HOW TO DRIVE OFF-ROAD Part 1

OFF-ROAD

ARGUS

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VEHICLES AND ADVENTURE

345TO MAY 1973 75¢

TRAIL BLAZING:
THE TOYOTA LAND CRUISER
FORD'S 4WD PICKUP
SUZUKI'S BRUTE IV





VEHICLES of the FUTURE

Action Coverage! DAM 500

Road Test:



TOYOTA LAND CRUISER (SOFT-TOP)

Despite a rather rugged, on highway personality, the Toyota Land Cruiser does maintain freeway speeds with comparable ease.

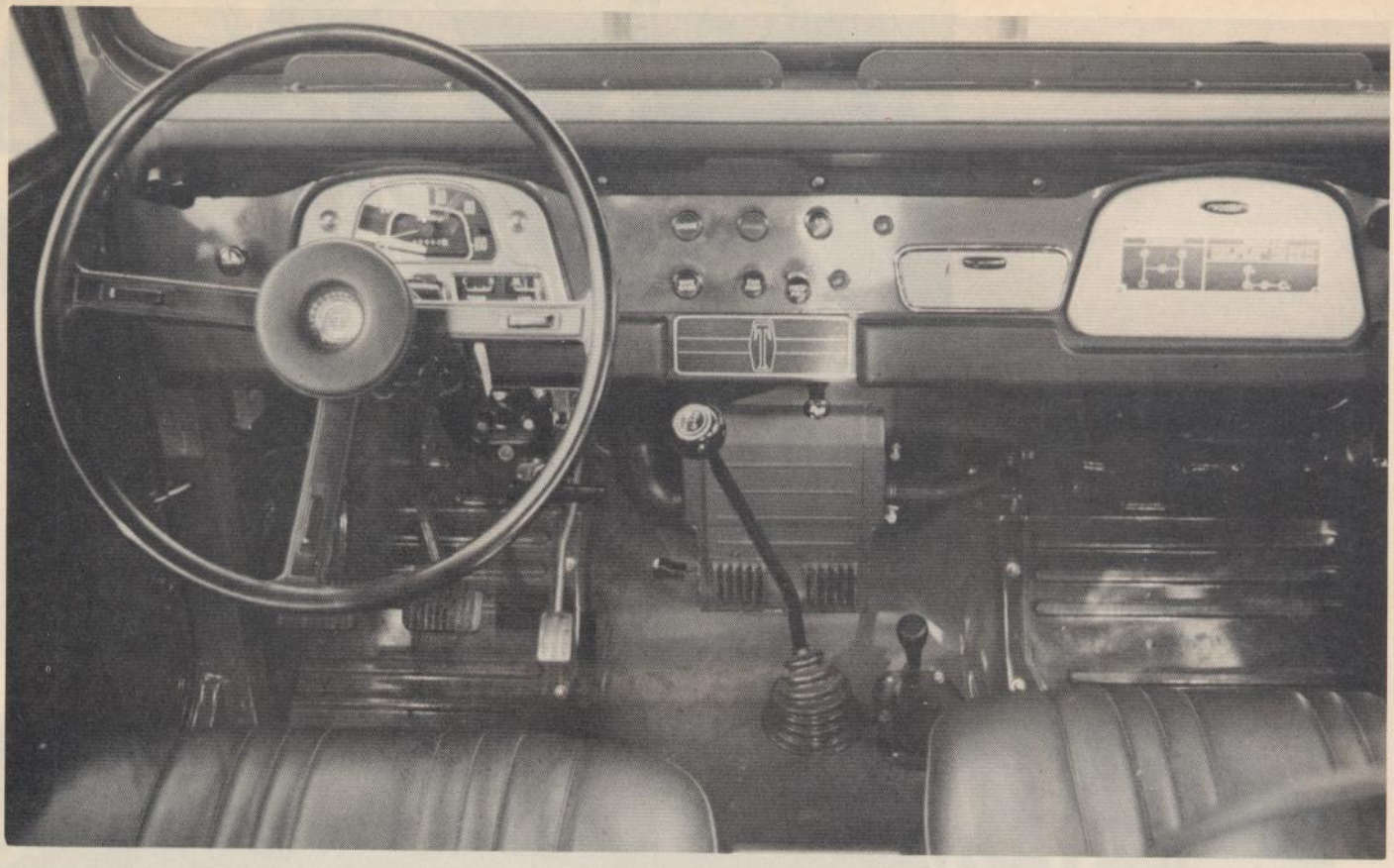
By Tom Madigan



First, let's place our priorities in proper perspective. For the off-roader who wants both an off-road vehicle and a freeway flier filled with luxury options and cosmetics, the Toyota Land Cruiser may not be his bag. It is basic, rugged and designed for the enthusiast who demands a functional off-road rig; in this capacity the Land Cruiser is pronounced.

