

The Lexus View

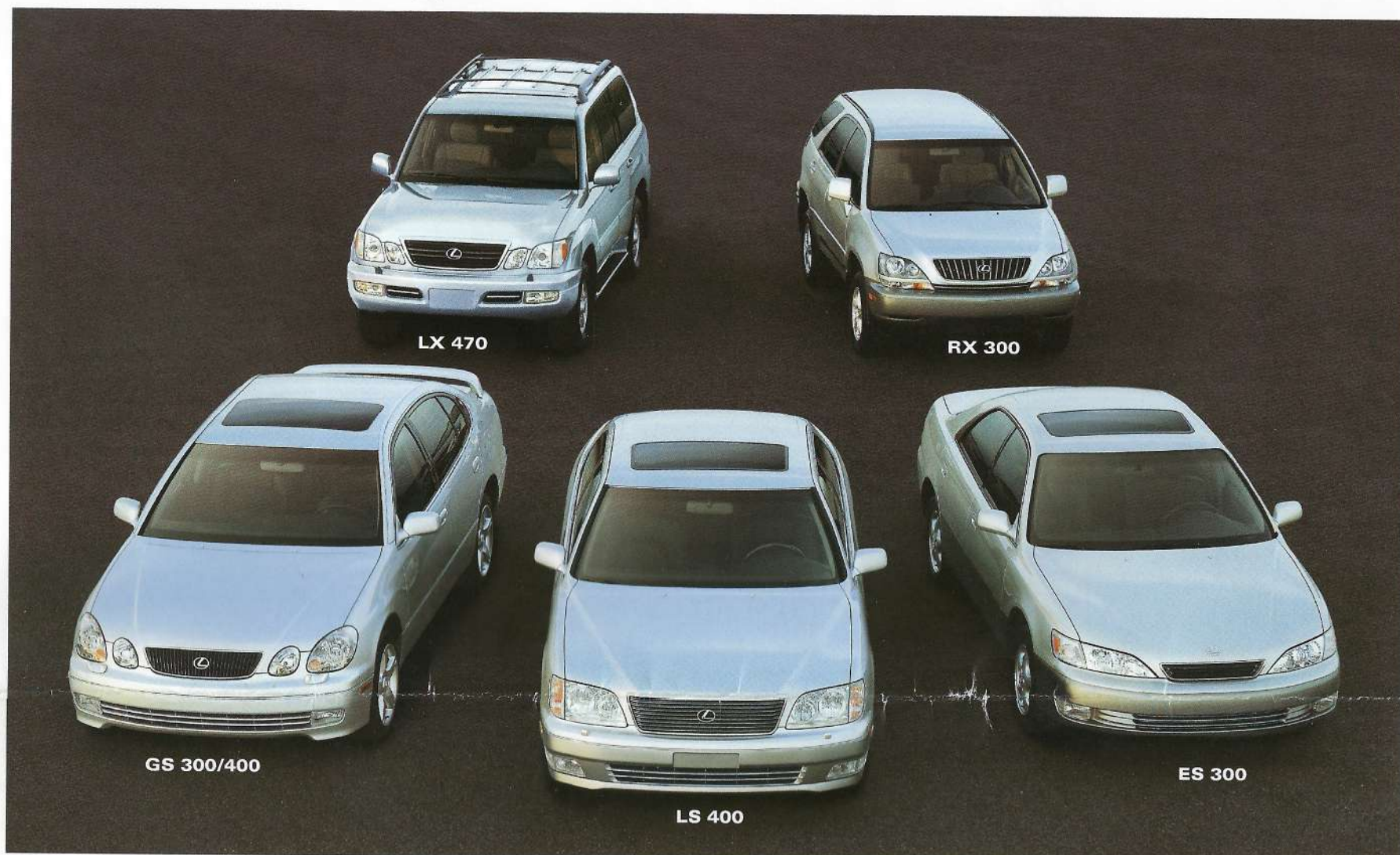
The latest in The Relentless Pursuit of Perfection

1999

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Lexus reborn: More power to them!



