

Road Beat: 2018 Toyota Camry V-6 impresses



The 2018 Toyota Camry V-6 is not your daddy's Camry. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Camry's have been offered for decades with a V-6 option and all of them have been high performance automobiles in their time, even the original 2.5L V-6 going back to the late 1980s with about 160 hp. With the advent of this eighth generation Camry comes the most powerful Camry ever now sporting 301 hp. Imagine a Camry with over 300 hp.

Camry's new design has received noteworthy praise from the entire automotive spectrum. It is the best-looking Camry yet with smooth muscular flanks, clever lines and perfect proportions giving it the look and feel of a much more

expensive ride. It is bigger with a 111-inch wheelbase supporting a 193-inch body. Width is a tidy 72 inches and while it stands 57 inches tall it looks sleeker.

My only other test of the newest Camry iteration was the hybrid and I couldn't stop saying superlatives about its drive qualities. Performance was outstanding and its fuel economy was spectacular pulling down mpg numbers approaching a Prius. It road and handled better than any predecessor, more like a luxo ride. Now add 300 plus hp and more buttoned-down handling to the equation.

Under the hood is a massaged Toyota 3.5L V-6 with all the bells and whistles now cranking out 301 hp at a lofty 6,600 rpm and a strong 267 pounds of twist at 4,700 rpm. Direct injection allows for a super high compression ratio of 11.8:1 on regular fuel. This monster motor drives the front wheels through a slick shifting eight speed cog-swapper. Performance is world class with 0-60 mph arriving in just over five ticks stopping the Chrondex is a miniscule 5.42 seconds. That's some very serious motivation.



Specifications

Price \$34,950 to about \$38,000

Engine

3.5L DOHC, 246 valve V-6 301 hp @ 6,600 rpm

267 lb.-ft. of torque @

4,700 rpm

Transmission

Eight-speed torque converter automatic

Configuration

Transverse mounted front engine/front wheel drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 111.2 inches

Length 192.7 inches

Width 72.4 inches

Height 56.9 inches

Ground clearance 5.7 inches

Track (f/r) 62.2/62.6 inches

Fuel capacity 13.0 gallons

Trunk capacity 15.1 cubic feet

Weight (SE) 3,549 pounds

Interior passenger volume 100.4 cubic feet

Steering lock to lock 2.6 turns

Turning circle 38.0 feet

Wheels 19X8 inch alloys

Tires 235/40X19

Performance

0-60 mph 5.42 seconds

50-70 mph 2.73 seconds

50-70 (up 6-7 percent grade) 4.06 seconds

Top speed anyone care?

Fuel economy EPA rated 22/32/26

city/highway/combined.

Expect 25-26 mpg in rural country/suburban driving; 37

mpg on a level highway at

legal speeds.

Passing times are also lightning quick with a 50-70 mph pass taking just 2.73 seconds and the same run up a steep (6-7 percent) grade slowing that time to 4.06 seconds. And it achieves this gravity defying performance while improving its fuel economy.

In a two-way 20-mile run on a level highway with the cruise control set at 70 mph, the Camry V-6 averaged a solid 37.2 mpg. EPA cycle tests said you should expect 22/32/26 mpg city/highway/combined. Overall in rural, suburban driving the Camry did average about 26 mpg but in my 200-mile aggressive run over the Sierras to Carson City the Camry averaged a solid 30.5 mpg. Those are numbers that ten years ago would be good for a 170 hp four banger that would struggle to make it to 60 mph in 8 seconds.

In XSE V-6 trim, the state of the art four-wheel independent suspension (MacPherson struts up front and a sophisticated double wishbone system in the rear) gets sports tuning with tightened up shock valving and springs. Otherwise the trick layout remains uniform with other Camrys. Steering is already a nicely weighted power rack of just 2.6 turns lock to lock but the wheels are 19 x 8 inch alloys shod with some very serious 235/40X19 series radial rubber. It all adds up to one fine handling automobile. Its turn in is very crisp, it bits beautifully with tenacious grip. It makes short work of the most difficult twisties. Camry can now change directions with the best of them and it makes accelerating out of apexes downright fun.