Land Cruisers come in three configurations, namely, the hard-top, the soft-top and the four-door wagon. The latter we are saving for a future evaluation. We chose the soft-top for two reasons: first, that of availability and secondly we wanted to try a model that was basic in price and would apply to the avid enthusiast who is looking for a practical and hard-working vehicle.

Equipped with a three-speed transmission, six-cylinder 236.7-cubic-inch engine, two-speed helical gear transfer case and Toyota's biggest change this year, bucket seats, the Cruiser stood ready. Everything on the interior of the Cruiser is functional and tough; if it's not needed to perform a mandatory job, it's not there. The floorboard is uncovered metal, great for fording streams but definitely not an asset to reducing noise levels. The most touted of this year's features are the Land Cruiser's individual bucket seats. After spending many miles inside the Cruiser's confines, we can tell you firsthand that they are quite an improvement over previous models. Also on the plus side was the heating and defrosting system. Despite the air leaks because of the soft top, the interior could be kept as warm as toast by simply raising a lever on the heater and pulling a switch on the dash. The only real



As we stated earlier, the Land Cruiser is very functional. The interior is stark but all that is necessary is there and in good working order.

complaint we had about any of the interior controls was the fact that it was extremely easy to forget that low gear was non-synchromesh and you would keep banging up gear teeth when the vehicle was brought down to low speeds. This is more a drive-train complaint than something dealing with the interior. Maybe next year the gear-box will take a change for the better.

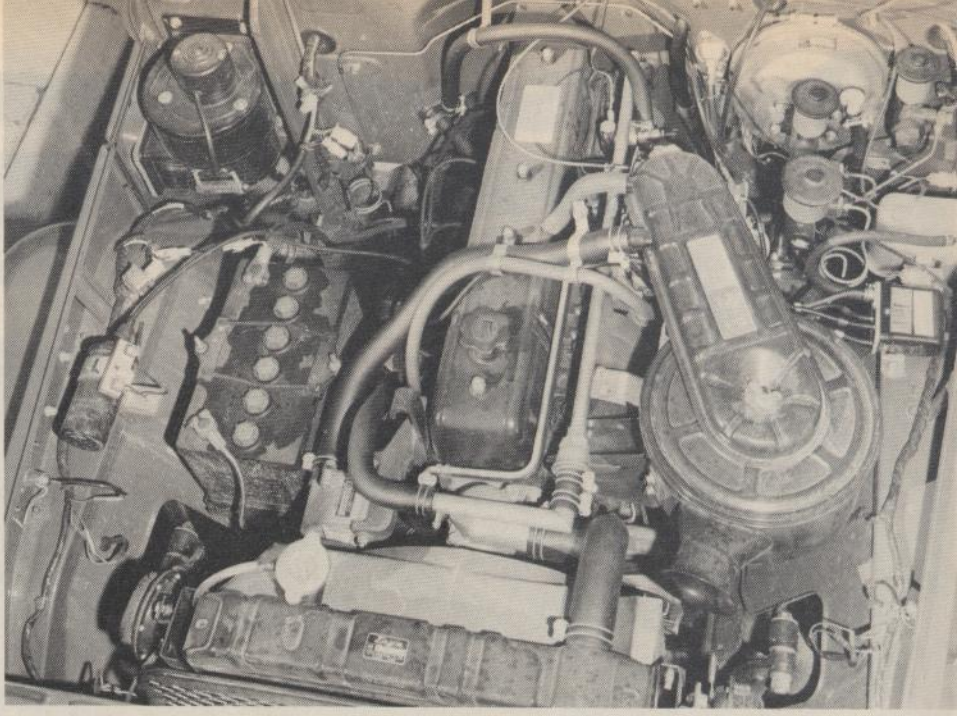
As mentioned, the highway portion of the test proved little about the Toyota's ability. It did, however, maintain good highway speeds; it had average passing aptitude and gas mileage that wandered between 12 and 14 mpg, better than most of the vehicles tested this year. Handling, of course, was stiff due to heavy-duty springs and generally rugged construction. Brakes are four-wheel drum, power assisted with tandem master cylinders. The brakes are adequate but this is another case of, "wouldn't disc brakes be better."

