

2000GT

The 2000GT was Toyota's first high performance, racing oriented vehicle, designed to compete with the top European "Grand Touring" cars. It was best known for co-starring with Sean Connery in the 1967 James Bond hit movie "You Only Live Twice," sporting a modified convertible top as it raced through Tokyo's crowded streets. Capturing three world and 13 international speed records, the 2000GT is regarded as the first seriously collectable Japanese super car.

- **When first debuted in 1967, *Motor Trend* described the 2000GT as "A fantastic engineering masterpiece on wheels, a magnificent manifestation of complete automotive ingenuity."**
- **The MSRP for the 2000GT was about \$2000 higher than a Porsche or Corvette, positioning it to compete mainly in the racing circuit, with a very limited production life (1967-1970, with a total of 337 built). Prices for a fully restored 2000GT now range from \$100,000 to \$150,000.**
- **In February of 1968 Toyota signed a one-year contract with the Shelby Racing Team- headed by Carroll Shelby, the man who made Cobra a serious racing competitor- to enter the Toyota 2000GT in American sports car competition, placing second to Porsche in its first race and winning a Grand Prix in only its third outing.**

Designing the 2000GT began in 1963 under the direction of Toyota's managing director of racing, Jiro Kawano, and his four-man team, including head designer Satoru Nozaki. The concept car was labeled #280A.

The roots of the 2000GT are found in a Yamaha design, the A550X, which was originally created by Albrecht Graf Goertz for Toyota's rival Nissan. When Nissan backed out Yamaha teamed with Toyota and passed the design to Kawano. It is a misconception that the A550X became the 280A; in many ways the design and engineering of the A550X was perceived as inferior by Toyota's design standards. The major importance of this partnership was the collaboration between the like-minded racing individuals from Toyota and Yamaha, a relationship that remains strong today.

The Toyota 2000GT was a radical departure from the kind of cars Toyota built in the 1960's.

The 2000GT was designed specifically for racing and extremely limited production. It was meant to be the first true Japanese exotic sports car.

In October of 1965 the 2000GT prototype, marked 280A/I, made its world debut at the Tokyo Motor Show.



At the 1966 Tokyo Motor Show the modified 2000GT, marked 280A/II, debuted along with one of the convertible chop-tops used in the James Bond film.

In November of 1966, the 2000GT made its official U.S. debut at the San Francisco International Auto Show.

Six months later the actual production car was released to the public.

The 2000GT “Bond car” first appeared in the US in April of 1967 at the New York International Auto Show.

At the October 1967 Tokyo Motor Show the 2000GT was displayed in a striking gold paint alongside actor/model Twiggy. The car was given to her as a gift at the end of the show. It then received a psychedelic paint job for a British TV sitcom and, in 1981, was purchased by Toyota to be restored by the Santa Monica, CA based company Hill & Vaughn. The color was changed to a Ferrari red, but it was eventually returned to its original gold color. It currently resides in the Toyota USA Automobile Museum in Torrance, CA.

The 2000GT's U.S. career spanned only three years and sold only 53 units.

Of the 53 GT models sold in the U.S., 40 are known to be still in existence. They reside in private collections and classic car museums.

The 2000GT earned a reputation as a quick performance automobile with a center of gravity so low it seemed to grab hold to the road, and never let go. Appearing in 1967, it made a bold statement for Toyota’s ten-year presence in the U.S. market.

The 2000GT also was a luxurious “Grand Tourer” designed to deliver the ultimate in comfort and performance, spreading Toyota's name and fame, and hopefully enhancing the pride of every person who sold, serviced, or owned a Toyota.



STATS:

Technical features included a box-section, backbone frame; four-wheel independent suspension; four-wheel disc brakes; dual overhead cams; and a five-speed transmission along with three, two-barrel carburetors.

It was the first Toyota to have a 2.0-liter, 3M twin-cam engine, which was capable of producing a hefty 148 horsepower. The 2000GT produced a maximum output of 7000 RPM's, compared to 4600 produced by the typical passenger car of the same era.

It had the first five-speed transmission imported to the U.S. from Japan.

It also featured a fully independent suspension and power-assisted front and rear disc brakes.

RACING:

2000GT's finished first and second in three successive races and ended up placing second to Porsche for the season.

Racing models placed first and second in several SCCA (Sports Car Club of America) races — ahead of Porsche.

The racing contract with Shelby Racing Team was discontinued at the end of 1968 because the 2000GT was no longer marketed in the United States.

Distance Speed Record

1,000 Miles - Toyota 2000GT - 131.03 mph average; (Top speed for Porsche - 116.62 mph average).

2,000 Kilometers - Toyota 2000GT - 130.91 mph average; (Top speed for Porsche - 116.33 mph average).

2,000 Miles - Toyota 2000GT - 129.68 mph average; (Top speed for Triumph - 102.59 mph average).

5,000 Kilometers - Toyota 2000GT - 128.92 mph average; (Top speed for Triumph - 103.11 mph average).

5,000 Miles - Toyota 2000GT - 127.73 mph average; (Top speed for Triumph - 103.71 mph average).

10,000 Kilometers - Toyota 2000GT - 127.54 mph average; (Top speed for Triumph - 102.83 mph average).

15,000 Kilometers - Toyota 2000GT - 128.78 mph average; (Top speed for Austin Cooper - 76.19 mph average).

10,000 Miles - Toyota 2000GT - 128.87 mph average; (Top speed for Comet - 125.14 mph average).