But don't think the Camry has lost any of its comfort quotient. It hasn't. It is still the quietest of midsize rides and its ride quality is second to none. In that respect, it remains the most comfortable of midsize sedans. There is no wind, engine or tire noise and with the V-6, the engine spins an incredibly low 1,600 rpm at 70 mph. It's one of the reasons

for its new-found highway fuel economy.

Toyota Safety Sense is standard meaning Camry is loaded with all the acronyms including lane departure warning and steering assist and my favorite feature of automatic high beam control. Camry headlights are very good on low and high beam. Camrys come with ten airbags. Did I mention the very strong all wheel discs?

In my XSE is soft, standard perforated leather seating that is sublime. Rear seating is also spacious and comfortable. The rest of the appointments are top quality and mostly soft touch.

Instrumentation is also first rate with a large tach and speedo flanking left and right of a digital info center which includes a trip computer. The center stack is topped by a large display screen which also has a detailed fuel computer in it as well. I am surprised no one has installed a digitized version of the Encyclopedia Britannica in the info system as it has almost everything else.

Cargo capacity is over 15 cubic feet and well-shaped.

Camry's price of admission is 50 bucks shy of \$35 large, plus \$895 for the train and truck from its Georgetown, Ky., assembly plant. My tester had three options, the Driver's assist package which includes the Bird's Eye Camera which gives you a 360-degree view of what surrounds the vehicle (\$1,050). A NAV package for \$940 and special Ruby Flare Pearl paint which is \$395 bringing to total price of admission to \$38,230. But this is no ordinary mid-size sedan, it is effectively a near luxury sports sedan that becomes an excellent alternative to some German offerings. Who needs a propeller when you can drive a jet?

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over

the Western United States.

WCSO looking to train Citizen Corps volunteers

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office Citizen Corps is offering an emergency preparedness and response training academy beginning July 19.

The training is free and trainees are not required to become a Citizen Corps volunteer to participate.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Academy provides residents with the information they need to help save lives and reduce trauma in the event of an emergency. CERT Academy training includes disaster preparedness, emergency medical techniques, fire safety, light search and rescue, disaster psychology, and terrorism awareness education.

CERT is more than emergency response; CERT is about community outreach, education and the building up and protecting of our community. This happens in all kinds of ways: providing traffic control, staffing first aid booths, or helping at special events.

The CERT Academy offers six training sessions over two consecutive weekends. Training is conducted by Citizen Corps staff and volunteers along with appropriate subject matter experts.

Academy dates are July 19 from 6-9pm, July 20 from 6-9pm, July 21 from 9am-4pm, and July 26 from 6-9pm, July 27 from 6-9pm, and July 28 from 9am-4pm.

All sessions are required to complete the training and receive a certificate. Training takes place at the Regional Public Safety Training Center located at 5190 Spectrum Blvd., Reno.

No special skills are required. Children 12-15 may participate with parent's supervision, teens 16-17 with parent's permission. To sign up for training, contact CERT Program Manager Michael Perry at 775.325.6928 or email mperry@washoecounty.us

Shelter design can help people recover from homelessness

By Jill Pable, The Conversation

About 544,000 people in the United States have no shelter every night, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Homeless families make up more than one-third of this total.

Beyond exposing them to weather, crime and unsanitary conditions, homelessness can also damage people's self-esteem, making them feel helpless or hopeless. Being homeless is a traumatic experience, in part because of the stigma associated with this situation.

Recovering from homelessness may therefore involve not just finding a job and permanent home but also rebuilding one's self-esteem.

My research on the built environment suggests that the interior design of homeless shelters can either support or hinder people's ability to assert control over their future.

How design affects people

Research has long demonstrated that physical spaces affect human moods and behaviors.

Office environments with many common spaces foster collaboration, for example, while stock investors who work on higher floors take more risks.