Lexus asked a long-time observer of the luxury automotive scene to study, drive, analyze and table his observations on the new, "reborn" Lexus line-up.

His report:

Lexus has transformed its line-up – in one bold, across-the-board sweep.

First, four new Lexus sedans crashed the automotive scene: namely, a newly-authoritative LS 400 flagship, a brace of dynamic GS sports sedans,

and a speedier, sportier ES 300.

Turning its high beams onto the sport utility vehicle (SUV) sector, Lexus set that burgeoning market on its ear, too – by ushering in a new generation of 4-wheel-drive *civilized* toughies.

In creating six performance-boosted new models in less than two years (a feat greeted as "almost a rebirth of the *marque*") Lexus is motoring faster than any luxury car manufacturer in memory.

A model-by-model review follows.

Lexus scientists told: "Performance paramount".

Almost a decade ago, the world's best car was launched – the best *all-round*. The LS 400 was quiet, quick, agile, comfortable, luxurious and long-lasting: Lexus became a respected leader of the luxury field.

By the second half of the decade, Lexus designers, engineers and scientists faced a new challenge: to create a new breed – across the board. *With performance paramount.*

A remarkable advance named VVT-i (for Variable Valve Timing with intelligence) led the resulting flood of innovation.

VVT-i plays a computerized engine management role that is dauntingly complex and sophisticated. Instead of inlet and exhaust valves operating with the measured tread of an elite marching squad (as they have done since automotive time immemorial) a computer directs them to open and close *in reaction to the needs of the micro-moment*. The



"The completely redesigned heads... boast variable valve timing on their intake camshafts via an oil-driven helical gear-drive... The LS 400 has become a startlingly quicker automobile" – ROAD & TRACK

power bonus extracted provides a marked performance boost to all Lexus sedans as well as the RX 300. In particular, the new LS 400 and GS 400 achieve breathtaking get-up-and-go times.

At the same time, VVT-i polishes the *marque's* already high-gloss reputation for power that is both smooth and silent.

It also saves gas and cuts emissions.

RX 300: Quest for the *civilized* husky is over.

Early in this writer's probing into the world of what is rather awkwardly termed the Sport Utility Vehicle, or SUV, he turned to an ultra-active friend – winter skier, snowmobiler and snowshoer, summer canoeing-camper, and orthodox family man/business executive the rest of the time – to further his understanding of the on-and-off-road, 4-wheel-drive breed.

As far as the supercharged one was concerned, the key issue wasn't how well a 4WD performed when the going was

rough but whether he wanted to subject his wife, kids "and, frankly, myself" to their rough 'n ready, often rolling, ride.

This writer found himself nodding agreement: "My sentiments exactly."

It seemed the time was ripe for a new generation of truly versatile vehicles to hit highway, road and trail.

Civilized tamer of wilds. It wasn't hard to figure out what the Lexus scientists would do when they tackled the world of the SUV. 1. They'd smooth out every rough edge. 2. They'd ensure that a Lexus 4WD really *performed*.

From the outset of the project, one

thing was uppermost in this writer's mind: He must drive this new, civilized breed of wilderness tamer.

So, along with a privileged cadre of automotive journalists and a photo-

Vancouver, including the magnificent Stanley Park oasis of green and quiet (eyes right)!

The writer's immediate thought was that, in the RX 300, Lexus had created the

first true 4WD that doesn't look like a box. Or drive like a truck. His second thought: The RX standards of comfort and quiet aren't just those of a sedan. They are those of a Lexus sedan.

Minds manners.

The RX "minds its manners" marvelously.

How about 4WD vibra-

tion through steering wheel or derrière? Not a hint. Jarring, truck-derived suspension? Banished. Typical 4WD lean? No more. Power? The RX's 220 bhp V6 hits 60 mph at the pace of a Lexus ES 300; its power to weight ratio rivals that of a GS 300.

Informally, fresh in from their evaluation outings, correspondents gave the RX high praise for road feel – that subjective sense of affinity with the tarmac, communicated via the steering wheel, that is so hard to get "just right".

