



HJ60
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GILDING THE LILY

Last year, we awarded Toyota Motor Company our 4WDOTY Award for the Series 60 Land Cruiser Station Wagon. Very close competitors were the Suzuki Sierra, the Mitsubishi Express and the Holden Jackaroo. The Series 60 was not a perfect vehicle by any means, simply, in our view, the best for the price. But Toyota has improved the 60. GORDON MALLETT, who was a judge on our last year's extended 4WDOTY test, looks at the changes.

BY THE TIME this issue hits the stands, Toyota's latest offering for the 4WD world will be in the dealers' showrooms. In its usual fashion Toyota will probably release the vehicle without fanfare. If this is the case then we are sure that the word will get around, despite the lack of marketing attention.

Toyota gave Overlander the benefit of a 2000km pre-release drive. The company must be confident indeed of the vehicle's reliability. The example we received had barely been unloaded from transit and was in fact a factory test model without all of the interior fittings to be included on release.

Quite frankly, if that's the sample, I'll have some! Despite the hasty pre-delivery attention, the test unit performed without fault. Paint, fit and finish were excellent and there were no rattles or squeaks evident. This is of course as it should be, but unfortunately is not always the case with some of the vehicles of which we take delivery.

What then is the nature of the beast? Perhaps the best way to describe it is to say that the company has taken the winner of 4WDOTY, noted the criticisms of it and quietly set about fixing them.

Regular readers will remember that the shortcomings of the previous model were mentioned as being too low geared, lacking in minor conveniences such as a 4WD indicator light and most importantly, from a safety point of view, being badly under-tyred.

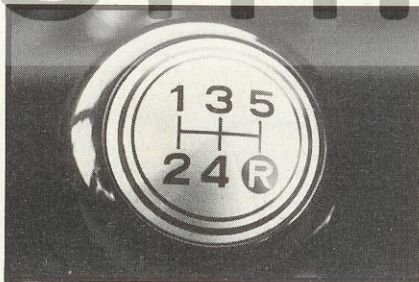
It should be said that this is a small list of shortcomings and so it is, but they

were items that began to play on your mind the more you drove.

Suffice to say that the improvements have made the 60 Series a vehicle that can more than ever hold its head above the competition, regardless of price.

New five speed gearbox

The addition of the five speed transmission to the 60 is the crux of the new changes. It not only provides the necessary extra overrider ratio but it is also quieter and slicker to shift than its predecessor.



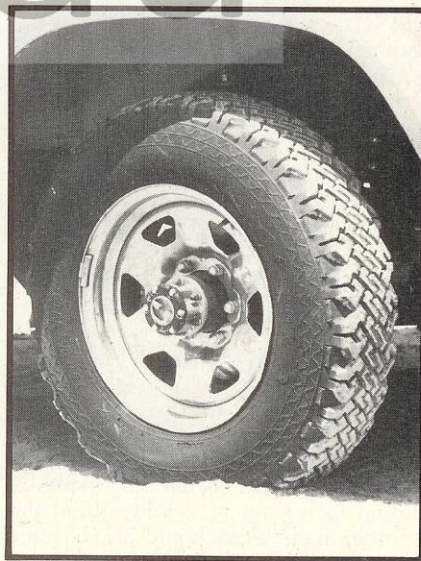
At first we thought it was a modified Dyna box, but further investigation showed that it was a completely new unit. The first four ratios are in fact the same as the previous model; the indirect fifth being the new addition. Gear ratios are: 1st 4.843; 2nd 2.619; 3rd 1.516; 4th 1.00; 5th 0.845; Rev 4.843; Final Drive 4.111.

Cynics among you will also note that the final drive ratio remains the same, so what you pick up in the redesign, you actually keep. The only possible loss is a

slight drop in overall ratio by virtue of the slightly decreased rolling radius of the new tyres. While this is noticeable to the tuned ear it is not at all significant in terms of new gains. It's also good to see the quick-start glow plug system, as in the diesel Hilux, incorporated in the new vehicle.

Standard radials at last

Gone are the outmoded RTMs! They have been replaced by Dunlop SP44 205 R16 radials. These are mounted on standard equipment, sturdy chrome



steel rims which add greatly to the upmarket appearance of the vehicle.

(However, this is only on the deluxe model. Standard 60s in both petrol and diesel come with split rims and RTMs.)

