

# TOYOTA

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### TUNDRA HYBRID DRIVE

Capstone, TRD Pro, & Limited Hybrid trucks HANDS ON

### MISTY'S FJ CRUISER

A New Beginning with the perfect vehicle at just the right time

### JAVEX 2021

International Off Road Event with epic Land Cruisers



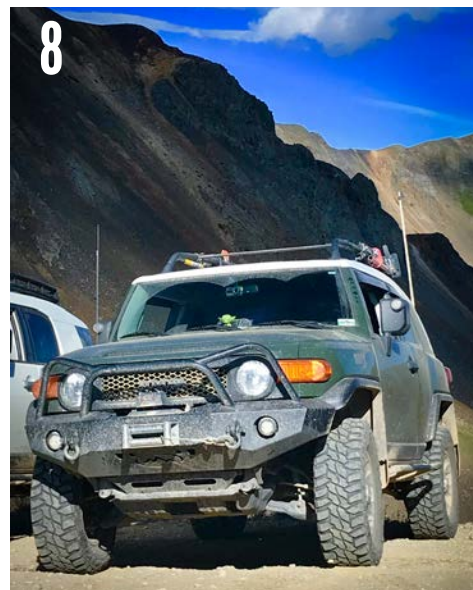
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PHOTO BY  
Shane Williams

tctmagazine.net

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**TOYOTA**  
**CRUISERS & TRUCKS**  
ADVENTURE.  
INSPIRATION.  
EXPLORATION.

# FROM THE PUBLISHER

## 2022 IS OFF TO AN AMAZING START, LET'S DO THIS!

A lot has changed since my last message, and for a change things are starting to look up!

In January I had the opportunity to drive the all new 2022 Tundra iForce Max (See page 16), and ALSO was there for the global reveal of the 2023 Toyota Sequoia. My thoughts on the impact of the Sequoia can be found on page 46, but for now let me say that, this is going to be huge.

We're all sad to hear that the FJ Summit has come to an end. The event had a great run and is a major reason why we started FJC Magazine back in 2008. As it happens though, the world changes, and the times must change with it. There is still plenty of adventure to be found in Ouray, Colorado - but also so much more to find around the country, and world.

Our family is finally settled at our new home in Florida, and we've even taken our first mountain trip as 'lowlanders'. More on that trip can be found over at LiveToExplore.co, since there was not much vehicle based exploring in the 3 days we were there.

Beyond that? Events are back...the chip shortage is (hopefully) coming to an end, and Toyota is starting to deliver some really great factory built exploring vehicles. 2022 is off to a great start, and we can't wait to see what's next. Where will you go? E-mail us to tell your story. No, really.

shane.williams@zaxyn.com - I love to read about, and publish, your great stories of adventure!

Until next time, Stay Safe, Stay the Trail, and Tread Lightly!

*Shane*



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# NEW & NOTEWORTHY

By TCT Staff



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# New Beginnings: Misty Whitford and Her 2011 FJ Cruiser



Whitford felt accomplished reaching heights above her comfort zone. Colorado's views are incredible.

Photo by Misty Whitford





Photo by Tricia Lynn

This is a beautiful, welcoming sign. It looked handmade and made Whitford feel like she was arriving into Colorado through a secret squirrel portal. This sign was indicative of the breathtaking views she was about to experience.

**Things happen for a reason.** People's lives deeply intermix with each other like layers of dirt, rocks, and moss on a forest floor. However, paths can change unexpectedly, sending some through a cataclysmic change of challenges and enlightenment.

Washington resident Misty Whitford's life changed drastically when she divorced her husband of over a decade in pursuit of happiness and self-fulfillment. However, a 2011 Toyota FJ Cruiser and a solo trip to Ireland changed her life eternally.

## GOING SOLO

"Finding the courage after 15 years to get divorced was scary and empowering," Whitford said. "But at the same time, I found that I didn't know what to do with myself as I have always spent my time trying to make a better world for my husband at all costs."

Whitford decided to find herself. She let herself be free

and do anything that "sounded fun." She started coming out of her shell and sought life experiences, as well as meeting new people. "I had to jump out of my comfort zone and jump into life," she said with a smile.

Taking the chance to travel solo to Ireland was the catalyst of Whitford's life change. "I have always been in an abusive relationship, whether it be physical or mental," Whitford exclaimed. "I was always under someone's thumb. I have never done much independently and freely in my life."

Once divorced and having enough initiative and money to travel, Whitford packed her bags and headed overseas.

**Whitford decided to find herself. She let herself be free and do anything that "sounded fun."**



# FJ CRUISER

"Ireland was the best decision and coolest experience in my life," she stated. During the two-week trip, she matured and discovered herself again. "I felt like I was just starting to actually live. There is so much in life I felt like I missed out on or didn't know could be." Whitford felt free.

## A CHANGE OF PLANS

However, shortly arriving back from Ireland, her vehicle was totaled. Whitford needed a new car.

"I've always wanted an off-road capable vehicle and was looking at a brand-new purple Jeep and two FJs at Toyota of Puyallup, Washington (I test drove one when they first came out)." She initially always wanted a Jeep. Although, after completing her research and comparing specs and information from both Toyota and Jeep owners, she felt Toyota would hold up better for exploring the off-road trails of Greenwater, Washington.

One of the Toyotas at the dealership was a stock, one-owner 2011 Military Green FJ Cruiser. It wasn't used as an

off-roading vehicle and only had 28,000 miles on it. "It was in great shape; I fell in love with her as soon as I test drove her during my lunch hour!" Whitford let nothing stop her, she headed back to the dealership after work and completed the sale the same day.

## OFF-ROADING COMRADERY

One day after grocery shopping, Whitford found a business card on her FJ's windshield. It was from a member of the Empty Pocket Crawlers, otherwise known as EPC. Whitford quickly became obsessed. "EPC is why I have been modding the heck out of REBEL." (This is her FJ Cruiser's name).

Whitford started exploring with her FJ. Her Toyota 4x4 took her to places she never dreamt of going, like FJ Summit. To her, FJ Summit was the best experience, offering expansive views and challenging trails. However, she's saddened with recent news the event will no longer happen.



Another pass, another sign and another pic for Whitford's "glorious FJ"

Photo by Chi Town 4x4 club



Photo by Misty Whitford

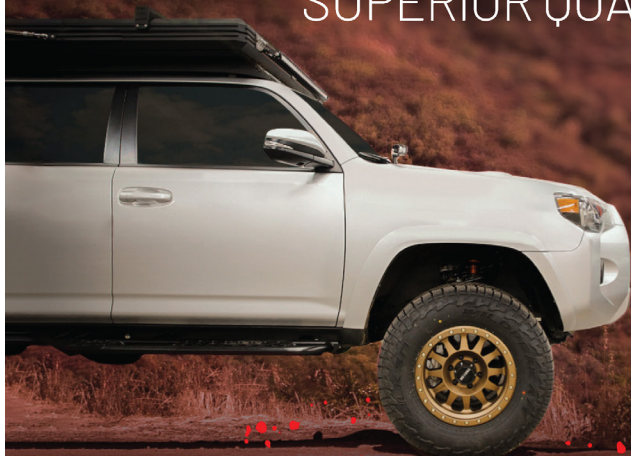
This photo made Whitford proud to own a Toyota FJ Cruiser. She appreciated the “beasty trucks” sitting together in the Colorado mountains. Her Toyota and that trip brought her to new heights, with a pack of new friendships.