This writer concurs. Sweeping round the long, fast bends of the ocean and mountain-hugging Vancouver to Whistler highway with true rack & pinion steering

precision, you might well be in a Lexus sedan – or a BMW (to give the marque its just desserts). The VVT-i controlled RX engine is superbly smooth as well as powerful. Its super-smart transmission shifts instantly – and virtually imperceptibly.

Inside story: From leather to wood, from superior silence to superior stereo, from attractively-ergonomic dash to soft-carpeted luggage area, the RX cabin is vintage Lexus. (Note for parents of leggy teens: its comforts include an abundance of rear seat legroom.)

Expert view. An "Auto File" article in THE FINANCIAL POST MAGAZINE, heartily approved of "the luxurious four-wheel-drive vehicles (both RX and LX) that bumped us over the 8 km of deeply-rutted, ice-filled track... Later, we decided the cars also look perfectly at home pulled up at the front entrance of the Chateau Whistler Resort.

"With the RX 300, Lexus has taken SUV evolution in a new direction that not only acknowledges the luxury aspirations of buyers but addresses their desire for a versatile, go-almost-anywhere vehicle that



The comfort and quiet of the RX 300 aren't those of a sedan. They are those of a LEXUS sedan.

grapher of his own, he proceeded to Whistler, B.C., Mecca of the ardent skier – and destination of the first of the Lexus new generation tough guys to hit North American shores.

There, he watched leading automotive correspondents from Canada and the U.S. try out both new Lexus offerings, mid-size RX 300 and ultra big 'n tough LX 470. Then he took the wheel himself – highway, byway and off-road.

Town and country challenge. From Whistler and its rocky, steep and snow-clad environs, writer and photographer headed for the urban challenges and beauty of



doesn't have the inherent drawbacks of more traditional truck-based SUV's – really poor fuel economy, hard ride and so on... it's quite unlike anything that's gone before".

To which this observer would add the snooty saying: "You can take the boy out of the country but you can't take the country out of the boy", concluding that, with the RX 300, Lexus has done just that!

Whatever the need, the RX knows

how to behave. Take it out hunting fun, return with mud up to the withers (whatever they are), give it mother's "lick and a promise" and, without a quiver of social doubt, grace the tables of civilized society.

"Have cake, eat it."

The RX 300's debut means that people who look for ruggedness and space, luxury and performance... so they can

lug family, friends, dogs, food-for-all, skis, scuba gear and whatever else from city to weekend getaway, in all kinds of weather... after enduring fellow drivers and generally appreciating the contribution high-quality transportation makes

to urban life... who want to have their cake and eat it too... who want it all and want it now... such people can *have* it all and have it now!

The Lexus RX 300 raises the on-and-off-highway bar for the entire industry.

"Just the facts, ma'am."

If one car hits 60 mph in 9 seconds, another in 7.5, the difference is instantly obvious. Unfortunately, where safety is the subject, figuring out the facts is far from easy. Are all vehicles uniformly safe in all important ways? Emphatically, NO!

Examples: Should a car seat's frame be uncompromisingly rigid? Answer: Traditional thinking has it that the stronger the seat the better the protection. Lexus crash tests demonstrate the contrary. Seats should act as *mini crumple zones* – to cradle and support the body up to but no further than the point at which force causes bodily injury. At that moment, Lexus seats yield and deform – to absorb shock that would otherwise hammer its occupant.

Lexus engineers also decided to locate side air bags *in the seats themselves* – to maximize protection no matter how far forward or back the seat is positioned.

Similarly, Lexus developed "soft-form" interiors by backing leather and fabric with a cushioning layer in impact-vulnerable areas such as arm rests and door pillars.

Conclusion: From the Romans came "caveat emptor". In the now-extinct cop show *Dragnet*, the sergeant was wary of buying anything without "...the facts, ma'am." For safety's sake, search them out!



Airbag inflates from side of front seats.



GS viewed as "the Lexus with attitude."

When the adjectives are in full and furious flood among the correspondents who assess their wares, automobile manufacturers figure they've struck mother lode!

