

General Motors: Still on the legal hook?

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Tight fit

Where does Toyota's C-HR squeeze into the lineup?

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TEST DRIVE

Lateral Transfer

2017 Toyota Corolla iM

DAN LYONS | text
Special to the Times Union

Though the Scion brand was disbanded last year, the freshest parts survived. Three models migrated to the Toyota lineup for 2017, including the two-seat sporty car 86 (nee FR-S), four-door sedan Yaris iA and this week's test car, the Corolla iM.

The iM fleshes out the Toyota compact series by adding a cool looking, five-door hatchback to go along with the perennially popular Corolla four-door sedan. Hatchbacks — strangely overlooked by American buyers for years — have found a niche in the compact ranks, providing a sporty foil to the traditional, sedan body style. Corolla iM is offered in one, well-equipped trim level. My test car this time had the one major option (a Continuously Variable



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER

2017 Toyota Corolla iM
MSRP: \$18,750 · As tested: \$20,750

Transmission, \$740), and an as-tested price of \$20,750.

The front-wheel-drive Corolla iM pairs Toyota's 1.8L four-cylinder engine with either a six-speed manual transmission or available CVT, and I've driven both combinations. By EPA's reckoning, there's little to choose between the two when it comes to mileage. Fuel economy is estimated at 27 city/35 highway/30 combined (manual); 28/36/31 (auto). Looking at a handful of comparable hatchbacks, the Corolla iM's mileage is



With the 2017 Corolla iM, Toyota rebrands one of disbanded Scion's models as its own. The five-door hatchback provides a sporty alternative to the other Corolla models' traditional body styling, and the hatch lends more cargo space.

better than the Ford Focus, Mazda3, or VW Golf, and trails the Honda Civic.

At 137 horsepower (@6,100 rpm) and 126 lb.-ft. of torque (@4,000 rpm), with a 0-60 time of between 9-10 seconds, the Corolla's power output is outpaced by the competition mentioned above. In normal, 'round town driving, it's a non-issue, as the car rolls away smartly from a stop. But high demand situations (merging, passing) require the driver to plan accordingly, and work with what he/she's got. The shifter's action isn't very sporty, but like any manual, it has the virtue of letting you hold the car in gear longer to keep the engine on the boil. As a rule, I'll opt for a manual transmission instead of an automatic, when given a choice. This is an excep-

tion to my rule. The optional CVT is a good one, with seven, stepped shift points that simulate the response (and sound) of a conventional gearbox. And, it has a

The iM fleshes out the Toyota compact series by adding a cool looking, five-door hatchback.

sport mode, which is where I left it whenever I was driving. The sport mode's effects on steering feel are minimal, but throttle response is a little more lively and the transmission works quite well in manumatic mode. Tap the stick fore or aft to shift, and you can maximize the engine's output and choose the right gear easily. By comparison, tromping down on the throttle in automatic mode prompts a slower (and louder) response from the engine. The CVT/sport/manual makes the most of what the iM's got.

With its double-wishbone rear suspension, the iM's

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