Even though the EPC group has somewhat fizzled as a whole, Whitford still stays in touch with some of its members. She now actively off-roads with her new husband, Joseph Whitford, and is part of 30 various off-road entities.

**Whitford started exploring with her FJ. Her Toyota 4x4 took her to places she never dreamt of going, like FJ Summit.**

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# FJ CRUISER

Whitford asks, "Isn't she GLORIOUSLY Magnificent?" She is on top of the world that her FJ is built not bought. She stands out among the crowd, she is very proud of this vehicle.



Photo by Misty Whitford





"If you could marry an inanimate object this would be the one," Whitford said with a smile. The vehicle looks like it belongs in this Colorado backdrop.

## GLOBAL GATHERINGS

"Most groups are very welcoming to all and you instantly have a bond with people you wouldn't otherwise have," Whitford exclaimed. "I talk to so many people all over the world. I meet up with 20 people to go out wheeling/overlanding/camping and have an absolute blast."

For Whitford, these people often become a part of her community and network. "We're like our own little family. Most of them are all willing to help each other, even if they only know you via social media."

Off-roading has made it easy for Whitford to continue to heal, socialize, explore, learn, and evolve. "During Covid, I was laid off from work after 15 years, got married, and I watched my mom (her best friend) fade away from ovarian cancer and pass in January 2021. My positivity tanked quite a bit," she said.

Freedom is when you can explore the world on your own, in your own time, and see places like this you may not have been able to see otherwise.





# FJ CRUISER

But that hasn't stopped her from solidifying her new beginning. "Covid doesn't affect the forest or Mt. Rainier. These are my escapes and I go at least one time a month to reset and get a breath." Doing this brings life back into Whitford's soul.

"It has been rough, I'm not going to lie," she stated, "all I can do is keep trying."

Off-roading with her beloved FJ Cruiser has given Whitford a definite boost in her confidence. She can now just be herself. Her advice to other women in similar situations is:

You are stronger than you think.

The first step is the hardest, but you can do it.

Life is out there—you just need to go grab it.

Although she was once filled with challenges and heartache, she found

**Fighting for who you want to become and taking steps into uncertainty is never easy, but the rewards found on the other side of the mountain could very well save your life as it did hers.**



Whitford gets an adrenaline rush from playing in Washington's Tahuya ORV Park. She loves obstacles and maneuvering her FJ through trails that feature tree ruts, rock gardens, water crossings, and off-camber spots are a little exciting! She says her Toyota can go ANYWHERE.

Photo by Misty Whitford



herself at a crossroads and started a new chapter in her life. Now happily married and exploring Mother Nature, Whitford earned a new lease of existence. Fighting for who you want to become and taking steps into uncertainty is never easy, but the rewards found on the other side of the mountain could very well save your life as it did hers.

Whitford stated her FJ Cruiser is the best vehicle she's ever owned. The life and freedom it allows her is immeasurable as she teared up during the interview. "This vehicle has allowed me to find myself, explore the U.S., make new friends all over the world, and changed my view on learning." (To date, she's taken several off-road classes, including a Washington-based winching demonstration where we met her).

"I learned I can do things on my own without permission," Whitford said, "Just because I was told I needed my hand held doesn't mean I have to. Life doesn't have to be that way—I can live for myself and not anyone else."

Whitford stated she will always own a Toyota. "You will have to bury me in this FJ as I will never part with it." *TCT*



Whitford now has a lighthearted, funny personality. "I have two big butts and I cannot lie, you other wheelers may deny, but when an FJ passes you by, you just can't deny."

Photo by Joseph Whitford



Whitford loves the places she goes and sees. Not everyone gets to enjoy nature this way, however this is a local spot for her. She visits once or twice a month; it's ever changing but still magnificent

Photo by Joseph Whitford

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# 2022 Tundra Hybrid and Capstone

**T**he all new 2022 Tundra has been a very long time in the making, at this point we all know that.

As Phil and Jim have already covered in the first two articles in this series, the updates and upgrades in the new TNGA-F platform have setup Toyota to deliver cutting edge new vehicles for the foreseeable future, and the new Tundra is the first of those (other than the

300 Series Land Cruiser). The fully boxed frame, rear suspension (which is new to Toyota for a full size truck), and of course the twin-turbo V6 are excellent upgrades to the outgoing platform, even if their not 100% beloved.

The event I was invited to centered on two Tundra options (and of course the all new Sequoia): The iForce MAX Hybrid, and the Tundra Capstone Edition. Our

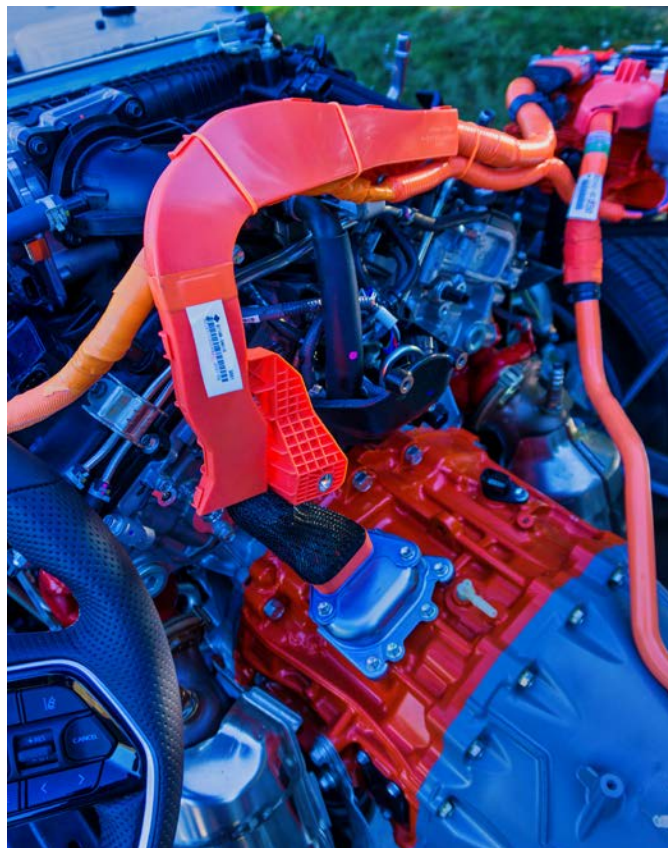
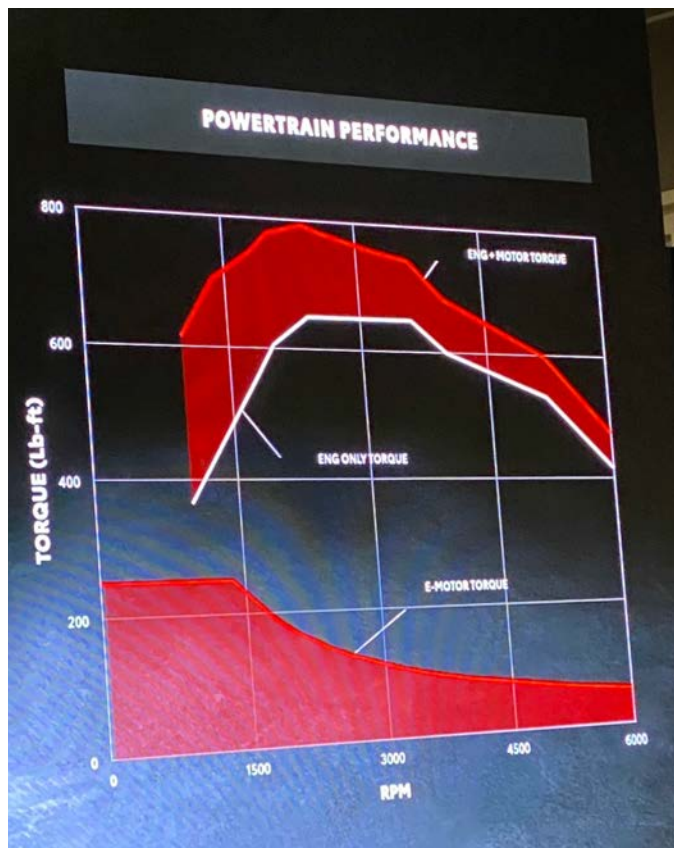


