

unstoppable

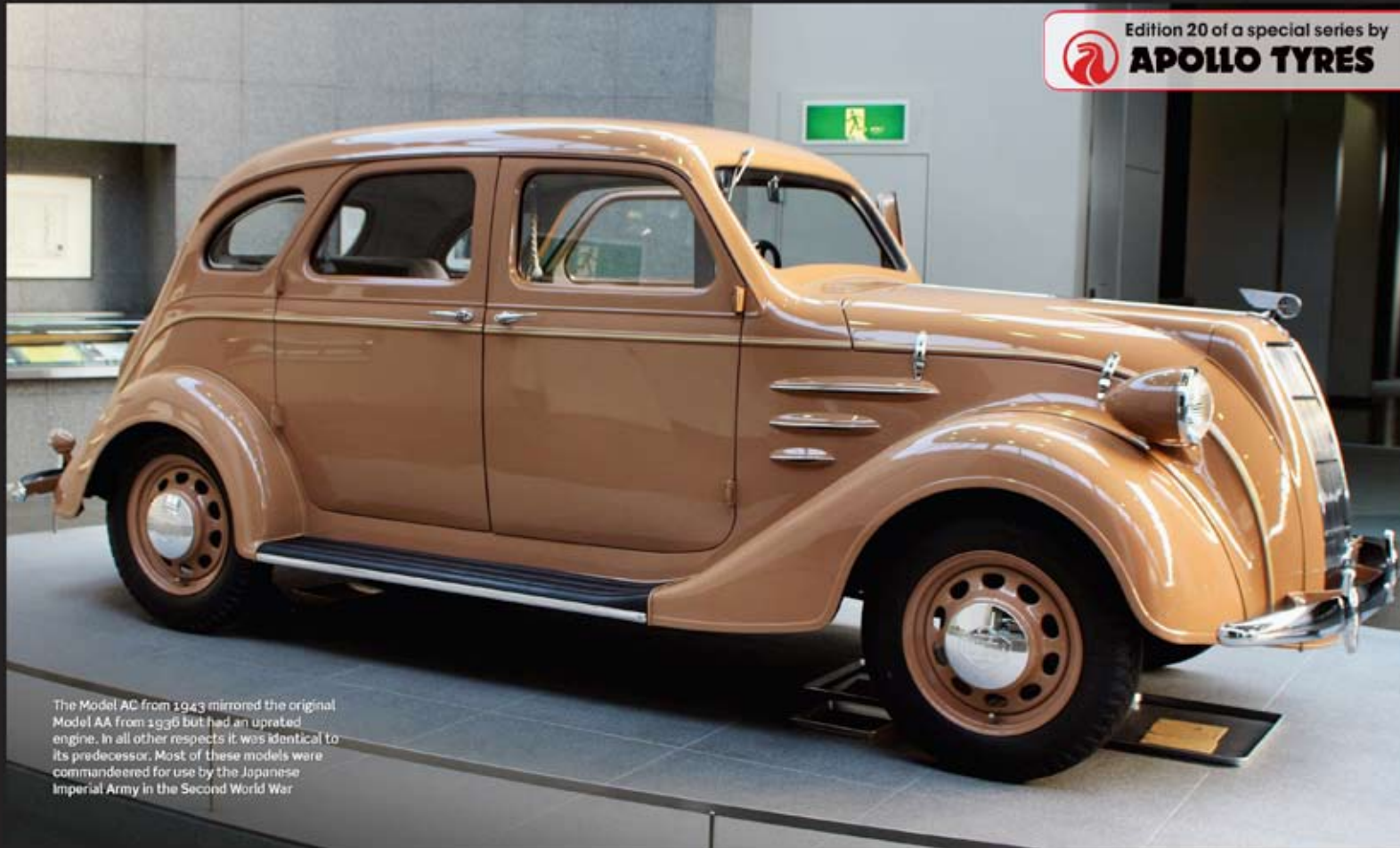
1936 TOYODA

Job 1 for Toyoda was the Model AA of 1936. Styled on the streamlined American saloons then in vogue, Kiichiro Toyoda's first ever offering was the forerunner for the world beating cars named Toyota today



Edition 20 of a special series by

APOLLO TYRES



The Model AC from 1943 mirrored the original Model AA from 1936 but had an updated engine. In all other respects it was identical to its predecessor. Most of these models were commandeered for use by the Japanese Imperial Army in the Second World War



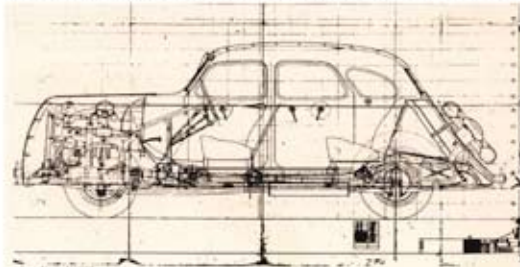
APOLLO TYRES LTD. *unstoppable*

Never wary of progress, never skeptical about success,
Never scared of challenges, never tired of trying.
Every step of the way we travel with our customers
On the "unstoppable" journey to success.