The tread on the tyres is a moderately aggressive mud and snow pattern which should do justice to the off-highway ability of the 60. More importantly, it matches the newfound performance of the Cruiser. A long stint at 130 km/h plus produced no noticeable heat build up. Without making wild predictions, this would seem to auger well for at least a **reasonable** wear rate.

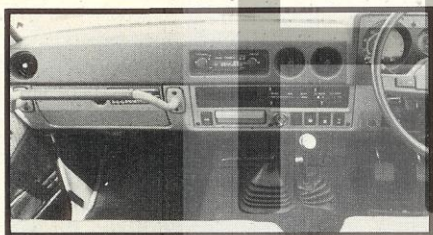
New interior improvements

Decisions on the final equipment levels for the interior had not been finalised at the time of the test, but some new inclusions had already been made.

There have been cosmetic changes to the instrument stalks.

The fuel filter warning light has been moved to the left of the dash and its place taken by the long overdue 4WD indicator light.

A new National AM/FM stereo cassette radio with metal tape facility replaces separate units.



Also included is a remote rear door lock which is operable from the driver's side of the dashboard. This is located directly above the new instrument panel dimmer switch.

All other equipment of the previous Deluxe remains, although we believe that further improvements will be evident in the release model. These will probably run to improvements to the already highly satisfactory seating (perhaps with some colour coding to match paint) and additions to the instruments by way of an additional binnacle. This would include an inclinometer and clock at least.

On the road

This is where all of the changes show their significance. Once on the move, the first impression is of the improvement to steering. The new tyres greatly decrease the vague feeling at the dead ahead position. The 60 can be pointed accurately through corners at speeds which were unthinkable on the old rubber. A simple technique of briefly lifting the throttle, applying lock and accelerating through, is all that is required. Mid-corner undulations do not cause any marked variation in line. Only in ex-

treme cornering situations is there any indication that a slightly wider foot-printed tyre might be an advantage.

Progression through the first four gears is really no different to the previous model except that it sounds a little quieter, and certainly the gate is a little smoother with less distance between the slots.

The great difference comes when you grab fifth which is spring loaded to the right and up. Instantly the unit settles into a quiet and seemingly leisurely gait. That is until you check out the speedo: 130 km/h cruising is both quiet and sure footed.

At 3000 rpm in fourth, you'll sit on 105 km/h. In fifth the same speed is barely at 2500 rpm and that sits you nicely between the power and torque peaks.

Being in fifth does not mean that you are forever hunting up and down the gears at the sight of every hill. The 60 will happily pull away from 70 km/h so it is also a gear with a very wide range.

Under the bonnet

Very few changes are discernible in the engine bay, and those that do exist are subtle.

However, the battery, still a Yuaca unit, has a somewhat different positive lead setup which looks, if anything, more sturdy and durable.

A more important difference is that there's a clutch booster next to the brake booster, which leads to much smoother, easier gearchanging. (Yes, it's a power assisted clutch.)

The only differences in plumbing between the new five speeder and the Overlander Series 60 proved to be a function of the fact that the older Series 60 is air-conditioned, whereas our test vehicle was not.

Improved economy

When tested, the 2H diesel was very new and very tight. Despite this, economy showed significant improvements over the old model with a worst of 12.3 l/100km and a best of 10.8 l/100km (23-27 mpg). Here indeed is a multi-purpose vehicle with socially acceptable economy.

In the rough

Because time was limited and we wanted to get as many touring clicks under the belt as was possible, no extended 'offroad' testing was done. From the limited terrain covered, certain conclusions can however be drawn.

The first is that the additional gear has no real application offroad. No surprise.

The second is that the vehicle is substantially of the same ability as the previous model in its ability to tackle difficult conditions. Exceptions to this are that it generally has better traction because of the new tyres, and on the negative side, the lower profiled rubber marginally reduces underdiff clearance.

Summary

The new five speed HJ60 Landcruiser overcomes most, if not all, of the previous criticisms we have made of it.

Its impact on the market is assured, especially as we do not expect a great increase in price.

Toyota has produced a truly great all-purpose vehicle. We are sure that after we grow accustomed to its face we will make further constructive criticisms. Hopefully they too will bear similar fruit.

For the moment the euphoria lingers on.

What price now for the four door Range Rover?