Our press briefing started with an in-depth discussion of the iForce MAX powertrain, which is setup to lead the segment for years to come.

press briefing started with an in-depth discussion of the iForce MAX powertrain, which is setup to lead the segment for years to come. If you want to go by just the numbers, the upgraded 437hp and 583 lb ft of torque on the Hybrid blows away the 'old' 5.7 V8, and even edges out the F-150 Hybrid, which is a similar but not identical system. The 1 Motor Hybrid Vehicle (1MHV) design







not only includes the 47hp Hybrid motor in-line before the transmission, it uses a common torque converter for both motors (ICE + E-Motor) for a fully mechanical connection.

That means that all of the power from the Electric system is stacked on to the Twin Turbo power, which means a much more powerful driving experience.

Unlike other trucks... THIS. IS. NOT. MARKETING.

It's true, all of it...

The power and performance from the additive hybrid system is recognized immediately for anyone that's driven the old 5.7 V8. It drives very nice, handles well, and is more economical. The reported EPA MPG of 24 highway, 22 combined is a nice bump, but will not be turning heads just for efficiency. This is not a Prius Hybrid, and doesn't even identify as one. No one should expect 'car' hybrid performance out of any truck, so for me a modest MPG boost is acceptable. Also, this is not a diesel. Even though Toyota Engineers in the US REALLY wanted to drop a diesel in this truck, it was never in the cards

**The reported EPA MPG of 24 highway, 22 combined is a nice bump, but will not be turning heads just for efficiency. This is not a Prius Hybrid, and doesn't even identify as one.**

(at least not yet). As it turns out, this power train gives you the performance, power, and efficiency of a big gas truck while pushing MPG toward the diesel range. It really is the best of both worlds, in a gorgeous modern package.

I had the opportunity to drive three trucks during the event:

The Capstone (which I towed with), the 1794 for a street test, and the TRD Pro for the off road course. All of these are the iForce MAX Hybrid, we did not test any non-hybrid vehicles.

## MODELS TESTED

### ALL NEW TUNDRA GRADE: CAPSTONE

It's quite accurate to describe this truck as the Lexus of Toyota Tundras. It is meant to be the absolute top-of-the-line truck, for those that use their trucks on streets, occasional towing, and for a powerful comfortable ride to dinner. It is not built to be a work truck, although it would still function perfectly fine as one.

The comforts of the capstone are undeniable. Semi-





Aniline leather, heated steering wheel, dark American walnut inlay, and an illuminated interior make sitting in the truck more comfortable than my couch. The hydraulic mounted cab, powerful hybrid with multiple drive modes, and acoustic glass set this truck apart from any other in the segment.

For the towing test, Toyota sourced a lovely Airstream Travel Trailer, weighing in at about 5,500lb. Pulling out of the driveway, it's clear that there is plenty of power, and the handling is excellent. The auto leveling airbags keep the truck where it needs to be (yet another previous upgrade that's now available from the factory), and the new suspension handles the corners very well.

#### **1794 EDITION**

I was excited to get the 1794 Edition on the street for a quick MPG test, and to open up the truck for some great power impressions. During my drive, after resetting the MPGs, I did 10 miles in eco mode and it topped out at

**As it turns out, this power train gives you the performance, power, and efficiency of a big gas truck while pushing MPG toward the diesel range.**

just over 21MPG, pretty decent for the new truck in a very non-scientific test. For the drive back, I chose to open it up a little more, and test the new Safety Sense system.

When you get on the gas in this Twin Turbo V6 + Hybrid, you know it. It is quite peppy for a heavy truck and the power will not disappoint.

We really enjoyed the radar cruise feature on our 2018 Tundra, so when I learned about the lane keeping feature of the new Safety Sense system, I couldn't wait to try it. As you can see in the video on our page, the system will



# TUNDRA



actually assist you in steering back into your lane when it can detect the lane lines. While it's a long way from self-driving, this type of safety feature will be very beneficial for keeping your precious cargo safe on the road.

## TRD PRO

Of course my favorite test drive was the Off Road course.

For some events, Toyota simply drops a few rocks down and makes some holes to drive through. For this one though, they sourced a driving course that's used to test some of the top brands in the off-road and overland world. This would be a good way to experience the 2022 TRD Pro Tundra.

Not only did this course have hills, rocks, and mud, but it was TIGHT. I mean, 6" clearance between two trees tight. Toyota wasn't even sure I could get a drone flight in, that's how tight it was. As a fairly old-school off road enthusiast, I generally like to keep all

**For the towing test, Toyota sourced a lovely Airstream Travel Trailer, weighing in at about 5,500lb. Pulling out of the driveway, it's clear that there is plenty of power, and the handling is excellent.**



the gadgets turned off. After this experience though, I definitely understand how using all the modern capabilities can make for a more enjoyable, and safe, off highway experience.

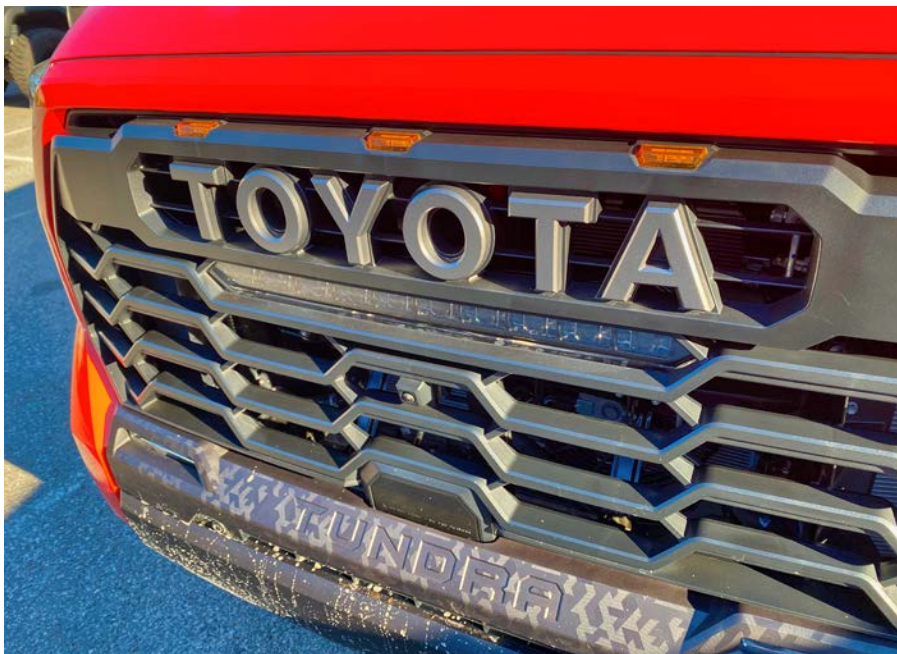
The truck drops into Low Range electronically, which also enables crawl control and the other Multi-Terrain select features. The course started simple with a tight uphill obstacle that also included a nice wheel stand. Of course the TRD Pro pushed through with barely a note of A-Trac kicking in. The all new for Tundra electronic locker is an excellent addition, and could be the new favorite feature for most of our readers.