Explaining why the magazine awarded the GS 300 and 400 its '98 Import Car of the Year title, MOTOR TREND wrote:

"Through a feat of engineering alchemy that can only be described as monumental, the GS 300 and GS 400 models combine luxury and performance more deftly than ever before. Watch out BMW, move over Mercedes, the Lexus with attitude has arrived."

Other leading publications weighed in.

ROAD & TRACK: "...Lexus, of all companies, has suddenly leapt up, grabbed a red scarf and a rose and decided to tango... Dynamically, this is one impressive sports sedan."

CAR AND DRIVER reviewed seven similarly-priced sports sedans, among them the GS 300. Placing the 400's smaller-engined sister at the head of the pack, the magazine opined: "This Rising

Sun rocket is fortified withchutzpah...

Lexus is definitely walking on the wild side with this one." (It also reassured "the Lexus faithful" that the engine "coos a mere 38 decibels at idle" and the chassis "provides a smooth, unruffled ride when driven in mother-in-law mode.")

"What the Devil?!"

The august NEW YORK TIMES mused in a headline: "Now what the devil has gotten

four-doors for the person with a pulse".

Out-enthused?

How's that? We must bear in mind that Americans are naturally outgoing and enthusiastic? Well, in lower-key Canada, that pinnacle of propriety, THE GLOBE AND MAIL, was moved to record that "Lexus has stepped out of the closet, shaken off the conservative look and feel and taken direct aim at some of the

finest Bahn-burners Europe has to offer... "the result is a very refined and highly sophisticated car."

The West was not to be outgunned. "The GS is a rocket" – the CALGARY SUN. Up the road, the EDMONTON SUN decided: "This car is smooth – liquid smooth... a marvelous piece of technology. Oh yeah – and a great car, too."

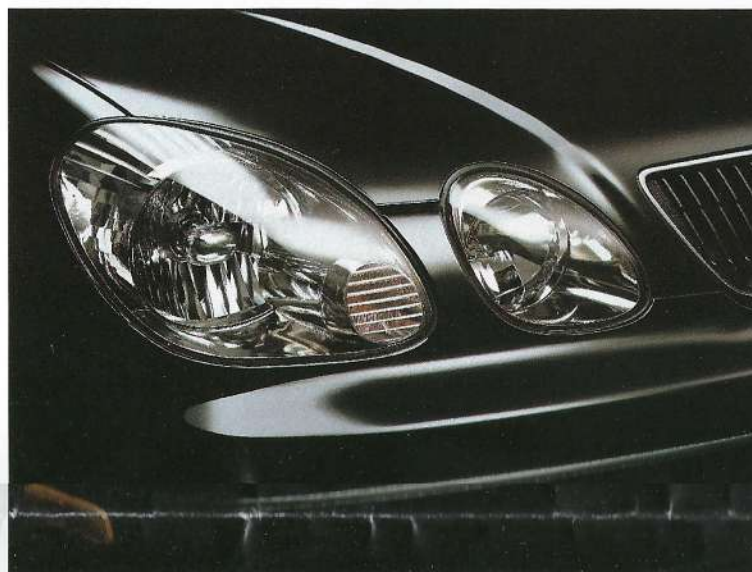
Before smothering you with praise, dear reader, here are some revealing facts:

0-60, 6.0; hands-on it's 5.7. Reaching 60 mph in the official factory figure of six seconds flat is exciting enough for anyone. However...

Using his thumbs to downshift and upshift manually via buttons flush-mounted on the wheel at nine o'clock and three o'clock, a CAR AND DRIVER reporter recorded a startling 5.7 seconds.

"Fast fun". With both GS 300 and 400, the engineers' goal was to design the quintessential sports sedan. Or as chief engineer Nakagawa put it more prosaically: "We set out to make a fast, fun sedan."

Unlike the super-calm LS 400



Further, wider, whiter: Twice as much light in a beautiful package.

into Lexus? ...they are Ba-a-a-d – in the good sense, that is". Its verdict: "...the GS 400 outperforms its rivals on virtually every count".

The USA TODAY correspondent was specially spicy-phrased, finding the GS "wickedly wonderful... chunky and mean..."