Homeless shelters, too, can influence how residents see the world and themselves. A shelter with sterile corridor and glaring lights may silently send the message that, "People don't think you deserve a nice place to live."

Homeless housing designed with warm colors, thoughtful lighting and useful signage, on the other hand, can send the opposite message: "Someone cares."

In my experience, most homeless shelters are designed simply to house as many people as possible. Others are so dilapidated, violent or dirty that people actually prefer to sleep outside.

What unhoused families need

I undertook a three-month field experiment at a shelter in Florida to understand how bedroom design could support or hinder two families trying to transition from homelessness into permanent housing.

Each family consisted of a single mother with two children. One family had two girls, ages 3 and 4. The other had two boys, ages 3 and 18.

Both parents had generally positive relationships with their children, had completed high school through the 10th grade and

were living in the shelter because they had lost their jobs.

Initially, both families stayed in identical 9-by-12 bedrooms. Each had two metal bunk beds, one dresser, pale green walls, a single light fixture and a bathroom shared with a family of four. With so little storage, the families piled their belongings on the unused fourth bunk.

The bedroom door had no lock, so that staff could check in on residents as needed. This is common in shelters.

Housing that looks like jail

After two months, one family moved into a room that our team had upgraded with 18 new features intended to empower residents by offering them control over their environment.

These included drawer-and-bin storage for their possessions, lap desks, privacy curtains around the beds, bulletin boards and shelving. We also painted the walls a light blue.

I interviewed the mothers in the beginning and the end of their experience.

The mother who would later move into an upgraded room felt “aggravated and frustrated” in the first space. The mother who stayed in that room for all three months described it as “crowded,” “claustrophobic” and “grim.” She even said the metal beds and hard, cold floors reminded her of jail.

Both families piled their belongings on the unused fourth bunk for lack of other storage.

“The more time you spend in it, the more you feel like the walls are closing in,” she told me after four weeks, explaining that she often stayed out late to avoid coming home to this cramped situation.

So did her older son, who sometimes spent all night in the shelter’s computer lab. His mother worried about her son’s

“vampire” hours.

This family seemed agitated throughout the three-month study. They sought relief from their housing situation – and from each other – elsewhere.

The family’s experience in the altered room

Things looked different for the other family.

The good lighting and wall cushions encouraged them to read together. They had guests more often. A case worker told me that the family would sometimes spend the entire day together in their shelter bedroom – something they’d never done in their previous space.

Though the two rooms were the same size, a divided dutch door and bed curtains allowed the residents in the altered room to create personal spaces for listening to music or reading.

They organized and put away their possessions in the storage provided, reducing clutter.

The children liked drawing on the marker boards, so the mother allowed them to use it as a reward for good behavior, exerting parental authority in a positive way.

Signs of ownership

Tellingly, the families also expressed themselves differently in the two rooms.

In the upgraded room with shelving, the family displayed photographs, art and beloved stuffed animals. The kids played dress up in front of the mirror. These are both territorial acts that define and confirm identities.

The family in the unaltered bedroom displayed little art, in part because the mother felt it was an imposition to ask shelter staff for tape to affix items to the wall.

When her 3-year-old boy tried to play cars on the floor, his mom told him it was too dirty. Bored, he would peel paint off the wall near his bed.

She reprimanded him for this behavior, causing arguments. The children also argued frequently with each other.

A place to call home

At the study's end, I asked the mother living in the upgraded space how she would have felt if her family had stayed in the unaltered bedroom. Her answer reflected the role housing plays in keeping a family happy and healthy.

"I don't know if I would say I would be depressed, but I would have had a different feeling," she responded. "Sometimes you just want peace and quiet" – which the bed curtains and dutch door now offered her.

She also thought her kids might have eventually "cracked," she said, because they couldn't act as they would in "a regular home."

"My older girl will pull the curtains and read books to her sister" now, the mother said. "She feels like she has something that belongs to her."

The new bedroom, which could be adjusted to fit the family's needs, empowered them to take ownership of it. I believe such actions may help combat underlying feelings of helplessness.