In the old days we really loved the Manual trans in the FJ Cruiser specifically for descending steep hills. The lower gear ratio allowed us to truly crawl down rocks. It's one of the defining capabilities of an off-road





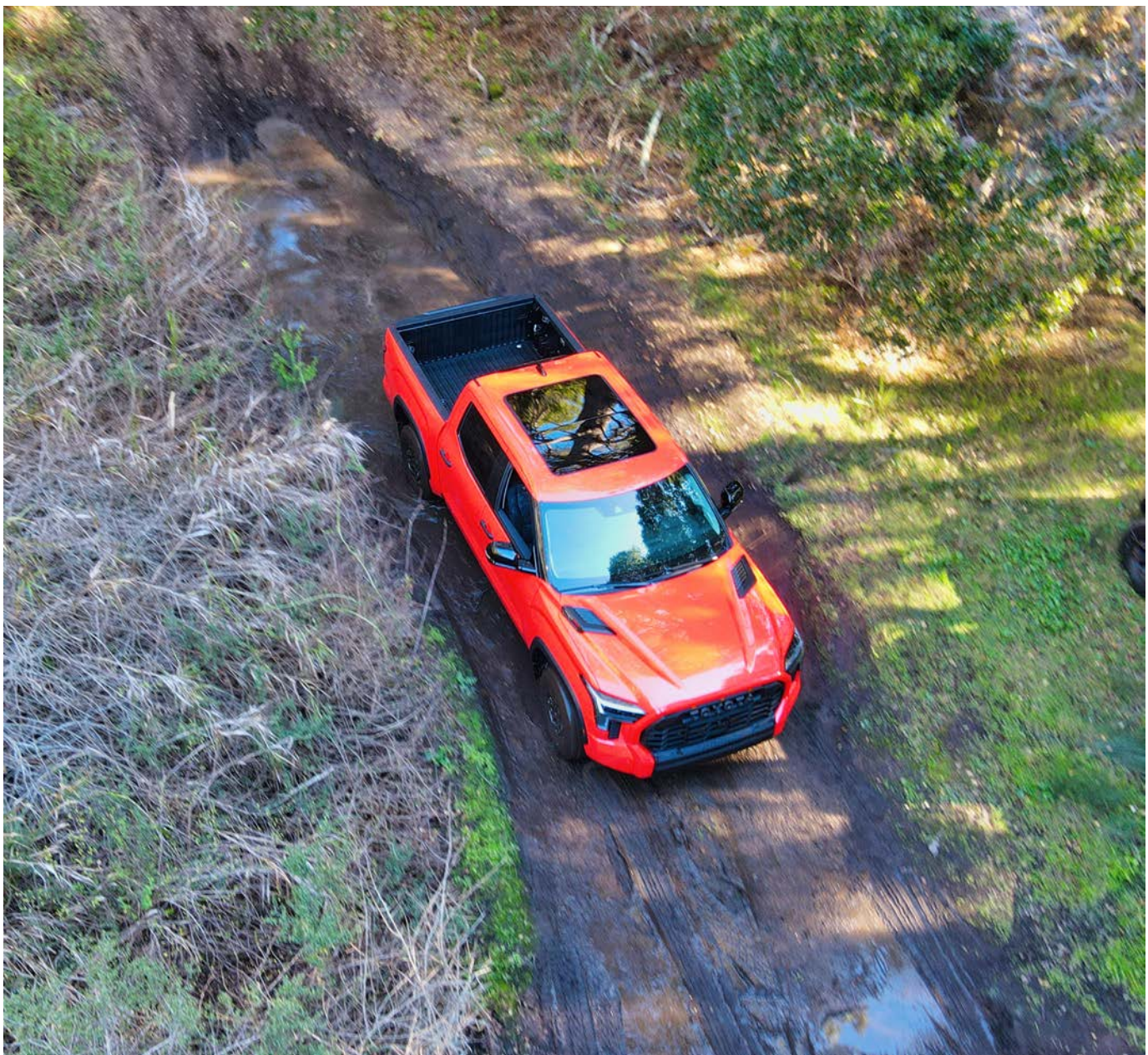
# TUNDRA



vehicle. As such, I've never thought too much of Crawl Control as an option on trucks. However, now that I've experience the latest version of this - it's truly remarkable. This was not a simple rocky hill to ease down, it was a very steep, muddy, grassy hill. It is unlikely that a human in this heavy of a truck could work the brakes quick enough to crawl down without sliding. For the new TRD Pro though, it was effortless. Select your mode, steer the truck, and enjoy the ride.

Let's talk about availability. In order to keep both the Capstone and TRD Pro exclusive, and due to the ongoing chip shortage, Toyota expects those two grades to be only single digit percentages of