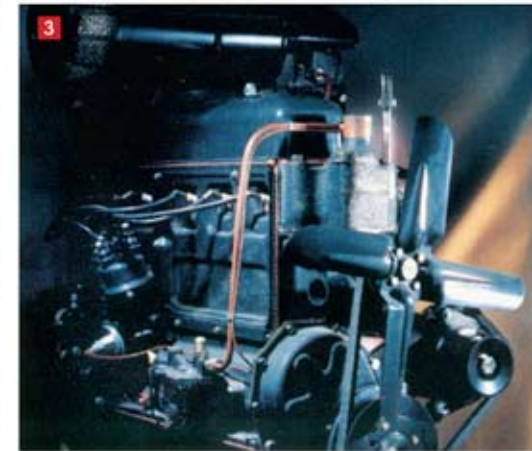
THIS IS THE CAR THAT KIICHIRO TOYODA CONJURED up in 1936 and unleashed the power and force that the world knows of today as the Toyota Motor Corporation. Of course it took more than six decades for the Japanese car maker to attain its present dominance as the world's biggest car maker but even from its humble beginnings in the mid-1930s, all its efforts underlined the fact which we all know of and also experience today: solidly reliable and perfectly engineered cars to serve all our motoring needs and some more.

The Japanese car market in the 1930s was dominated by American brands Ford and Chevrolet who had assembly plants in the country. Ford had been first off the block in Japan, starting off with its famous Model T in 1924. Chevrolet used to import and sell large numbers before it finally set up its own assembly unit in Japan with the Model AE in 1937. These two brands plus a host of British cars made life difficult for the fiercely nationalistic Japanese who were aware of the need for a peoples car of their own and this was the prime motivating factor which drove Kiichiro Toyoda to design and develop his first car.

The Toyoda Model AA of 1936 was by no stretch of the imagination Japan's first car or even its first mass produced car. Nissan and a couple of others had claim to that but as a symbol of what we have come to expect of the mega unstoppable brand that Toyota is today, the Model AA is historically a very significant automobile. In trying to develop a people's car for Japan, Kiichiro Toyoda drew upon inspiration from two American cars. For the styling and the chassis and suspension it was the



Original sectioned drawing of the Toyota Model AA outlining the passenger compartment ahead of the rear axle for optimum comfort of the occupants



De Soto Airflow saloon which determined the look and the manner in which the Model AA rode. For the tractive power and its transmission to the rear wheels, it was the Chevrolet 3.4-litre ohv six-cylinder engine plus gearbox. There were however certain important modifications which Toyoda made to the car including his own design pistons and overall refinement which made it a strong seller in the domestic market. The engine developed 65bhp @ 3000rpm and produced 19.4kgm of torque at 1800rpm. The sturdy and strong structure allied with the 110km/h capability of the car endeared itself to many and launched Toyota (name was changed sometime in 1938-39 after a name contest was held for just this purpose) in the automotive world.

The light maroon coloured car on the opener was the 1943 Model AC, essentially an evolution of the Model AA with an uprated B-series engine and featuring slight cosmetic changes to the bodywork. The black Model AA you see on this page is a complete modern recreation by the master craftsmen at the Toyopet Service Centre who worked from original drawings to make it. It occupies pride of place at the well stocked Toyota Automotive Museum in Japan. What is significant about the Model AA was not just that it was the first Toyota but also that the famed Toyota Production System came into being with it. And that as we all know is an unstoppable fact of life, being embraced by a host of global car makers.

Adil Jal Darukhanawala

- 1 The first Toyota Model AA placed head on against the 1934 De Soto Airflow sedan from Chrysler Corporation. Toyoda made no bones about where he derived the inspiration for the style of his first automobile.
- 2 The replica Model AA which stands in the Toyota Automotive Museum.
- 3 Toyoda sought inspiration for the mechanicals from Chevrolet. His OHV six-cylinder engine being modeled bang on the Yankee powerplant.
- 4 The Toyota Model AA also adopted the Chrysler Airflow's ladder frame and suspension design.