This small, only partially controlled study is not the final word in shelter design.

But it certainly suggests that shelter architecture can help families experiencing homelessness by giving them a calm, positive and supportive home base for planning their future.

Jill Pable is a professor of interior design and architecture, Florida State University.

Easy ways to reuse, recycle old paint

By Kim Beeler, Moonshine Ink

Summer is the time of year when we gather with friends and family, and part of the tradition of spring and summertime is getting our homes ready for company. Often that includes painting and staining projects.

A lot of homeowners end up collecting old or unused paint and stain over the years and are unclear about what to do with it, but most of us do know that we shouldn't throw it away in our trash cans.

When stored properly, extra paint can last for years.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency conducted a study in April 2007 estimating that about 10 percent of the house paint purchased in the United States each year – about 65 to 69 million gallons – is discarded.

Read the whole story

Road Beat: Lexus LX570, the ultimate SUV



The Lexus LX570 continues to impress with each model.
Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

With an MSRP \$685 shy of a hundred grand, one would expect a sublime ride and anechoic chamber quiet. LX570 delivers that and more including a Mark Levinson sound system headlined by a muted, but wonderfully smooth sounding 5.7L V-8 engine.

Coming off its best sales year since 2008 with more than 6,000 units sold in 2017, Lexus LX570 goes into 2018 with few changes. One being a new color, Eminent White Pearl, and 10 years of complimentary Enform Safety Connect and Enform Service Connect, otherwise it is the exact same vehicle as the 2017 model following the motto: "Don't fix what isn't broken." And being a Lexus, it rarely breaks, if ever.

By today's standards LX570 is a big vehicle stretching out exactly 200 inches on a 112.2-inch wheelbase. It is beamy at 78 inches and stands a stout 75.6 inches tall. But it is

narrow enough for the Panama Canal (by about 96 feet, 173 feet with the new locks). The design is a classic two box with a massive cargo hold of over 83 cubic feet. Up front is the now classic and familiar L'Finesse trademark Lexus grille. It is massive. Headlights are slick, sophisticated three box LEDs. Sweeping fender bulges add muscle and strength as the overall impression is one of beautiful mass. Speaking of mass, curb weight is 6,000 pounds.

To move such mass against the forces of Newton's First Law is a large, 5.7L, DOHC, 32 Valve V-8 that pumps out 383 hp at 5,600 rpm and 403 pounds of twist at a low 3,600 rpm. It sends this power longitudinally to an eight-speed auto cog swapper that drives all four wheels all the time (it has a two-speed transfer case for rock crawling) with a rear wheel bias. That is the big change from four years ago, two more tranny speeds which added about an mpg to fuel economy. Its air suspension system can raise or lower the vehicle and there are several throttle mapping controls for off road work. But I doubt that anyone who buys an LX will ever use any of the systems. Marring its beautiful finish would only bring heartache and tears.



Specifications

Price \$82,690 to about \$90,000

Engine

5.7L, DOHC, 32 valve V-8 383 hp @ 5,600 rpm

403 lbs.-ft. of torque @
3,600 rpm

Transmission

Eight speed electronically
controlled automatic

Configuration

Longitudinal front
engine/all wheel drive

Dimensions

Wheelbase 112.2 inches

Length 200.0 inches

Width 78.0 inches

Height 75.6 inches

Ground clearance 8.9 inches

Track (f/r) 64.8/64.6 inches

Weight 6,000 pounds

GVWR 7,385 pounds

Weight Distribution (f/r)

51/49 percent

Towing capacity 7,000 pounds

Fuel capacity 24.6 gallons

Cargo capacity third row
removed, second row folded
83.1 cubic feet

Turning circle 38.7 feet

Steering lock to lock 2.4 to
3.4 turns (at below 6mph)

Wheels 20X8.5-inch alloys

Tires 285/50 HR mud and snow

Coefficient of drag 0.35

Performance

0-60 mph 6.88 seconds

50-70 mph 3.61 seconds

50-70 mph uphill 5.45
seconds

Top Speed Electronically
limited to 137 mph

Fuel economy EPA rated at
13/18/15 mpg
city/highway/combined.
Expect 16 mpg in rural
country driving and 19-20
mpg on the highway at legal
speeds.

