



Toyota Avensis (2003 - 2008)

Question of conscience

Car review | Question: Would you like to tear through Germany in a fast car? The heart says "yes" and is already looking forward to the wide German autobahn where putting your foot to the floor and fixing your eyes on the horizon are serious possibilities. The conscience on the other hand says "no". Fast cars are too much of a threat to the environment. Toyota however developed a whole new diesel engine, which makes all these problems disappear: at the same time the Avensis D-4D D-CAT is the fastest and cleanest diesel Toyota has ever made. In that case ... "Tally Ho!"

Toyota is renowned for its reliability, but since a few years now also for its remarkable progressive policy where the environment is concerned. The Prius has been the flagship of the whole car industry for years when it comes to environmentally friendly solutions that are now indeed available. The "Avensis 2.2 D-4D D-CAT Clean Power" is less spectacular than the Prius, but when it comes to technology this latest discovery is most certainly a revolutionary step forward.

Theory

Whoever has the freedom to choose between a petrol and a diesel engine and wants to consider the environment at the same time is faced with a dilemma when buying a car. As a rule, diesel is more economical, which means lower CO₂ emissions. A petrol engine generally has a cleaner combustion and therefore less NO_x emissions and soot particles. The CO₂ emission of a petrol engine is much higher than that of a diesel engine though. In the end there is a difference in performance between petrol and diesel, although this difference is getting smaller.

Toyota offers a solution to this dilemma with the "D-CAT"; a special diesel catalyst that drastically reduces the emission of four harmful substances (soot, NO_x, HC and CO). Along with an extremely refined engine management, the diesel engine with D-CAT is on many points up to 90% cleaner than the Euro IV standard requirements. To keep performance levels high, Toyota has applied this new technology directly on to a very powerful engine. This environmentally friendly greenlover promises a sturdy 177 horsepower and an impressive 400 Nm of torque.



Practice

It sounds good in theory, but does it drive 'good' as well? To find that out a trip to Hamburg is made. On the German autobahn all horse powers and Newton meters can be used in full to prove that environmentally friendly technology does not have to get in the way of driving pleasure.

After collecting the car, there are a few inevitable city miles to overcome first. Immediately it becomes clear that a strong engine doesn't just excel at high speeds, but also offers a lot of flexibility. The clutch bites vigorously and the 2.2 litre diesel engine instantly demonstrates that anything is possible. If need be the car can drive along in a queue of traffic in a high gear at not even 800 revs per minute. This car is perfect for lazy gear changing and already registers extremely friendly fuel consumption in city traffic. A little more acceleration and the Avensis rapidly finds a gap in the other lane or merges onto a roundabout with fast driving traffic. Although the brakes perform well, a more biting character would have suited this kind of powerful engine better.

Autobahn

Once in the country it is obvious that here too the large reserves are typical for this modern diesel's character. The engine can hardly be heard, everything is done with great ease, anything goes. This is also thanks to many refinements made since the introduction of the model in 2003, to the engine, gearbox and sound reducing materials. Only when the

revolutions increase rapidly through braking on the engine, there is a distant diesel sound noticeable. Otherwise the 2.2 litre 4-cylinder diesel performs with such ease and superior forces that it matches the character of a 6-cylinder. Because of this, this most powerful Avensis diesel doesn't have the character of a sports car, but more of the grandeur of a Gran Turismo.



When the German autobahn is finally reached this feeling is emphasized even more. The Avensis is not aggressive like many German diesel makers and misses the vitality of an Italian diesel engine. Again it is the ease with which this piece of Japanese ingenuity follows the "fat Germans" in the fast lane. The environmentally friendly Avensis performs just as well, but in its own very personal way. Even when the speedometer registers 120 mph, the rev meter shows an almost lazy 3000 revs per minute. Partly responsible for that is the 6-speed gearbox developed especially for this engine.

Fat Germans

Unfortunately the Avensis hardly commands other road user's respect, for time and time again the Avensis has to defer to cars that misjudge the Toyota purely on its appearance. Fortunately the car remains stable and controllable even at very high speeds. Still, the only solution is to have a car with either a star or rings on its nose to get ahead, for everyone seems to move out of the way for those.

The test vehicle's Executive-version however offers just as much luxury as the car in front that does command respect. Left and right separated

air-conditioning, a fine audio system and a comprehensive leather interior: all of this is standard. Only the DVD based navigation system and the xenon headlights are optional. The Avensis also offers plenty of space, for a car in this class, in the front as well as in the back. The "Badge Brigade" may keep the outside lane immaculately clean of slow-moving traffic, the Avensis also keeps the environment clean.



Conclusion

After the Prius, Toyota again offers good news for drivers as well as the environment. The "Avensis 2.2 D-4D D-CAT Clean Power" is a very fast diesel that matches many larger diesel engines of competitors brilliantly. Despite that, the emissions are much lower thanks to the special "D-CAT" diesel catalyst and the soot-filter.

Like every Avensis (see the more general test on the petrol version) this fastest and greenest example offers a lot of space, a comprehensive outfit and a high level of safety. ■



Specifications

Toyota Avensis (2003 - 2008) 2.2 D-4D T180

Size and weight



Length x width x height	463 x 176 x 148 cm
Wheelbase	270 cm
Kerb weight	1.435 kg
Trailer	500 kg
Trailer - braked	1.300 kg
Fuel capacity	60 l
Luggage space	520 l
Tyre size	215/50R17

Engine and performance



Capacity	2231 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	177 PS @ 3600 rpm
Max torque	400 Nm @ 2000 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	8.6 secs
Top speed	220 km/h
Average mileage	6.1 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	7.6 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	5.2 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	161 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 21,515
Price base model	Â£ 15,515