Crystal-clear black on white instruments: buttons at nine and three o'clock for "thumb-tip" clutchless shifting; control of temperature and sound at a glance and within easy reach.

banner carrier, you feel the pace in a GS; through the taut steering, you feel the wheels planted firmly on the road. And – shush now, listen – unlike the awesomely-quiet LS 400, you can actually hear the growl of the engine!

Powerhouse V-8.

The GS 400's advanced-technology VVT-i V-8 extracts 300 rousing horses from a

torque curve produces 80% of maximum torque at engine speeds as low as 1400 rpm. Result: The GS 300's three-litre engine gets up and goes to the stirring tune of 7.6 seconds from 0-60 mph.

Which poses the question: "Who on earth needs more than that?" Answer: Big brother GS 400 satisfies (indeed satiates) any desire to be a member of

Together, the intelligent duo of VVT-i and five-speed automatic transform both the GS 300 and 400 into fastest-of-the-fast territory in their respective sectors.

"Ba-a-a-d – in the good sense"...

"wickedly wonderful"... "the Lexus with attitude".

What the devil has gotten into Lexus? Certainly something has!

Skidding, spinning banned.

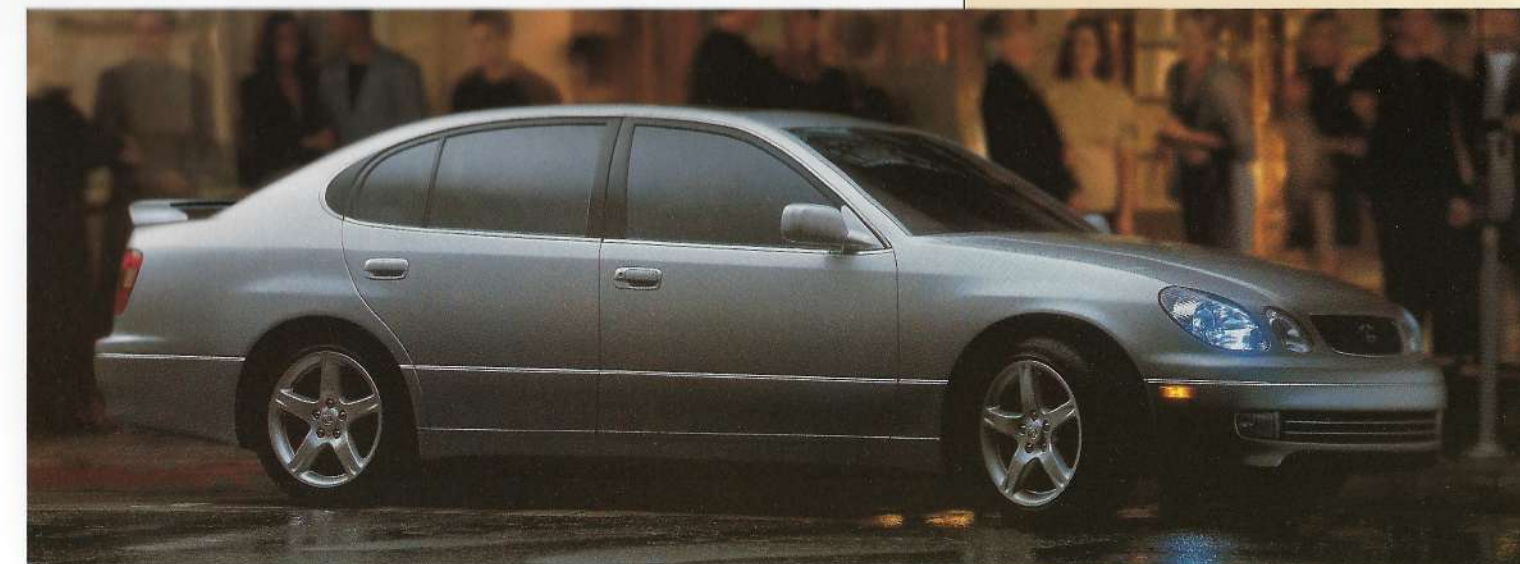
Performance is not the only important virtue that has been cranked up several notches by Lexus engineers. So has safety.

