

CLASSIC DRIVER

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Lead

One of Toyota's rarest and most capable off-rovers of all time, this Mega Cruiser for sale in the Classic Driver Market is ready to give your neighbours' Hummers and Mercedes G-Wagons self confidence issues.



What do the Lamborghini LM002, Land Cruiser, Hummer and G-Wagon have in common? They all fear Toyota's rarest and most capable all-terrain vehicle: the mighty Mega Cruiser. With a name like that, there's immediately some expectation, and at least as a collector car the Mega Cruiser ticks all the boxes. Like the Hummer, it was based on a military vehicle designed for the Japanese Self-Defense Force, internally coded the BXD10 and dubbed the High Mobility Infantry Transport Vehicle. 3,000 of these rare military off-rovers were built, but in 1996 Toyota caught wind of General Motor's master stroke of building civilian Hummers and decided to build one of their own: the Mega Cruiser.





When new, the Mega Cruiser cost just as much as a Honda NSX and 20% more than a Hummer, which likely contributed to the ultra-low production numbers of just 133 examples. That makes the Mega Cruiser rarer than the LM002 and one of the most exclusive Toyotas ever made. However, while those numbers will have collectors drooling, the Mega Cruiser's real forte is off-piste motoring.

Toyota packed as much equipment as possible into the Mega Cruiser: a centre, two-speed electronically locking differential, front and rear Torsen limited slip differentials with electronic locking, portal axles, torque converter lock-up control, inboard ventilated brakes, 37 inch tires, 16.5 inches of ground clearance and hydraulic rear wheel steering which cut the turning radius to 18.2 feet — over 7 feet tighter than the Hummer. It was also 16 inches longer than the H1 Hummer, yet it weighed 1500lbs less thanks to its lightweight engine, a 4.1-liter intercooled turbodiesel inline-four "15B-FT" rated at 155 horsepower and 282 lb-ft of torque, borrowed from Toyota's heavy trucks and buses from the time.



This example was registered in June 1996 in Japan, where it spent its first 12 years and 43,000 km, before being shipped to Russia, where it roamed for a further 14 years and 35,000 km. The current custodian purchased this Mega Cruiser just a month before Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. In the conflict that ensued, the car was lost for a year before being rediscovered and shipped to United States, where it received a comprehensive refresh, detail and service at both Colbern's Detailing in Ventura, CA and Corsetti Cruisers in Gardena, CA. Now fully registered and road legal, this Mega Cruiser is ready to get muddy with its next owner.

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