

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

2024 Toyota Tacoma TRD Sport

MSRP: \$31,500 \$39,400 (TRD Sport Double Cab)



Introduced in 1995, the Tacoma is all new for 2024. The fourth generation of Toyota's perennially popular, midsize pickup is offered in six grades initially (with two to follow), two cab sizes and two bed lengths. My test drive this week was a TRD Sport. This trim is offered solely with the Double Cab, and a choice of five or six foot boxes. This Toyota had the former.

With 34 years in the marketplace, Tacoma's long history has been marked by relatively few, full makeovers. Tacoma 4.0 arrives, with characteristically rugged styling. Two engine variations are available initially, and – surprisingly – two transmissions. The engine is a 2.4L turbocharged four cylinder, which is rated at 228 horsepower and 243 lb.-ft. of torque in base trim. My TRD Sport was outfitted with an upgraded version of the 2.4, which makes 278 horsepower, and 317 lb.-ft. of torque. A third version of the 2.4L follows soon. Known as i-Force Max, it will be a turbocharged hybrid powertrain, with 326 h.p. and 465 lb.-ft. of torque. While most Tacoma's will be built with a new, 8-speed automatic transmission, Toyota is offering a 6- speed manual on TRD Sport and TRD Off-Road. Trucks so equipped have slightly different power numbers (270 h.p., 310 lb.-ft. of torque). As a shift-it-yourself kind of guy, I'm happy to see the three pedal option offered by Toyota, even though my test truck was not so equipped.

The 278 horse 2.4L matches well with the new, Tacoma platform. There's enough power under foot to handle all basic driving needs (I'd guess the 0-60 time would be in the mid 7-second range). Fuel economy for a 4x2 like this one is estimated at 21/26/23, and I averaged just over 20 mpg's, in a week of mixed driving. Modest engine noise is evident under hard acceleration, and interestingly, the motor's soundtrack is rather lower



Photos are courtesy of the manufacturer.



pitched than the typical four cylinder. My time behind the wheel of the Tacoma included a snow storm, and while the TRD Sport is available with 4WD, the test truck was, as noted, a rear wheel drive model. I drove it enough in the snow and slush to confirm what I've known for 50 years. Being lighter in the tail than they are up front, a rear drive pickup truck is seriously lacking in traction on snowy roads. So, if you live where we live, and plan on driving your truck in all four seasons (or seriously off-road) make it a 4x4. Road conditions aside, Tacoma handles confidently. Models with TRD sport tuned shocks have a firmer ride quality than other trims.

The new interior is a clean update of the previous model. Happily, in the great tradition of pickups, the HVAC controls are dead center on the dash: easy to reach and easy to use. Just above, a 14-inch touchscreen provides access to infotainment functions. The menus require a typical number of steps to make system adjustments, though the touchscreen doesn't respond to input from a winter gloved hand. Double Cabs are the larger of the two choices, but this is a midsize pickup, and with six footers in front, row two leg room runs short, and that space is better suited for kids or gear. Back seatbacks fold forward to accommodate in-cabin storage, though you may need to remove the rear seat headrests first. A 360-degree camera is offered optionally, and worth considering. Once you park with one, it's hard to go back.

A thoughtful, thorough update of the previous version, the new Tacoma should only add to the truck's popularity.

A 40 year resident of the Capital District, Dan Lyons is the author of six automotive books, and photographer of more than 200 calendars.