For the highway segment of the test we left the stock, 7.60 x 15 tire in place. These tires are sufficient for most highway and off-road applications. However, it has been our policy in recent tests to try different, popular brands, of wheels and tires for the off-road portion of the test. In the case of the Toyota we changed only the tires at the completion of on-highway testing. Overall, the Toyota's highway performance is very capable of getting it to and from a weekend of off-roading.

On the trail the Cruiser warmed to the task at hand. Stock tires had been discarded for a set of 10-15, 4-ply Formula Desert Dog paws. These tires are very popular with off-road racers and in our case they worked ex-

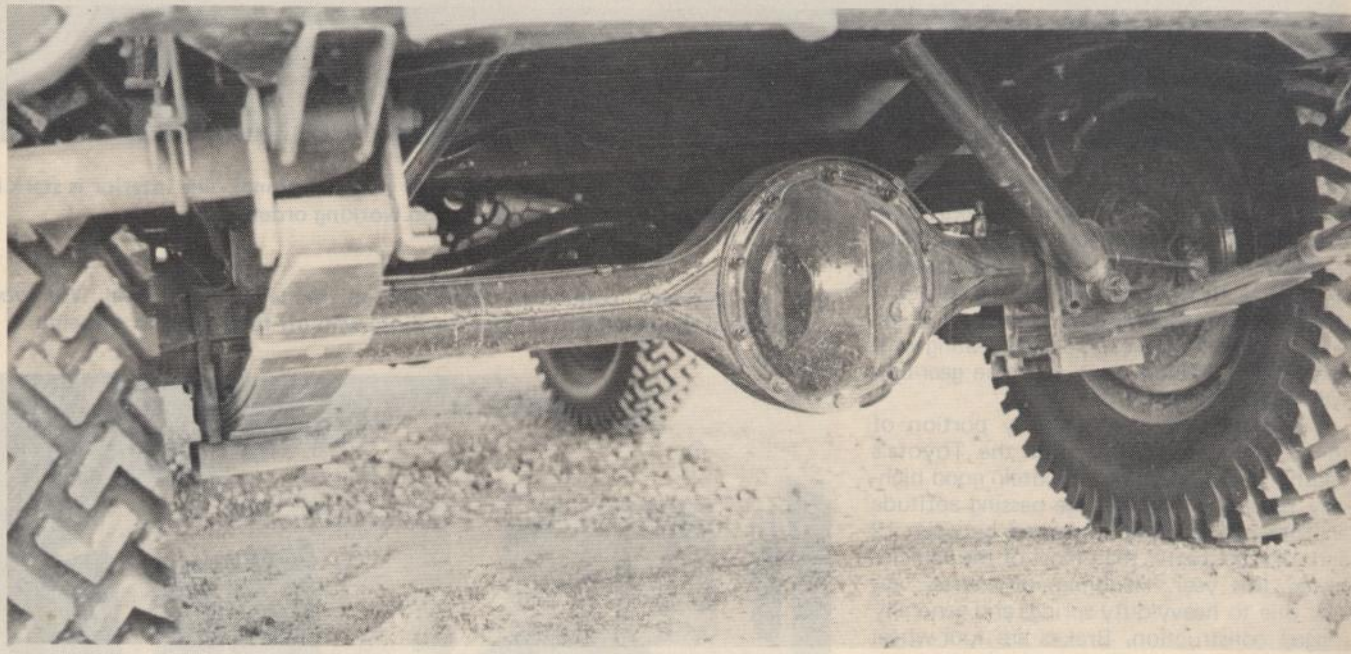
For the freeway commuter, the soft-top model is not ideal. We would recommend the metal top version for those who off-road only on occasion.





Power for the Land Cruiser comes from this six-cylinder, 236.7-cubic-inch engine. Horsepower is rated at 138 hp at 4000 rpm with 213 ft./lbs. of torque, at 4000 rpm.

