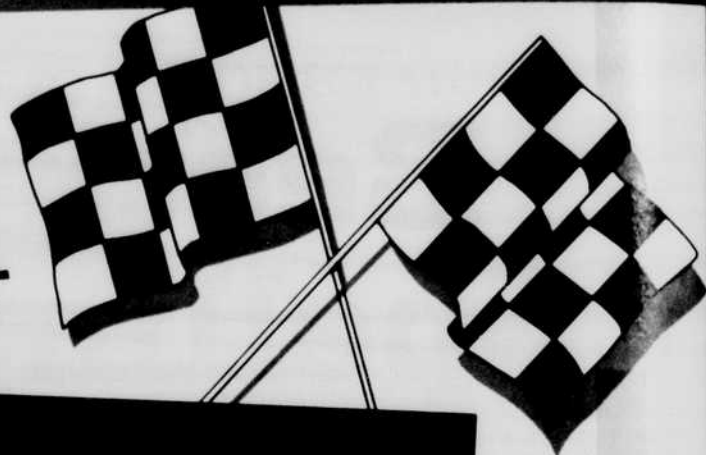


CARS

Road Test



Supra turbo to super practical

Tim Furman behind the wheel

So maybe you can't afford it until you graduate, but look what Toyota promises with its '89 Supra.

For car lovers, the buzzwords for this sleek-lined leader are "intercooled," "horsepower" (up from 230 to 232), "torque" (increased from 246 ft. lbs. to 254 ft. lbs.) and, of course, "turbocharged" (bursting from a 200 hp engine at 6,000 rpm, which is what the '88 delivered).

At about \$22,000 for the non-turbo 5-speed and about \$2,000 added for the turbo, this kind of performance doesn't come cheap. But the sporty 5-speed manual overdrive we tested seemed well worth the price. The turbo cornered well, had more than enough power when needed and was always in full control. There was virtually no lag before the power boost.

Our super Supra had a computer somewhere aboard, in the form of an electronic modulated suspension option that varied the ride from soft on rough roads to medium for stability and firm for maximum feel.

If you drive an automatic only, all 4-speed automatics come with a shift-lock device that forces you to turn the ignition switch on and depress the brake pedal before you can shift out of park.

Also redesigned for '89 are the car's rear light combinations, rear spoiler, steering wheel and relocated cruise control switches. In particular we liked the anti-theft circuitry on the audio system that makes the whole thing worthless if it is removed from the car.

If the Supra is just too high priced and practicality is what you're after, Toyota has the Tercel, which ranges in suggested retail



TOYOTA SUPRA TURBO

price from about \$7,500 for the 2-door manual standard coupe to \$9,000 for the 5-door liftback deluxe with 3-speed automatic.

Looking at the Supra's competition, as everyone knows by now *Motor Trend Magazine's* "Car of the Year" is the '89 Thunderbird Super Coupe (yours for about \$20,000), which generates more than 200 horsepower and 300 foot pounds of torque; the car's wheelbase is longer, its front and rear-tread widths have been increased, its front- and rear-seat space is larger and so is its four-wheel, fully independent suspension system new.

But let's not overlook the other, lower-priced student-friendly cars in the fine Ford stable. Taurus, for example (\$12,300 for the four-door), with its three-speed transaxle giving smoother shifting; we like the diagnostic instrument cluster with tachometer on the LX model (base \$15,700).

Equally reasonable and extremely practical (at about just under \$10,000) is the all-wheel-drive Tempo, which now has multiple-port fuel injection. There's also the affordable Escort, a front-wheel-drive series which includes two-door hatchback models of the Pony, with a \$7,300 base, the LX (\$7,700) and GT (\$9,650).

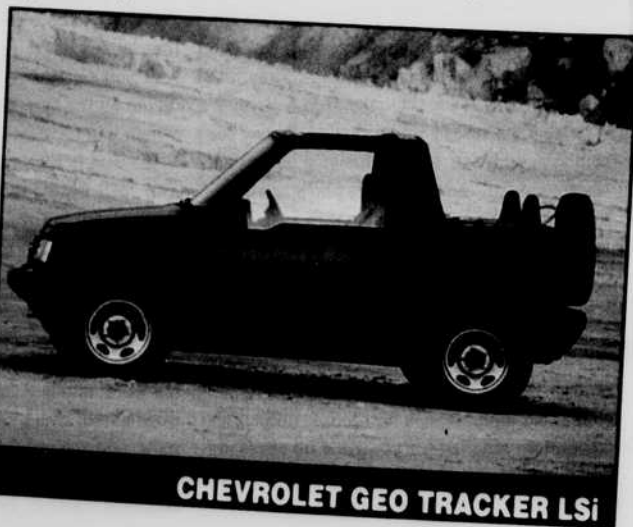
Speaking of acclaim, there's the

brand-new-for-'89 Acclaim itself, which begins at about \$11,000 and runs to about \$15,000 for the top of the line LX. The Acclaim has been compared to the Honda Accord (based at about \$12,000) and offers the new 4-speed automatic overdrive transaxle. It has a very responsive V-6 and a sports suspension package that makes it extremely easy to handle.

Ranging still lower in price, Chevrolet under its "Geo" banner is waving a \$5,995 price tag for the Geo Metro, a 53 mpg four-seater aimed at young singles or families with a budget. Chevrolet says more than half of Geo Metro buyers are expected to be women.

Geo is Chevy's approach to distinguishing GM's imports from the rest of the Chevrolet line. The Geo Spectrum, which is another of Chevy's smallest vehicles, is priced at \$7,610, and is offered as a hatchback, coupe or sedan.

And let's not forget the baby, the all-new four-seat, four-wheel-drive runabout called "Baby Blazer," which is the Geo Tracker LSi. This luxury version of a sports utility vehicle, which sells for a high of \$12,495, gets its nickname from the S-10 Blazer that emerged in the early '80s. The car is the product of the joint venture between GM of Canada and Suzuki in Ingersoll, Ontario.



CHEVROLET GEO TRACKER LSi