



Toyota Auris (2007 - 2012)

The Corolla is dead, Long live the Auris!

Car review | For years and years, the best known Toyota has been the Corolla. After forty faithful years, it is now time to bid a fond farewell to the Corolla. In Barcelona, Toyota introduced its successor: the Auris. Is the Auris so much better than the Corolla that it deserves a new name?

The Toyota Corolla was always one of the most sensible cars for sale. The Corolla was neither exciting nor desirable; but as a reliable household apparatus, it knew no equal. In addition, since its introduction in 1966, the Corolla has proved itself as an extremely trustworthy car. It was thus difficult to improve the Corolla. Additionally, it is an almost impossible task to make its successor so much better that it deserves a new name.

From inside out

To fulfil their difficult task, the designers began with the interior. Around this, the exterior was subsequently created. By the end of the design process, it would appear that all the creativity had been used up. Toyota wanted to give the Auris more emotion and character than the Corolla, but the car has neither the flair of the new Opel Astra nor the Citroen C4. Even though the Auris is not an ugly car, it is certainly neither desirable nor unique. At first sight, the Auris is in fact no more than a streamlined Corolla.



The interior is a whole other story, where it is evident that it is an intelligently and well thought-out car. The most distinctive feature of the Auris is a flying buttress that extends from the dashboard to right between the front seats. Not only does this provide extra storage space, but more importantly it places the gearlever within perfect reach. Intuitively this works like a dream; there is no more reaching to low down by accident.

The whole dashboard is built around the two front seats. Handsome as it is, it enhances the sense of security and ensures that everything works much better than usual. The materials used emanate a certain air of quality. This unfortunately only goes to highlight the cheap plastic that is used in the double dashboard compartment, with one flap on the dashboard and the other under.

Whilst the sound systems in the Yaris and the Avensis are considerably better than the average, the standard Auris radio emits a poor sound.

Room

The experts at Toyota have shown that the interior of the Auris is extremely roomy. According to the manufacturer's dimensions, the Auris offers more cubic feet than any of its competitors. The Auris does not feel particularly spacious, as there is a difference between interior space and room to move.

The shape of the dashboard also allows less space to move around the front seats. The relatively high seats, even with their front seat height adjusters, and the low windscreen give a feeling of much less space. Moreover the headrests are provide insufficient adjustability for taller drivers and do not contribute amply to the driver's safety. The low windscreen accentuates the car's streamline; however it makes it difficult to see with oncoming high headlights.



The promised room is found on the back seat, which is roomier than average for a car of this size. Here, an adult would have enough head and leg room. Moreover the annoying bump in the middle of the floor has gone. Toyota saw its chance to move this strengthening feature without compromising the safety of the car. The car boot is considerable and thanks to the 'Easy Flat'-system it possible to literally flatten the rear seat in two shakes of a hand to make more loading room.

Piggy bank

The Auris is delivered as two petrol and three diesel engines. The diesel versions are emphasised as Toyota wants to market the Auris as an intelligent, functional alternative. In order to spoil the business driver Toyota's technical tour de force is the two litre 'D-4D D-CAT Clean Power' engine. Strong as an ox, this engine ensures first rate performances and is also very environmentally friendly. The 177 hp/400Nm strong engine makes the Avensis a fast business car; in the much smaller Auris, the performance is much more spectacular.



The most intelligent functional choice is the lightest diesel on the price list: the 1.4 litre D-4D met 90hp/19Nm. This engine was already available in the Corolla, but has been refined making the Auris into a piggybank on wheels. This self-igniter is very efficient, has low emissions, is very quiet and still allows good performances.

Regardless of the situation, the Auris performs as if it has much more than a 1.4 litre engine under its bonnet. In town, it is smooth and lively; on country roads, it is a road maniac. At a low rev counter, almost all the power is available. Increasing the revs will only increase the noise of the car. It takes a little getting used to, but in the end the Auris 1.4 D-4D is an extremely enjoyable car. In fact, it is the best little diesel that is on sale!

Nice name, nice engine

A whole new 1.6 litre engine was developed for the Auris. This uses so-called "dual VVT" technology. This is a fancy name for a cunning system that regulates the oxygen supply resulting in a more efficient combustion. Just as with the small diesel, this petrol engine combines above average performances with a very modest consumption. Exterior noise from the tyres or wind are barely audible and the engine itself only becomes categorically audible at speeds above 60miles/hr.

Because this engine delivers good performances at low revs and the driving noise are minimum, there is

the chance that the driver could unconsciously end up driving too long in a lower gear. For this reason, every Auris has an indicator positioned between the speedometer and the rev counter which donates the best moment to change gears. This moment is sometimes extremely low; at 40miles/hr, the system suggests that the fifth gear should be utilised, however in reality these suggestions tally. According to research by Toyota, the average driver will drive 5% more efficiently due to this gear-indicator.



Performance

Regardless of the chosen engine, the performance is sublime. In this class, the Ford Focus is still the uncrowned king, but the Toyota Auris has at least such a good road holding. The Focus emphasises the sportiness, whereas the Auris chooses safety. At speeds where many other cars would break apart, the Auris continues to follow its pre-set course without a problem. Even the most awkward manoeuvres or sudden panicky behaviour did not throw the Auris out of balance.

In the city, the Auris is comfortable on poor roads; even forgetting to break at a sleeping policeman poses no problem. At higher speeds, the car is very communicative and absolutely stabile. In the Auris, Toyota has found a fine combination of comfort and communication. Just what every European driver is looking for.

Conclusion

Compared to the Corolla, the Auris is a great improvement. However contrary to what Toyota would like the consumer to believe the Auris is not

the best car in its class on every level. The Auris has worked on the strongest points of the Corolla: advanced technology, an extremely high reliability and a lower mileage price with its efficient engine and high residual value.

These characteristics are now linked to greatly improved driving qualities and sublime engines. As a result, the Auris is just as sensible as its predecessor. However now there is room for emotion and driving pleasure. This new name gives the Auris a new chance amongst a new public. The car deserves it. ■



Specifications

Toyota Auris (2007 - 2012) 1.6 16v VVT-i TR

Size and weight



Length x width x height	422 x 176 x 152 cm
Wheelbase	260 cm
Kerb weight	1.205 kg
Trailer	450 kg
Trailer - braked	1.300 kg
Fuel capacity	55 l
Luggage space	354/761 l
Tyre size	205/55R16

Engine and performance



Capacity	1598 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	124 PS @ 6000 rpm
Max torque	157 Nm @ 5200 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	10.4 secs
Top speed	190 km/h
Average mileage	7.1 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	9 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	5.9 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	166 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 12,495
Price base model	Â£ 11,995