

THE CAMRY SPORTSWAGON

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A few years back, we traded in the long-serving Bluebird for a Camry stationwagon. The Boy, seven at the time, took one look at the alloy-shod Camry 220 GL and declared it a sportswagon.

No ornery stationwagon for The Boy - a **sportswagon**. I suppose when you're seven and you're a Holden V8 fan with a cap and jacket to prove it, you make do with what you get.

I grew up with a succession of Ford Falcon stationwagons, each of them called 'The Tank'. I remember my father inching one down a particularly narrow and winding section of road in Aro Valley. Almost all of my childhood holiday memories include lying in the rear cargo area, in a cocoon of blankets and luggage; if I got bored, I played polite games of shoot-'em-up with the driver of the vehicle behind us.

I never thought I'd be driving a Toyota. They're so ubiquitous that... well, I thought Other People drove the damned things. Not me.

But it's grown on me. The two-point-two litre engine is a good compromise between around-town trips and our annual cross-country holidays. It's wide enough to give each occupant room to move - on long trips, the kids fill up the backseat and footwell with anything and everything to keep them occupied. The rear cargo area has been filled with everything from luggage (and a dog, once) to film-making gear, and from grocery shopping to firewood aplenty (with the backseat folded forward). It's a workhorse, baby, and it'll take on any job you throw at it.

I know that, HKS alloys aside, we've got a stock Camry. But there's something about **our** Camry that makes it better looking than the rest of the Camrys out there.

And you know what it is? They're not sportswagons like ours.

D F Mamea lives in West Auckland with his Lovely Wife, two kids, two cars, a mutt, a moggie, and a large selection of black t-shirts.

Reality check: the cars are a Toyota and a Fiat, and he's originally from Wellington.