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# TUNDRA



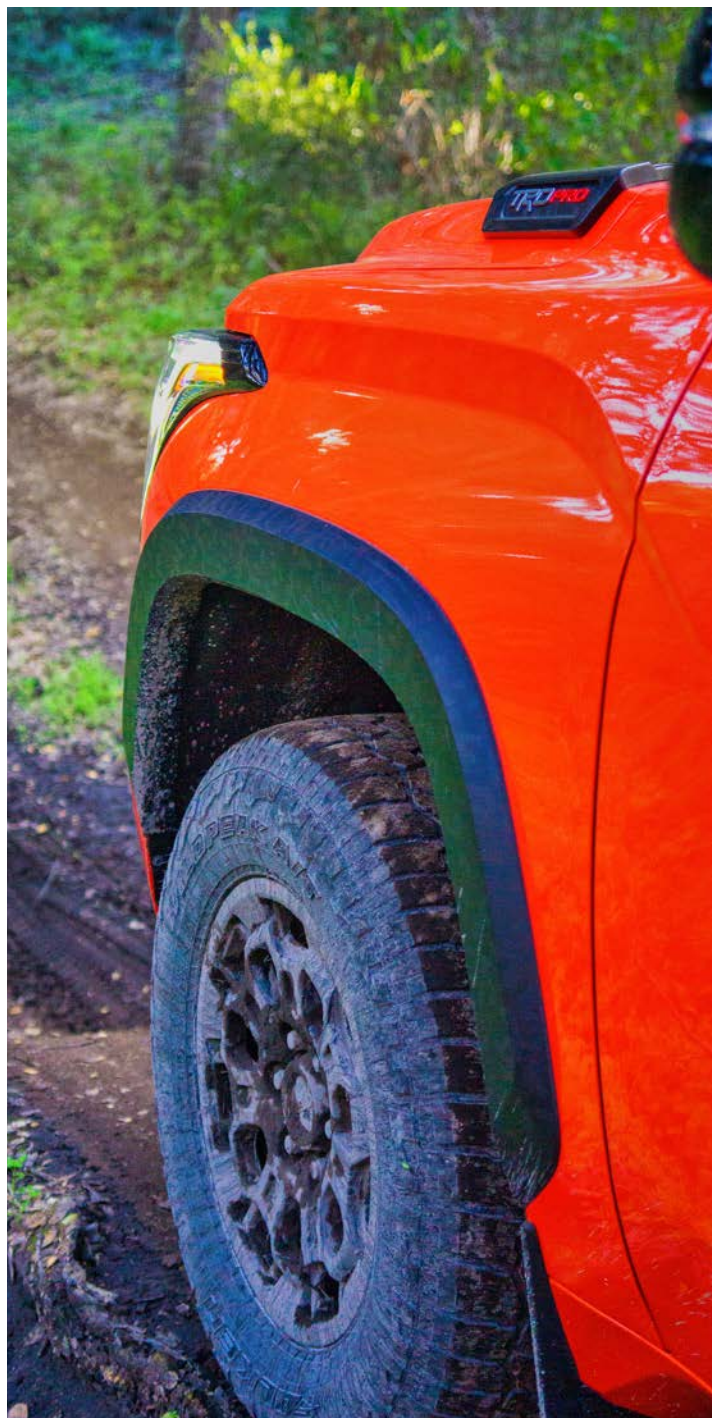


total production numbers. That means that even when Tundra's are back to full production, the TRD Pro and the Capstone will be hard to come by. The exact availability date has not been released, but we expect to see these on the lots during the summer of 2022.

In his 2022 Tundra First Drive article, Jim illustrated how Toyota has checked all the boxes. Design, power,

tech, drivetrain, massively updated all the way around. When you add the enhancements and capabilities of the iForce MAX along with the TRD Pro (or TRD Off Road) options, Toyota's legendary reliability (once the first year bugs are sorted out) the result is an amazing truck.

I truly believe this is the best option for a full size truck on the market. *TCT*





# [FRAMED]

2022 Toyota Tundra 1794.

PHOTO BY SHANE WILLIAMS













# [FRAMED]

*f/1.8 1/30s 14mm*

Death Valley, Milky Way

PHOTO BY DANIEL ELO





# [FRAMED]

*f/1.8 1/250s 85mm*

Alabama Hills, Sierra, CA.

PHOTO BY ROB OF REVERE OVERLAND











# JAVEX 2021

**BY THOMAS PFISTER**

Yogyakarta is the capital city of the Yogyakarta Special Region in Indonesia, located on the island of Java, and is the only Indonesian royal city still ruled by a monarchy.

While the city sprawls in all directions from the Sultan's palace, the modern city's core is to the north, centered around traditional Dutch colonial buildings. This is the starting point where this adventure begins, at the Pulang Ke Utara hotel.

Due to local COVID restrictions imposed by the government, the organizers are forced to divide the 75 cars into two separate groups, Merapi and Merbabu, both named after prominent regional active volcanoes.

Both groups have their own team leaders, Pak Syamsir Alam and Pak Agus Halim, who are both very experienced off-roaders and they designed the tracks, conducted the survey, and prepared the entire event organization, which is chaired by Pak Wawan Dalbo.





The Indonesian Off-Road Federation (IOF), or more specifically the IOX Adventure Club, an exhibition and adventure arm of the IOF, is the organizer of this 'JAVEX 2021 Off-Road Expedition', hence there are local standards in places and many years of experience available.

Team KUDANIL, short for Kuda (horse) and Nil, like the river in Egypt or team hippo in English, was my group B assigned team. Five completely different vehicles, but all fully built up and compliant with the event requirements.

This year's KUDANIL teams included Pak Ruben in a Toyota Land Cruiser 70, Pak Andre in a Range Rover P38, Pak Catur in an older Jeep CJ7, Pak Wisnu and Pak Suby in an old Toyota Land Cruiser FJ43, and Pak Sani in a slightly smaller but no less powerful Suzuki Jimny.

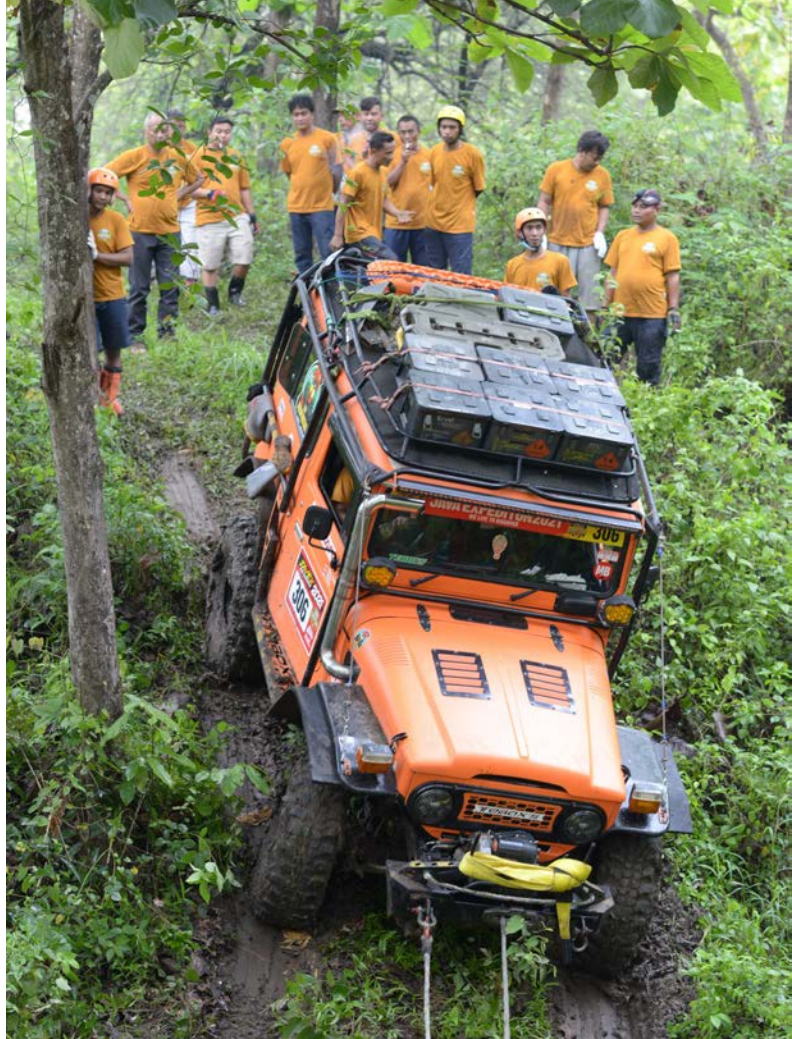
It is the rainy season, and the 75 cars are scrutinized in two different outdoor locations, depending on their assigned group, on November 19 and



on November 20, 2021. All necessary packed and securely stored equipment must be unpacked and re-presented for completeness, compliance and functionality. Winches and other technical equipment are tested and only after a successful scrutinizing the event stickers are issued and the car is declared fit for the event.

