

FIRST DRIVES



TOYOTA LIVA TRD SPORTIVO

Toyota brings out a sportier Liva. If the bigger engine doesn't make it sportier, the side skirts sure will

Words AGASTI KAULGI

Hot hatches are not new to India. These more powerful siblings of your regular hatches have been hitting our roads for some time now. For instance, a decade ago, there was the Palio 1.6, which was quicker than any other hatchback out there. Then there was the VW Polo 1.6 and the Skoda Fabia 1.6 each putting out a healthy 100bhp and a smile on the driver's face every time they were driven hard.

PHOTOGRAPHS: KIRAN JADHAV



That was more than two years ago. Now, India gets its newest hot hatch. Okay, it's not a hot hatch in the true sense but a slightly more powerful version of the regular Liva. Under the hood, the Liva TRD is an Etios. It has the same four-pot 1.5-litre petrol engine that puts out 89bhp and 132Nm – that's 10bhp more to play with compared to the 1.2 Liva. The TRD feels way more agile than the regular Liva.

It also borrows the five-speed manual gearbox from its booted cousin. It's smooth to slot into the gates. The gearing is tuned to be on the shorter side to help you keep the motor in its powerband as far as is possible at city speeds. The TRD, with a bigger engine, hits a top whack of 150kph if you show it a long enough stretch of road. Interestingly, it's good fun to drive on a comparatively open expressway where you can keep the throttle almost completely pressed into the floor for long durations.

Set the Liva and the Liva TRD on a dash to 100, and the TRD will hit it in 11.49seconds, which is a little under

IN DETAIL

ALLOY WHEELS
Best-looking alloys we've seen on a hatch



SEATS
Some badging to remind you this is no ordinary Liva



SPOILER
Goes well with the TRD's whole sporty look



three seconds quicker than the Liva. The TRD feels a lot quicker than the regular Liva even on in-gear acceleration. Meanwhile, stand on the brake pedal and you won't be disappointed with either tyre grip or stopping distance. It'll come to a full stop from 80kph in just 25.26metres.

Of course, as you'd expect, the Liva TRD's motor is not as efficient as the Liva's but it'll go 14 kilometres to a litre on the highway and 11.2kpl in city traffic.

Outside, the TRD differentiates itself with a lip on the front and rear bumpers and Sportivo badging. The sides get new skirts to add to the TRD's sporty look. Like all souped up cars, the TRD gets a rear spoiler, which may not do much for aerodynamics considering its top speed, but does complement the looks. What we really like are the new gun-metal-finish alloy wheels, which look both sporty and classy.

Inside, the Liva TRD gets TRD Sportivo-badged seats along with an all-black interior. Also new is the Bluetooth-enabled music system. But it doesn't get steering-mounted audio controls like the top-end model. The instrument cluster still sits at the centre of the dashboard but now gets a slightly better-looking one compared to the older ones that seemed to have been inspired by those



LIFE ON THE INSIDE

- 01 STEERING**
A bit too light and lacks feedback. And where's that flat bottom?
- 02 DASHBOARD**
No fancies here, no two-tone plastics, just plain black
- 03 SEATS**
Design complements interior. Comfortable too
- 04 MULTIMEDIA**
Dual DIN system with USB and AUX inputs. Also supports Bluetooth



THE SPECS

TOYOTA LIVA TRD SPORTIVO

THE NUMBERS

4cyl, 1496cc, 89bhp, 132Nm, 5M, FWD, 0-100kph - 11.49sec, 30-50kph (3rd) - 3.49sec, 30-50kph (4th) - 5.13sec, 50-70kph (5th) - 6.30sec, 80-0kph - 25.26m, 2.26sec, 12.6kpl, 150kph

THE COST

₹7.36 lakh (on-road, Mumbai)

THE VERDICT

Not a complete hot hatch but surely a Liva that can go faster than its namesake and look the part too

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radios from the 1960s.

Toyota has improved the sound and vibration damping systems to keep engine clatter and vibes out of the cabin. Oddly, the TRD doesn't get a lowered and stiffened-up suspension as seen in proper hot hatches. The TRD's ride feels a tad more planted than the regular Liva's but still pitches generously. It gets unsettled around corners and there's lots of body roll.

The steering too is untouched. It remains light to aid slow city driving more, and there's no feedback at high speeds. Strangely, the sporty-looking flat-bottomed steering wheel found on the Liva has been ditched - although this wheel does

THE RIVAL



MARUTI SWIFT

It's been setting the sales charts on fire ever since its launch. The perfect mix of sportiness and comfort.

feel pretty nice to grip.

If you want this more powerful Liva, you'll have to shell out ₹7.36 lakh (on-road, Mumbai). That's just ₹9000 more than the top-end VX variant of the Liva. But it misses out on a lot of equipment as the TRD gets the same equipment as the lower G SP variant.

And compared to the G SP, you end up spending ₹90,000 more for all this sportiness. Mind you, this

is not a quintessential hot hatch but if a peppy, reliable hatchback is what you are looking for, the Liva TRD makes a good case for itself. **TTG**