From the launch of the Lexus marque, its sophisticated ABS system produced

fast, straight, skid-free stops. Then wheel-spin was tackled and solved. During acceleration, the computerized traction control system (TRAC) perfected by Lexus prevents wheelspin and the loss of directional control associated with it.

Stability circle complete. Now Lexus has completed the stability circle with a further technology leap.

Leading automotive journalists sampling Lexus



little under four litres capacity.

Comparative stats reveal that the radically-new Lexus engine is more powerful – and, consequently, faster – than the V-8's of its two prime German rivals. It's also a mite lighter, smaller and more fuel-efficient.

VVT-i technology (see front page) also provides the GS 300's three-litre, twin-cam six powerplant with a similarly-big power boost. Its flat-as-an-athlete's-abdomen

the need-for-speed club.

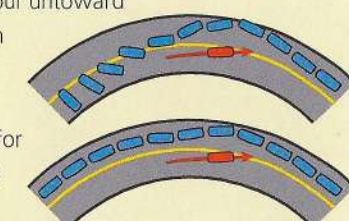
Supersmart? VVT-i is only half the story. The other half belongs to a new, world-leading, five-speed automatic transmission with electronic intelligence. Termed, in the jargon of the day, "smart" the new transmission is reputed to lead the world in both speed and smoothness ("shift shock" is barely perceptible even when you're looking out for it). Perhaps it's supersmart.

in test track mode were invited to "spin out". They couldn't. Unless they pressed the "VSC off" button to deactivate the system, Lexus Vehicle Skid Control kept them on the straight and narrow.

VSC protects us more mundane mortals from having rear end abruptly catch up with front end as the consequence of our untoward action – such as swerving violently to avoid an oncoming car. Or taking a turn too quickly.

To stop sideways slip, the VSC system brakes the wheel, or combination of wheels, for minuscule fractions of a second until the car is placed back in line – and disaster avoided.

(Unless there's nothing for tire tread to grip onto, e.g. the dreaded black ice, or a manoeuvre so violent it's beyond redemption.)



Without VSC (top): To avoid the red car crossing the centre line, the blue car swerves, overcorrects – and spins out. With VSC, the computer takes control – and saves the day.

LS 400: King of the "High Altitude Cruisers".

"Incomparable refinement, impeccable build quality, unbeatable value... an almost perfect recipe for the luxury car" — CAR AND DRIVER

Labeling them "High Altitude Cruisers: strategic transport for captains of industry", leading U.S. automotive magazine CAR AND DRIVER chose to assess five cars that "cruise in rarefied atmosphere at the \$60,000-plus altitude".

"...a demanding lot."

CAR AND DRIVER chose to top out at around US \$70,000. According to the magazine's editors, at this price level:

"Their owners are a demanding lot... An executive demands comfortable accommodations, strong performance, driving pleasure, and a level of features and amenities that justify the car's lofty price and set his or her car apart from the merely great mass-market automobiles."

In the opinion of CAR AND DRIVER: *"Only the world's best automakers compete at this level. We rounded up four from the old world — the Audi A8, the BMW 740iL, the Jaguar XJ8 Vanden Plas and the Mercedes-Benz S320 — and pitted them against the best sedan available from Japan, the Lexus LS 400."*

Having set the ground rules, the magazine's editors subjected the mini-fleet to a rigorous series of comparative tests and measurements. Their verdict:

"First place, Lexus LS 400. Highs: Incomparable refinement, impeccable build quality, unbeatable value... An almost perfect recipe for the luxury car."

In such company, "near perfect" is a rare accolade indeed.

"...it's the winner."

The magazine's report began with a bang.

"What can you say about a car that turns in the best acceleration and braking

...the (Lexus) engineers made changes to the car's steering to provide a more positive interaction with the driver. They also modified the suspension to provide better body-motion control. There never was much wrong with the car's suspension geometries and components, and it still attacks a winding road with surprising poise and ability.