On the evening of November 20, 2021, all team leaders received the final briefing, and a warm welcome reception officially kicked off the event on the roof top bar of the Pulang ke Utara hotel. Participants from all of Indonesia's major islands hadn't seen each other since the last IOX event in 2020, so region-specific snacks were served, and new bonding friendships were formed. What else can you expect from a Pulang Ke Utara hotel rooftop sunset over Yogyakarta with the Merapi volcano in the distance?

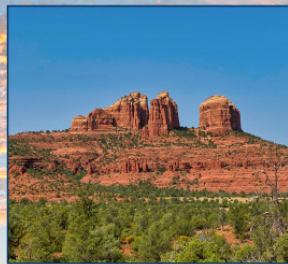
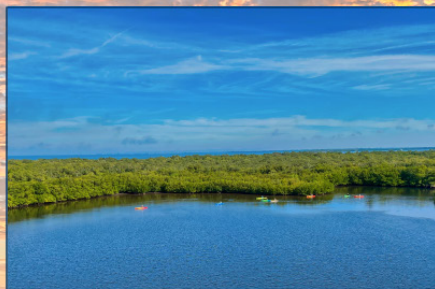
The following morning, there was a symbolic flag off at the Pulang Ke Utara hotel, symbolic in the sense that groups started individually from their own event headquarters rather than



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lining up all together in Yogyakarta. At the end of the day, the IOX Off-Road Challenge is not a race with winners; everyone is a winner and everyone is acknowledged as such.

Warming up is essential in any sport, especially 4x4 off-roading, not only for the cars, but also for the individual teams and groups. Everyone must be assigned to a task, and everyone must understand who is doing what, when, and where within their own team and within the group. Finally, because it is a team sport, teams must support one another, whether through winching exercises, technical equipment support, or simply by cooking rice.

So the first few stages were considered easy because they were only a few kilometres outside of Yogyakarta, a simple river crossing and some muddy tracks through old deserted rice paddies, a real warm-up, but ultimately fun after almost two years of not being on the tracks with the cars.

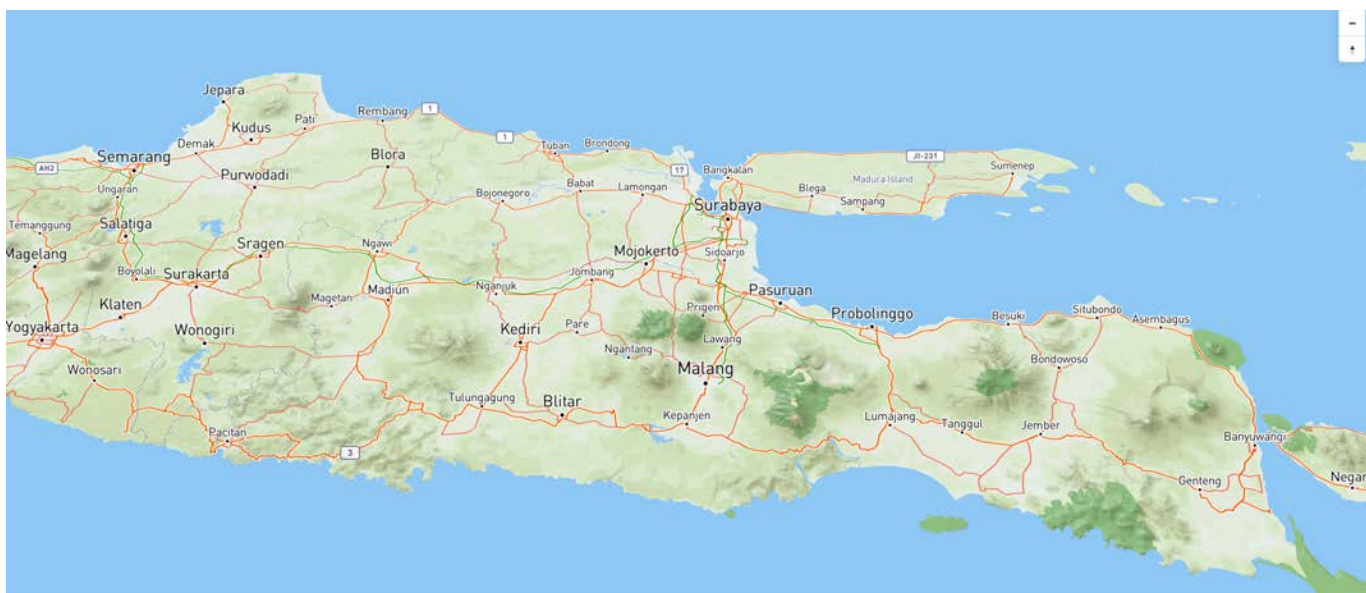
However, as part of the East Java regency, only Blitar should be the true starting point of the IOX Off-Road Expedition. Different regencies issue different permits, and it was only here that we received full support and access to remote forests and beaches, and



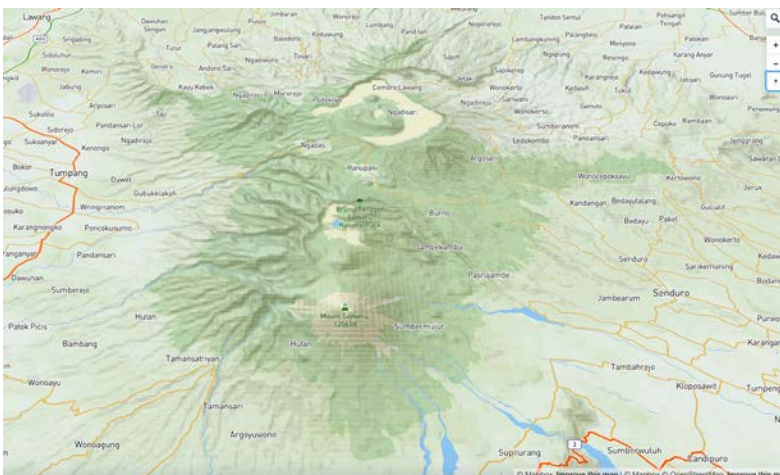


it was only here that the forgotten beauty of Java's southern coastline shone brightly.

The southern coast of East Java is, in fact, underdeveloped due to historical reasons, with limited road connectivity. As a result, driving from beach to beach is impossible; one must take shortcuts, which is exactly what we did, or were asked to do, beach hopping and taking shortcuts through secondary teak forests, cross country, no roads, no tracks. It would take hours to travel from beach to beach using official roads; one must first drive inland before returning a few kilometres down the road to the beach.







It's easier said than done, especially since it's rainy season and the southern coastline is steep, rocky, and teeming with sharp lime stones. However, there are beaches that are so remote, deserted, and devoid of infrastructure that one might not believe they are on one of Indonesia's over 7,000 islands, far and remote, but this is Java, Indonesia's most populated island.

