

A major focus for Toyota for the latest iteration of the Camry has been on the available safety technology. All grades of the Toyota Camry comes standard with Toyota Safety Sense P.



PHOTOS: TOYOTA

FLEET CAR OF THE YEAR: TOYOTA CAMRY

DESPITE OTHER AUTOMAKERS DISTANCING THEMSELVES FROM THE PASSENGER CAR SEGMENT, TOYOTA UNDERSTANDS THAT SEDANS ARE STILL BEING UTILIZED IN COMMERCIAL FLEETS AND WILL CONTINUE TO INVEST IN THE SEGMENT. **BY ANDY LUNDIN**

The Toyota Camry was voted as the 2019 Fleet Car of the Year. The model edged out 20 other vehicles in an online survey that was voted on by professional fleet managers, marking the first time the midsize sedan achieved the honor.

"We're very excited about this news. Toyota's proud of all of our vehicles, but any time one of your vehicles is recognized as one of the best, in this case with professional fleet managers, it's even more of a special honor," said Don Fordiani, group manager, Toyota fleet sales and operations.

The Toyota Camry, which is in its eighth generation, won out in a segment that is filled with stiff competition, despite some automakers in the vehicle landscape distancing themselves from the segment.



FORDIANI
TOYOTA

"There's still a strong percentage of the industry that utilizes passenger cars, particularly sales fleets, and we're very happy to have the appropriate offerings in that space for our commercial fleet customer," said Fordiani. "They want to have a quality reliable, strong passenger car, and we're doubling down on our offerings in that space."

Fordiani said the Camry's reliability has presented fleets with an ideal total cost of ownership (TCO).

"The Camry has always presented our customers with a strong sense of quality, durability, and reliability, and has demonstrated great value which our fleet customers certainly recognize," said Fordiani. "And the Camry TCO story continues to resonate with our fleet customers. The high residual value we maintain on the car also feeds into the TCO story with the vehicle."

CAMRY OFFERINGS

The Toyota Camry was fully redesigned for the iteration available in its current generation. It is available with a 2.5L Dynamic Force 4-cylinder that offers 203 hp and 184 lb.-ft. of torque and a 3.5L V6 with 301 hp and 267 lb.-ft. of torque. The Camry is also available in 12 different grades.

The Toyota Camry L base trim, with the

2019 TOYOTA CAMRY SPECS

- **Engine:** 2.5L Dynamic Force 4-cylinder (203 hp, 184 lb.-ft. torque)
- **Transmission:** Direct Shift 8-speed ECT-I automatic
- **Cargo Space:** 15.1 cu.-ft.
- **Fuel Economy:** 29 mpg city, 41 mpg highway, 34 combined.



The Hybrid Toyota Camry is powered by a 2.5L Dynamic Force 4-Cylinder DOHC 16-Valve D-4S Dual Injection, it includes an ECO, normal, sport, and EV drive modes. The Hybrid Toyota Camry is growing in momentum with fleet customers focusing on sustainability initiatives.

2.5L engine, has an mpg of 29 miles in the city, 41 miles on the highway, and 34 miles combined. The L model offers 14.1 cubic feet, while all Camry models above the base offer 15.1 cubic feet of trunk space.

Fordiani also spoke on significance of Toyota's Global Architecture platform, which provides a stronger lightweight frame, enhancing handling and ride quality, as a contributor to the Camry's success as of late.

The latest Camry doesn't skimp in the realm of technology either; the base model is available with a seven-inch touch screen, and is available with Apple CarPlay and, new to the 2020 model-year, Android Auto compatibility. The latter two of which he credits as being a solution to reduce distracted driving for fleet drivers.

"With fleets, safety is a big concern, and those features make it easier for drivers and sales reps to connect with their cars instead of using their phones," he said.

Toyota also introduced Amazon Alexa connectivity that allows customers to interact with Amazon's intelligent cloud-based voice service in their car.

SAFETY TECHNOLOGY

A major focus for Toyota for the latest iteration of the Camry has been on the available safety technology. All grades of the Toyota Camry comes standard with Toyota Safety Sense P, which is a bundle

of active safety features included on many new Toyota vehicles at no additional cost.

"We've sold over five million vehicles equipped with Toyota Safety Sense in the past five years, and its on 90% of all of our current models," he said. "Our company has prided itself on being leaders in the industry when it comes to safety as part of our sustained push to expand the availability of safety technology."

At the base level, each TSS packages is at least equipped with pre-collision system with pedestrian detection, lane departure alert with steering assist, automatic high beams, and dynamic radar cruise control. Dynamic radar cruise control uses a camera and millimeter-wave radar to recognize vehicles in front of the Camry, and automatically adjusts speed to maintain a safe following distance between the two vehicles.

"For commercial fleet customers, we recognize they use our cars as an office, and they need an array of safety technology features to keep their drivers on the road," said Fordiani.

All Camry models are also available with ToyotaCare, which features a no cost maintenance plan with roadside assistance. ToyotaCare includes maintenance reminders, engine oil and filter changes, tire rotations, battery jump-starts, emergency fuel delivery, towing, and more.

Further reflecting the emphasis on safety, the 2019 Toyota Camry received the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) five-star overall safety rating.

ALT-FUEL OFFERINGS

Another notable feature about the Camry is that it's also available in a hybrid variation, which is something to note for fleets looking to achieve sustainability goals.

"Specifically, on our commercial fleets when you look at Camry hybrid volume, in our year-over-year performance, our hybrid volumes doubled," said Fordiani.

Powered by a 2.5L Dynamic Force 4-cylinder DOHC 16-valve D-4S dual injection, it includes an ECO, normal, sport, and EV drive modes. The electric motor has a 118 hp output, and 149 lb.-ft. of torque. It offers an electric motor voltage of 650 v and has a hybrid system net power of 208 hpm and has an electronically controlled continuously variable transmission.

"We are seeing a growing momentum with our fleet customers on a greener focus, and they certainly recognize hybrids," he said. "Any hybrid is a viable way for them to accomplish their goals."

LOOKING FORWARD

Toyota will continue to invest in the Camry, and recently announced an all-wheel-drive version of the Camry for the 2020 model-year.

"This is going to be a product that I think our commercial customers in cold-weather states and along the eastern seaboard are going to be very attracted to have this option," said Fordiani. Toyota is also continuing its considerations with connectivity and telematics-based technologies for fleets.

"Another specific focus for fleets that we're going to take advantage of is the embedded connectivity in our cars," said Fordiani. "In partnership with Toyota Connected North America, in 2020 we're looking to increase the number of fleets that use our connected offerings to monitor things like driver behavior, to improve safety and driver productivity." 