acknowledges the fact that our vehicles are simply the beginning in the eyes of our customers. Providing them with an appealing and sturdy "canvas" is only the first step for many of our passionate Tacoma owners.