A possible drawback is the offset rear end design. This could make it difficult to choose which of the two axles to take as a spare.



All of the off-road testing was conducted over muddy trail conditions; never once did the Cruiser fail to claw its way over the muck and mire.



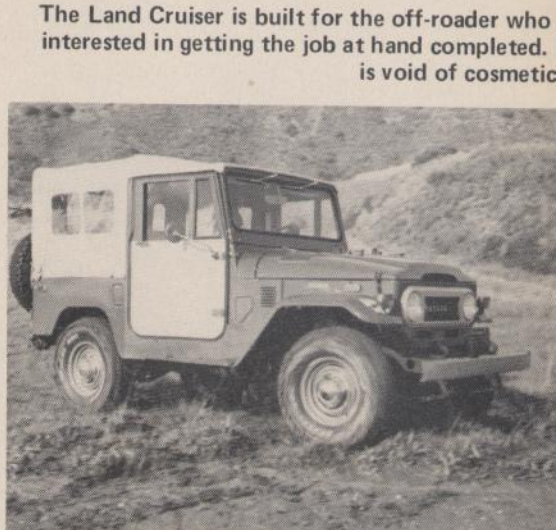


Biggest change in the '73 Land Cruiser are bucket seats. After spending nearly 1000 miles in the vehicle we can say, without reservation, that they really work.



The only change we made to the otherwise stock Toyota was the addition of these 10-15, 4-ply Formula Desert Dog tires. They proved to be outstanding regardless of the off-road situation.

The Land Cruiser is built for the off-roader who interested in getting the job at hand completed. is void of cosmetic



tremely well in sand, mud and rough rock conditions. In fact, all of the off-pavement testing was conducted in a mud condition thanks to seasonal rains. With its short 90-wheelbase (152.4-inch overall length), and curb weight of 3470 lbs., our test Cruiser tiptoed over most obstacles. Switching into four-wheel drive was a matter of placing the transmission into neutral and using a floor-mounted transfer case lever. The transfer case is a two-speed helical gear, sliding type. The ratios are: low, 2.3 to 1; and high, 1.00 to 1. Axles are full-floating hypoid fronts and semi-floating hypoid rears. The rear end gear was 4.11 to 1.

Two options that were not on the Land Cruiser that we highly recommend are locking hubs and a front-mounted winch.

In the back country we found the fold-up rear seats especially useful when it comes to stowing gear. Also the vinyl top allows the driver to remove the top and doors to really enjoy nature.

The Land Cruiser is a vehicle that grows on you the longer the relationship. In the environment for which it was designed the Land Cruiser continues to impress you with its ability to overcome most types of terrain. With a base price of $3372, the Land Cruiser has a great deal of appeal for those of us who enjoy rugged off-road driving.

1973 TOYOTA LAND CRUISER SPECIFICATIONS

Models:
2-Door Hardtop (Manual Transmission), 2-Door Vinyl Top (Manual Transmission)

Overall Lengths:
152.4 in. (Hardtop & Vinyl Top)

Overall Widths:
65.6 in. (Hardtop & Vinyl Top)

Overall Heights:
76 in. (Hardtop), 76.8 in. (Vinyl Top

Wheelbases:
90 in. (Hardtop & Vinyl Top)

Front Tread:
55.3 in.

Rear Tread:
55.1 in.

Curb Weights:
3600 lbs. (Hardtop), 3470 lbs. (Vinyl Top)

Tires:
7.60 x 15, 4 ply

Fuel Tank Capacities:
18.5 gal. (Hardtop & Vinyl Top)

Oil Capacity:
8.5 qts.

Coolant Capacity:
17.7 qts.

Steering:
Recirculating ball & nut with 20.5-23.5 to 1 gear ratio

Turning Circles:
35 ft. (Hardtop & Vinyl Top)

Engine:
6-cylinder, in-line O.H.V.

Displacement:
236.7 cu. in.

Bore & Stroke:
3.54 x 4 in.

Compression Ratio:
7.8 to 1

Net Horsepower (SAE):
138 at 4000 rpm

Net Torque (SAE):
213 ft. lbs. at 2200 rpm

Carburetion:
Down-draft, 2-barrel

Transmission:
3-speed manual (2nd & 3rd synchro-mesh), ratios: 1st, 2.757; 2nd, 1.691; 3rd, 1.000; reverse, 3.676