Fishing and going out to sea are not a real source of income for the people who live in this part of Indonesia, because the southern shorelines are simply too rough and full of spirits, but lobster fishing is, and what better reward is there than boiled lobster and coffee for breakfast or grilled lobster and a cold drink for dinner? And that's exactly what we did, our reward for battling the mud, rain, and uncertainty of muddy tracks and deep ruts day and night.

At the end of the expedition, the Kudanil team's two Land Cruisers had the fewest technical failures throughout the expedition and within the team. Two plasma ropes simply snapped, one panhard rod at the LC80 and two at the FJ43 broke, and one joystick for the winch had to be replaced. In fact, considering the track's toughness, there was very little damage.

Pak Sany, on the other hand, was unlucky, as were Pak Andre and his Range Rover, and Pak Catur with his JEEP CJ7. Four plasma ropes snapped in total, all of which were branded, and one brand new tire was even slit open by





sharp rocks. One WARN 8274 winch had to be completely replaced, as well as an alternator, a solenoid switch, a coupling cylinder, and numerous other parts such as an accelerator cable and head lamps.

Yet unconsidered are the numerous dents and scratches. In fact, the orange foil used by all participating cars was intended to provide some protection for the car, but few people remove it and instead keep it on for the next event. In any case, it isn't a protection against true dents caused by trees and rocks.

Following that, one might wonder what the total financial damage in broken parts and missing equipment is with 75 cars participated in total. Millions of Rupiah or thousands of Dollars, plus all the labour required to replace them.

When you cross the finish line near Lumajang in East Java, and group A and B eventually merge again, you feel relieved, happy, and proud. Especially since everyone arrived safely and without any major injuries aside from a few minor scratches here and there.

PS: If you look at the map, you'll notice, that Lumajang is east of the majestic Semeru volcano; in fact, the day before, we passed through the old lava fields and rivers. Exactly one day after the Semeru erupted, and as of this writing, 39 people had died as a result of the volcanic eruption, and members of the expedition are still on site and are providing assistance with their 4x4 vehicles.

Well, IOX members are always present all over Indonesia to assist with relief efforts whenever necessary, and if not, they are all looking forward to the next event in Kalimantan, MEX, where the tribe will gather again for 14 days of rainforest action. **107**







# SPRING FLING

## Discovering desert delights

Story and photos by Michael Holland

Utah and all its many landscapes.



**I MADE A PILGRIMAGE. NO, NOT A HOLY ONE, BUT AN INSPIRATIONAL ONE FOR SURE.**

While the snows of the north cover the mountains of Utah, I traveled south to Canyon Country to enjoy the warm Spring temperatures. The scenic land features canyons, plateaus, buttes, and mesas. This land pops with red and white sandstone rock. The Colorado Plateau is a unique, special place. The warm temperatures and the longer days, offer a perfect time to romp in the desert.

My family and I traveled in my Land Cruiser 200 Series south on Highway 6. We intersected Interstate 70 and headed west for a short time before continuing south on Highway 24. We paralleled the San Rafael Reef. A massive 70+ mile sandstone reef that was pushed up and toward the sky millions of years ago. A reef, not at the bottom of an ocean but, rather, towering above red rock country in the desert of central Utah. We turned off the highway, aired down, and followed a dirt road around the southern end of the reef.

"Are we on Mars?" asked my daughter, Lilly.

"Ahhh, I think you might be right." My wife, Louise, responded. I wasn't going to argue. The rock, colors, and landscape appeared stark and void of plant life. It was gorgeous in a strange, eerie way! The land beckoned the traveler to explore and discover the secrets of this arid, desert landscape, and we were doing just that.







Crossing the Muddy Creek was uneventful this time.

I shifted into 4-low to drive through a rutted, rough spot. In the distance, Louise spotted an old homestead on the bank of the Muddy Creek—the first sign of water for miles. The ranch house was two-stories tall with an enormous fireplace. Abandonment and weathering had taken their toll on the structure, but it stood as a sign of the fortitude and determination of the homesteaders many years ago. We wandered the homestead and noticed that the land was free of debris and absent of relics of the past. Flash floods wash over this and clear the land, which likely forced these ranchers to depart this land for better pastures.

We crossed the Muddy Creek and continued south until we found ourselves on the eastern slope of Factory Butte. Louise prepared dinner while Lilly and I tried to savor the beauty of this desert land. We climbed into our 23 Zero rooftop tent for a good night's sleep.

The next morning, we ate and then headed east on Highway 24 to meet some friends. Like many roads in Utah, the meeting spot was ill defined—a small pull off next to the tarmac. Our friends, Abby, George, and their two children, Cal and Scarlett, were excited to “play” in this red rock landscape. They had brought dirt bikes and four wheelers to drive. We shifted the Land Cruiser into drive and led them on their dirt bikes and four wheelers down the dirt two-track to Mars.

In the desert landscape outside of Hanksville, a Mars research station exists. The research station is privately funded to train and educate would-be astronauts. During our first visit, we were greeted by ATVs driven by astronauts in full, white suits. However, on this day, we noticed no one. Abby, Louise, and I hiked through the sandstone and clay towers while the rest of the gang explored the area surrounding the Mars Research Station on two and four wheels. As we hiked, we surveyed the ground for anything unusual.

I was on lookout for flint chips. Flint, a natural mineral, was used for making arrowheads, spear heads, and sharp tools. The flint would be hit by a harder rock, such as granite, and flake off on impact. The mistakes or flakes can be found across the southwest. Unfortunately, luck wasn't on our side: we found nothing. We all returned to the starting point, loaded the bikes and four wheels on the trailer, and continued south.

The Notom-Bullfrog parallels the reef of Capital Reef National Park. Similar to the San Rafael Reef to the north, this reef extends north-south for some 60 miles. The dirt road was fairly easy to navigate because I aired



Lilly viewing signs of the past. The relics of yesteryear can be found all over the deserts of Utah.





Factory Butte at sunset.

down my tires using the ARB LINX system to improve the ride and traction. The afternoon sun backlit the sandstone canyons as rooster tails of dust followed us south. We stopped our vehicles at the bottom of the Burr-Trail Switchbacks. This dirt and gravel road ascends the cliff face via switchbacks carved and created by man. The Burr-Trail is an old cattle trail that was used to move cattle to and from different grazing grounds depending on the season. Today, it's a relatively smooth gravel road that allows the traveler to access the southern portion of the Capital Reef. We drove slowly upward. The road was in great shape, and we made quick work of the seven switchbacks to the top.

We stopped to enjoy the views of the Henry Mountains and the reef. The Colorado Plateau is a gorgeous land worthy of exploration, whether by vehicle or on foot. The plateau comprises all of southern Utah, parts of Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona. Our plan for the following day was to explore this majestic land on foot. Entering the small town of Escalante, we felt tired but excited about our next adventure.

"Where are we hiking today, Mike? Scarlett asked. "How long will the hike be?"

"There's a slot canyon which is super picturesque and so fun. But, it's narrow," I responded. With a little apprehension and nervousness, we packed our gear and started our hike to the Red Breaks slot canyon. Slot canyons are synonymous with the Colorado Plateau. Rushing water carves these tight sandstone slots.

