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## Toyota HiLux Invincible X – Road Test

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**‘Reality shows are all the rage and if there was one about vehicles I think the survivor would be the Toyota HiLux’, writes Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales).**



It has faced and overcome challenges such as being blown up in a building, being demolished and drowned in a rising tide, only to start up with what I would term “tinkering”, apart from needing to replace a broken windscreen when it was dug out of the building rubble.

There are also numerous on-line videos of HiLux models of a certain age still starting and running in jungles, deserts and sometimes without conventional seats.

The Toyota HiLux is a survivor, and everyone loves a survivor, which gets a popular vote.

Today’s line up has come a long way since the model was launched in 1968 with a 76 hp 1.5 litre 4 cylinder engine, originally made by subsidiary company Hino Motors. It has now reached its eighth generation and is assembled in several countries with numerous facelifts, the last in 2024.

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In the last two decades we have seen HiLux models being successfully developed for the arduous Dakar Rally across Africa but also featured strongly in reports of civil unrest in North Africa where they have become mobile weapons platforms for heavy calibre machine guns used by insurgents and militia.

In the UK, the extensive options’ list does not run to big calibre machine guns but the upgrades for 2025 see a beefy 201 bhp 2.8 litre diesel engine join the



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familiar diesel 2.4 litre four-cylinder 148 bhp unit, along with a six-speed manual gearbox for those who want maximum control at all times.





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The easily switched 2H, 4H and 4L transmission continues but with revisions to the final drive for greater on-road smoothness.

The current range comprises single, extra and double cab designs in entry-level Active trim and then double cab only versions in the Invincible and GR Sport series priced between £30,270 and £63,525 excluding VAT for the nine-model line up.

The top of range versions have emphasised styling elements, higher quality interior trim and equipment as well as the new look front-end treatment.

Our near top of range InvincibleX looked dramatic and filled-with-something-to-spare every parking bay which for some reason meant no-one wanted to park close.

The big loadbed was finished in a hard wearing coating to protect it and also provide some grip to better locate items, and it was accessed through a hefty drop down tailgate from chest height. It's not easy to load if you have heavy items but it will take over a tonne and then pull about 3.5 tonnes.





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It's arguably the motoring equivalent of a shire or dray-horse used by knights of old or breweries.

And I'll drink to its workhorse and workmanlike character. It is built for doing tough jobs. Easily.



The gearing is set to pull heavy loads from standstill or to wade waist deep through water and up to its belly in mud while the driver and crew of up to five can sit in reasonable comfort in a wide, high roofed cab.

The 2.8L engine is noisy on starting and runs with a distinctive throb covering the miles on main roads... and then dialling in some different notes going through the gearbox on country roads.

It has to work hard to do its job and this reflects in the average fuel consumption. Even driving with a lighter throttle you'd be lucky to see 35 mpg achieved.

The gearing meant frequent changes even when lightly loaded and those came through a strong clutch with a lot of travel and big swings throughout the six-speed gate. The rotary switch to change modes was easy and quick acting and nicely positioned on the fascia just ahead of the lever.

Brakes were very strong underfoot and you could find them grabbing if pressed too hard, while the traditional parking brake held it very securely on slopes or in traffic.

If you are minded, the clutch and gearbox gives a driver a reasonable workout along with the steering, which is power assisted but needs a lot of arm twirling in tight spaces.

Secondary switches were all conveniently close to hand and fingers, including the infotainment system which was big, clear and had fairly quick-changing



displays.

The main dials were also large and clear with a decent sized selectable central panel for a range of information. Heating and ventilation was excellent if a bit noisy and backed up by powered windows all round.

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You climb up and into the cabin with well placed grab handles to assist, and there's a narrow step under the doors.

Once inside the seats were big, very comfortable and had fairly good adjustment on the front pair with useful oddments spaces throughout. The seats' helped cushion the bumps which the suspension struggled to absorb and it was an acceptable level on good roads but bumpier off them.





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On road performance is not the forte of the HiLux, so it's slow through the gears and not particularly brisk towards the top end but we did manage to extract a squeal at one junction.

Off road it just seems to look at the terrain and get on with whatever you want it to do, just like a good shire.

At night the lights were bright and had good range, essential in the countryside or off-road, with massive wipers and a high capacity washer system. You cannot see each corner but sensors and a camera make up for it.

## VERDICT

The Toyota HiLux is built for doing a job, any job, and that is its real strength. What's more it will survive.

**For:** Immense low speed pull, strong brakes, huge load & tow capacity, five seats, very good build quality, reasonable equipment

**Against:** Jiggly ride when lightly laden, big turning circle, long-throw gear gate, low economy, noisy, high taxes.

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## FAST FACTS



**Model:** Toyota HiLux InvincibleX

**Price:** £40,271 ex-VAT

**Mechanical:** 201 bhp 4 cyl 2.8 litre turbo-diesel 6 speed manual, 2/4WD

**Max Speed:** 109 mph

**0 - 62 mph:** 10.13sec

**Combined MPG:** 33

**Insurance Group:** 45D

**C02 emissions:** 250 g/km

**Bik rating:** 37%, £4,680 FY, £620×5

**Warranty:** 10 years/ 100,000 miles

**Size:** L 5.33 m (17.49 ft), W 1.90 m (6.23 ft), H 1.87 m (6.14 ft)

**Payload:** 1,090 kg (2,403 lb)

**Kerbweight:** 2,290 kg (5,049 lb)