Performance is outstanding, able to move the big Lexus from a standing start to 60 mph in 6.88 seconds. Passing times are commensurate with that number as 50-70 mph comes up in 3.61 seconds on level ground and in 5.45 seconds up a 6-7 percent grade. That is getting the lead out, quickly. Throttle response is strong although I found throttle travel to be a bit long. Interestingly, when this vehicle was tested four years ago, the performance times were virtually identical with the respective numbers coming in at 6.89, 3.59 and 5.28 seconds. How's that for production consistency and keeping nano tolerances.

As you would expect, a 6,000-pound vehicle that can accelerate from 0-60 mph in under seven seconds powered by a honking, huge V-8 engine, wouldn't exactly win any awards for frugal fuel economy. LX doesn't but compared to big vehicles 40 years ago with bigger engines, the LX is remarkably fuel-efficient averaging 18.1 mpg in a 200-mile round trip from Placerville to Carson City. That trip included about a dozen full throttle passes in the passing zones. On the highway at 70 mph the LX managed 18.8 mpg. EPA numbers are 13/18/15 mpg city/highway/combined. Overall, during my 400 plus miles, I averaged about 16.8 mpg. Don't expect much more than the EPA numbers, maybe an mpg or two. Fuel capacity is a monstrous 24.6 gallons, only high limit credit cards need apply.

Handling is good. Suspension is by state of the art double wishbones up front and a four-link controlled live axle in the rear with electro/hydraulic variable suspension. Track is wide

at 65 inches at each end and steering is a variable gear ratio electric power rack with a tight turning circle (for a big vehicle) of 39 feet. However, steering is on the heavy side. As the ride is super compliant and on the softer side of life, body roll is present when pushing the big Lexus in the twisties. However, massive 285/50 series rubber riding on 20X8.5-inch alloys provide intense grip allowing the big SUV wide latitude in choosing your cornering speeds. This baby goes around corners at speed with control and confidence. I surprised many sporting sedans when the road started bending.

Ride quality is extremely smooth and compliant. For a hard core serious off-road vehicle with extreme capabilities, the ride is as soft as the vehicle is rugged.

Safety is a tour de force starting with its stout construction. It feels like you are surrounded in armor-plate. With Lexus Safety Sense plus, there is just about every acronym ever. Its triple beam LED headlights turn night into day and its four-wheel, huge ventilated discs provide immense stopping power.

Inside is a scrumptious reddish-brown leather interior. It is soft, comfortable and beautiful. Instrumentation is complete with a big speedo and tach flanking a centered trip computer/info center. But the mouse controller system makes the operation of the otherwise fabulous Mark Levinson Sound System difficult. HVAC was more conventional.

Its copious interior would be dangerous at Home Depot or Lowe's. There is about 83 cubic feet of cargo behind the front seats and second seat legroom is of limo proportions. Can't say the same for the sideways folding third row seats.

When I last tested the LX570 some four years ago, it stickered for about \$90 large with most options. Now the base price is \$20 shy of \$90,000 plus the \$1,195 luxu suite on the yacht from its Japanese assembly plant. Options on my tester like

its dual screen DVD system added nearly 10 grand bringing the total sticker shock to \$99,315. For that kind of money, I'll take an LC500 and move to where there is little or no snow. Wait a minute, I already ready live there.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Edgard Jan Pevenage – 1940-2018



Edgard Jan
Pevenage,

Edgard Jan Pevenage, known by his friends and family as Eddy, passed away on July 5, 2018, at age 77 after complications from a motorcycle accident.

Originally from Belgium, Eddy came to the United States in his

early 20s. He spent many years as a chef in Lake Tahoe.

In addition to cooking and riding motorcycles, Eddy loved learning about cars, watching soccer, and skiing with his family.