Flash floods roar down these narrow canyons; water carrying rock and sand acts as a sandpaper to the canyon walls which results in the walls being carved and the canyon deepening—each and every time. They are a hoot to hike in but inclement weather should be a deterrent. Lucky for us, the weather was ideal.

We entered the canyon at a wide opening and hiked upward. As we did, the walls began to constrict. The blue skies faded, becoming more difficult to see. We were in the belly of the beast: Earth! Cal, Scarlett, and Lilly loved the opportunity to climb and stem the canyon walls. It truly was a kids' playground. The adults, on the other hand, remained mindful of the twists and turns of the canyon so we could safely hike our way through.



Mars Research Station from above.





Don't forget to look up when you are deep in the slots.



Lilly savoring the view, deep within Earth.



Scarlett enjoying Mother Nature's Playground.



Moki Marbles are a special and unique find in the deserts of Utah.





Golden Hour over the Escalante desert  
after a long day out on the trail.

The final stretch was the tightest, and we had to turn our bodies sideways to move through.

When the canyon opened, we were rewarded with daylight and the warmth of the sun's rays. We enjoyed the gorgeous scenery on our hike back to our vehicles. The kids found a large concentration of Moki marbles. For thirty minutes, they tried to find the largest one. Moki marbles are created when iron inside the sandstone rock appears as the softer sandstone is weathered away. The iron gets hammered by the elements over thousands of years and, if lucky, turns into an iron ball. The Moki marbles are protected; so, we looked, played, and left them there for others to enjoy.

Louise, Lilly, and I jumped in the Land Cruiser and headed back to payment. Our friends followed us in their own vehicle as "Golden Hour" was hitting the sandstone rock. A warmish glow of yellows, oranges, and reds shined magically all over the landscape. It was a beautiful

drive back to Escalante.

Spring is here. Embrace the changing landscape and weather wherever you might travel. Wear shorts and a short sleeve and embrace the warm temperatures. Jump into your Toyota and explore! It can lead you to many wonderful, awe-inspiring places and activities. Enjoy the discoveries! Enjoy the drive.

#### TRAVEL TIPS

- Supplies and gas are limited in south-central Utah. Towns such as Hanksville, Boulder, and Escalante offer basic necessities and gas. Go prepared.
- Cell phone coverage is spotty.
- Be mindful of where camping is legal. Bureau of Land Management land abounds and offers numerous places to disperse camp. National Park's mandate that campers stay in designated campgrounds. *107*



# 2023 Sequoia, What Does it Mean?



**W**hy did Toyota take 14+ years to debut a new Sequoia? Why is the outgoing Tundra also so 'long in the tooth'? Why doesn't North America get the 300 Series Land Cruiser? Well... it's all about the architecture.

What does the reveal of the most capable modern SUV in North America mean for us enthusiasts? In short, it means that the world of exploring with vehicles is about to see the largest transformation in history. During the event I was able to attend that revealed the new Sequoia (and Capstone +

Hybrid Tundra, see page 16 for details), I was talking with a well known colleague. He said, "People think Overlanding has reached peak. It's not even getting started". After thinking about that for a minute, I think he's right.

Over the last 14+ years covering the Toyota Adventure world, our team has learned that everything is about compromise. Want to build a capable rig that will take you around the world? Sure, but your MPG's will suffer, and watch out for that GVWR. Want to explore with the





family on the weekend, and still have room for soccer gear? Great, but you won't be going any where too fast.

By the time you knock out minimal modifications to your Toyota rig to make it capable enough for adventure, you've modified not only the cargo capacity, but the suspension and drivetrain as well. The truck was engineered to perform in OEM configuration, modifications end up messing with everything from electronics to performance to efficiency.

In this new future we're starting to see, factory trucks will be quite capable of tackling almost anything. Let's face it, they kind of always have been that capable. The reason these trucks will be so capable, efficient, and performant from the factory is the architecture I started with. Specifically the TNGA-F "Toyota New Global Architecture - Full size". It includes a fully boxed





# SEQUOIA



and robot welded steel frame. It includes the 3.5l Twin Turbo V-6, with Hybrid as an option. It includes coil suspension on all four corners, and on and on.

This platform will, for the first time, unite Toyota full size vehicles on a single architecture. We also expect that a version will be used on the new 4Runner and Tacoma, and potentially another more off-road focused SUV in the near future. That means that your 2022 Tundra or 2023 Sequoia or 2022 LX 600, are all 'basically a Land Cruiser'.

Yes, I said it, and I'll keep saying it. They are all going to be built to the same standards as the 300 Series Land Cruiser, which we don't get in North America. This will come with capability, reliability (once the bugs are sorted out), and modifiability.







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# SEQUOIA

Think about the fact that the 2023 Sequoia now has a 9,000lb towing rating. We haven't seen the exact weight or GVWR specs yet, but I'm certain that they will provide ample overhead for the 'overland modifications' that most people will want to do to their trucks. The same will likely hold true for Tacoma and 4Runner in the near future.

Today, the 4Runner and Tacoma are likely the most popular outdoor adventure 'overland' vehicles in North

America. As the modern version of full size trucks come to market, and the aftermarket industry is able to work their magic, great things will be happening all over the country.

So what does the 2023 Sequoia mean? It shows us that Toyota is listening. They are building a new generation of factory capable, yet easily modifiable trucks. These new vehicles will be able to handle anything we throw at them, and we will all be able to go places. The future, as they say, is bright! *TCT*







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# FJ Summit Had a Great Run!



**As we all know by now, the FJ Summit has been *Cancelled*.** There will no longer be a Summit in Ouray every summer, at least not as it has been traditionally organized.

When I was invited to join the FJ Summit Alumni group on Facebook, memories of the foundations of how Angie and I got involved in this industry started to flood in.

Many know, but most do not, that the reason we started the original FJC Magazine back in 2008 is directly because of the first FJ Summit. After attending that original even in our bone-stock Silver 2007 FJ Cruiser, we were hooked into the world of off-road exploring. Driving back to Colorado Springs from the event, we discussed a good way to get involved in the community we had come to know during that first week in Ouray.

I've been a map geek for as long as I can remember, so when the original directors started working on the Summit through the FJCruiserForums.com site, I decided to pitch in. I was able to put together a few custom maps of the trails in the area that roughly showed the routes, where they were located, and additional basic information. These original map pack would come to be known as the FJ Summit Event guide by 2008. It complimented our brand new magazine perfectly, and was a great way to give back to the community.

I still have copies of every event guide that I was able to help put together. The guides include maps of the trails, articles about the towns, mines, and ruins that are encountered, and include photos from the community. Over the years we went through several

design changes, from my basic maps & layout to the final update, which our own Creative Director Kathy Locke helped us publish in 2018.

While our entire team is sad with the news of no-more FJ Summit, the past 15 years have been truly amazing and we will all have memories that will last a lifetime. I'm already aware of several people that are planning to once again head to Ouray in July, and I've also seen a new Overland themed event that's planned for the same timeframe. I have no doubt that there are still plenty of great adventures to be found with Toyota vehicles and the mountains near Ouray, Colorado.

**Are you an FJ Summit Alumni?**  
**We put together a new way to show your support for previous FJ Summit events with an oval OURAY! Sticker, just like the old-school On My Way version...this one reads "Wish I was in ... Ouray!"**  
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From IG @ formidable\_land\_cruiser



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