



PHOTOGRAPHY: KUNAL K. IADSE

AN ALTERNATE LIFESTYLE...

...is what Toyota is giving the Corolla Altis with not only a face-lift, but also a new gearbox and more horsepower in the petrol engine. The car's shelf life just got extended, and here's how!

Ask somebody who really knows about transportation design how difficult it is to redesign a next-generation car bearing a strong brand name and he'll probably start sweating like he's been thrown in the middle of the Amazon. Take the Toyota Corolla for example. When the Corolla Altis raised its head to be the replacement of the Corolla, it would have been a pretty daunting task for sure, but the end results were pretty good. They had come up with a car that carried on with the previous

legacy of the Corolla and still added a fresh twist to the car's design. But there's a problem with any design - it ages, fast. Three years after the Corolla Altis was big news in its segment, it has now got itself a face-lift and accompanying the cosmetic job is a new transmission as well.

On the outside, the Corolla Altis gets curvier all round. While the body itself hasn't been altered - in keeping with the basic laws of face-lifting cars (if there exists anything as such), it's the individual elements that have been subject to the redesign. For starters, and

the part of the car that most people will immediately notice, is the reworked front end. The headlamps retain their intrinsic shape but instead of the straight rulers, their lines are now governed by a set of French curves. The Corolla Altis grille gets some treatment as well and now helps distinguish between the gasoline and oil burning powerplant versions: While the Altis now gets a front grille that is more reminiscent of the bigger Camry, the petrol variants get chrome edged slats while the diesel car gets a single solid matte black bar

running across its breadth. On the inside, Toyota has made the Corolla Altis more liveable for everyone. The dash gets a darker shade of the same beige colour that adorned the previous car, but in being so, it makes it a lot more appealing and classy. The wood grain used all round the insides also gets darker and lest we forget, it now also has a funky touch-screen display audio system!

But far from being just a cosmetic job, the 1.8-litre engine's cubic capacity has been bumped up by 4cc to now make it 1798cc. But it isn't the mediocre rise in cubic capacity that we're raving about; it's the head surgery that really impresses. The Corolla Altis petrol now gets dual VVT-i and if that sounds a little too complicated, well, it's not. While most variable valve timing engines use the same mechanism to operate the intake and exhaust valves, the dual VVT-i system employs two separate variable timing mechanisms for the exhaust and the

intake valves, enabling even more precise control of the valve timing. This now allows the petrol Altis to churn out 140PS @ 6400rpm and torque is also up to 173Nm. With the increase in power also come new transmissions. Making their way into the Corolla Altis petrol armoury are a 6-speed manual and a CVT-i. The CVT brings in pure convenience for those looking at a hassle-free commute around the city in their Altis. But this isn't just another hard-on-the-fuel-bills CVT if that's what you're thinking, because this gearbox maintains its revs between 1500rpm and 2000rpm as the vehicle speed increases, resulting in better efficiency. If you wish to be more in control of your car's gearing, it also comes with a 7-speed sequential shiftmatic, a manual mode for those who don't work in a Toyota showroom!

All this surely puts a sting in the Toyota Corolla Altis' now ageing tail and should get it ready for the Renault Fluence onslaught of which you can read elsewhere in this magazine. Set for another few years of sales success then, Toyota?



1 Not much capacity increase to the 1.8-litre motor but it pumps out a respectable 140PS!



2 Interiors get plush with snazzy touch-screen display and dark wood grain trim



SPECIFICATIONS

TOYOTA COROLLA ALTIS

Engine:	4-cylinder, VVT-i, petrol
Displacement:	1,798cc
Power:	140PS @ 6,400rpm
Torque:	173Nm @ 4,000rpm
Transmission:	CVT-i
LxWxH:	4,540 x 1,760 x 1,480mm
Wheelbase:	2,600mm
Price (ex-Delhi, estimated):	Rs 15 lakh