Eddy will be lovingly remembered by his wife, Pamela, and her family, son and daughter-in-law, Steve and Kim, and granddaughters, Tyler and Jenna.

An intimate gathering with friends and family will be in Campbell, Calif., on July 14.

Tahoe bear book to be released in Spanish



Krissi Russell has written a bilingual version of her original sing-along story “In The Meadow (Don’t Feed Our Bears).”

“No Alimente a nuestros osos – Don’t Feed Our Bears” features the same full color illustrations and the same toe tapping melody. The difference is there are now two musical versions of the same message: Don’t feed our Tahoe wildlife.

Whether it’s a bear in the street, a coyote in the meadow, or Canada geese on the beach, you’re bound to encounter wildlife in Tahoe. This sing-along story is designed for Tahoe locals

and visitors, the young and the young at heart.

Digital download of music is included with purchase of the 32-page soft cover book. Each page is written in Spanish and English. Release date is Aug. 1.

The South Shore author will be in the lobby at Lake Tahoe Community College during the Spanish Summer Institute on July 31-Aug. 2.

Russell has been a Spanish teacher in the Lake Tahoe Unified School District for 24 years.

For more information go **online** or contact Russell at Littlebearbooks@att.net.

Gamblit CEO confident skill-based games will make mark

By Todd Prince, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Skill-based slot machines seemed to be the talk of the town during the first half of 2017.

Their arrival on gaming floors generated interest like a new Hollywood film.

Fast-forward a year, and the excitement has fizzled. At least for now.

The first generation of skill-based machines – dwarfed on casino floors by hundreds of better-known slots – failed to attract much player interest, casino floor managers say.

Read the whole story

Caring for Fido when playing in the backcountry

By Michael Krueger and Amanda Stuart, Moonshine Ink

In summer, we all want to be outdoors with our dogs. Just like we bring Band-Aids and water on long hikes for ourselves, there are a few keys to keeping our dogs healthy in the wilderness. That's why ski patroller and outdoor enthusiast Michael Krueger teamed up with veterinarian Amanda Stuart to offer classes this summer called Wilderness First Aid For Dogs.

Krueger says for humans, the main question a wilderness first aid responder needs to keep in mind is, "What do I need to do to quickly stabilize an ill or injured person and get him or her out of the backcountry as fast as possible?"

Dog owners should be prepared with the same question for their canine hiking companions: "What do I need to do to stabilize my dog and get him or her out of the backcountry to a veterinarian as quickly as possible?"

[Read the whole story](#)

Book review: 'Permanent

Vacation-2' delights

By Kathryn Reed

Going to more than a dozen national parks in less than a week would normally be an exhausting undertaking. Not how I did it this summer.

“Permanent Vacation, Volume 2” (Bona Fide Books, 2018) is a compilation of 18 essays written by people who have lived or worked in a national park.



This version comes seven years after the **first volume** was released. In that book the essays were from West Coast parks.

The latest book is much broader, covering parks from Hawaii to Florida and points in between.

This is the first book released by the Meyers-based publishing house under current owner Maeko Bradshaw. The familiarity of format and style makes it read like a sequel under the same leadership.

Of the 18, one writer is from South Lake Tahoe (Joseph Flower) and another from Truckee (Joseph Flannery). Combined, all of their stories paint a picture of the National Parks that the average visitor is never going to experience. Some tales are about how the experience changed the worker/writer.

An overriding theme in this volume seemed to be the solitude of the work, the remoteness of the location. This is hard to imagine for someone living in California near one of the busiest parks – Yosemite.

Some of the locales written about were places I hadn't heard of – like Isle Royale, Apostle Islands and Kenai Fjords. I enjoyed getting a glimpse into these areas, and learning something new about places I've been – like Sequoia and Kings Canyon, Grand Canyon and Everglades.

As with any collection of essays, some are more interesting than others. Fortunately, most are sure to captivate you. This is definitely a book you will want to put on your summer reading list.

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Note:

- It may be purchased **online** through Bona Fide Books for \$15.