"...this generation LS 400 has moved

some way toward BMW in the way it has been sharpened and tightened. It would have been a mistake for Lexus to forsake the luxury-car attributes that so shocked the world's premium car manufacturers, so it hasn't. The almost eerie quietness and relaxed, detached sense of isolation are still there. So are the quality materials and the meticulous fit and finish.

As one tester noted: *"This car checks all the boxes on most luxury-car buyers' shopping lists."*

"Not surprisingly, therefore", concluded CAR AND DRIVER, "it also checks into first place."

And that, as they say, is that!

Quality, quiet – and speed. Almost a decade ago, the first LS 400 was heralded as *"embodying new standards of luxury, quality and quiet"*. Now Lexus is at it again. This

time, performance takes pride of place.

Extracting 290 rousing yet smoothly-silent horses from a little under four litres capacity, the LS 400's radical new VVT-i boosted engine brings apt new shading to the word "powerplant" (6.6 seconds 0-60 mph is fast for any car, let alone a luxury

sedan with a largesse of space and a long list of amenities.)

The new Lexus engine is not only more powerful – and, consequently, faster – than the V-8's of its prime rivals, it's also a mite lighter, smaller and more fuel-efficient.

However, the VVT-i V-8 is only half of the story. The other half belongs to the Lexus flagship's new, world-leading, five-speed automatic transmission with electronic intelligence (See "Supersmart" on page 5).

And now to the undefinable realms of luxury, peace-of-mind, and their worth.

Hidden luxury. In a Lexus, there's much that meets the eye – and much that doesn't. What is obvious in the LS cabin shown alongside is its impeccable taste – and that room for hip, head and long legs is unusually generous, front and back. Among not-so-obvious features:

In the LS 400 (GS and LX, too) an electrochromic control automatically darkens rear-view mirrors to cut glare

from headlights or setting sun.

A newly-developed hydrocarbon air pollution sensor shuts off foul outside air until you've moved on to cleaner territory. An activated charcoal micron filter removes dust and pollen.

Via four door-mounted, full-range speakers, two front-pillar tweeters and one magnificent parcel-shelf-mounted sub-woofer (all of them practically

invisible) the 280-watt-driven sound is full, rich, clean. And by Nakamichi.

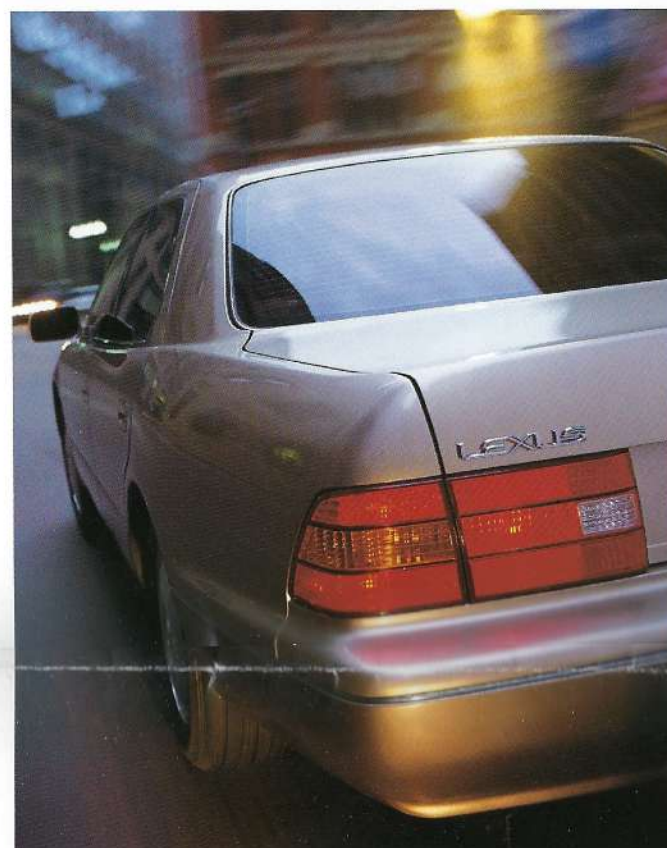
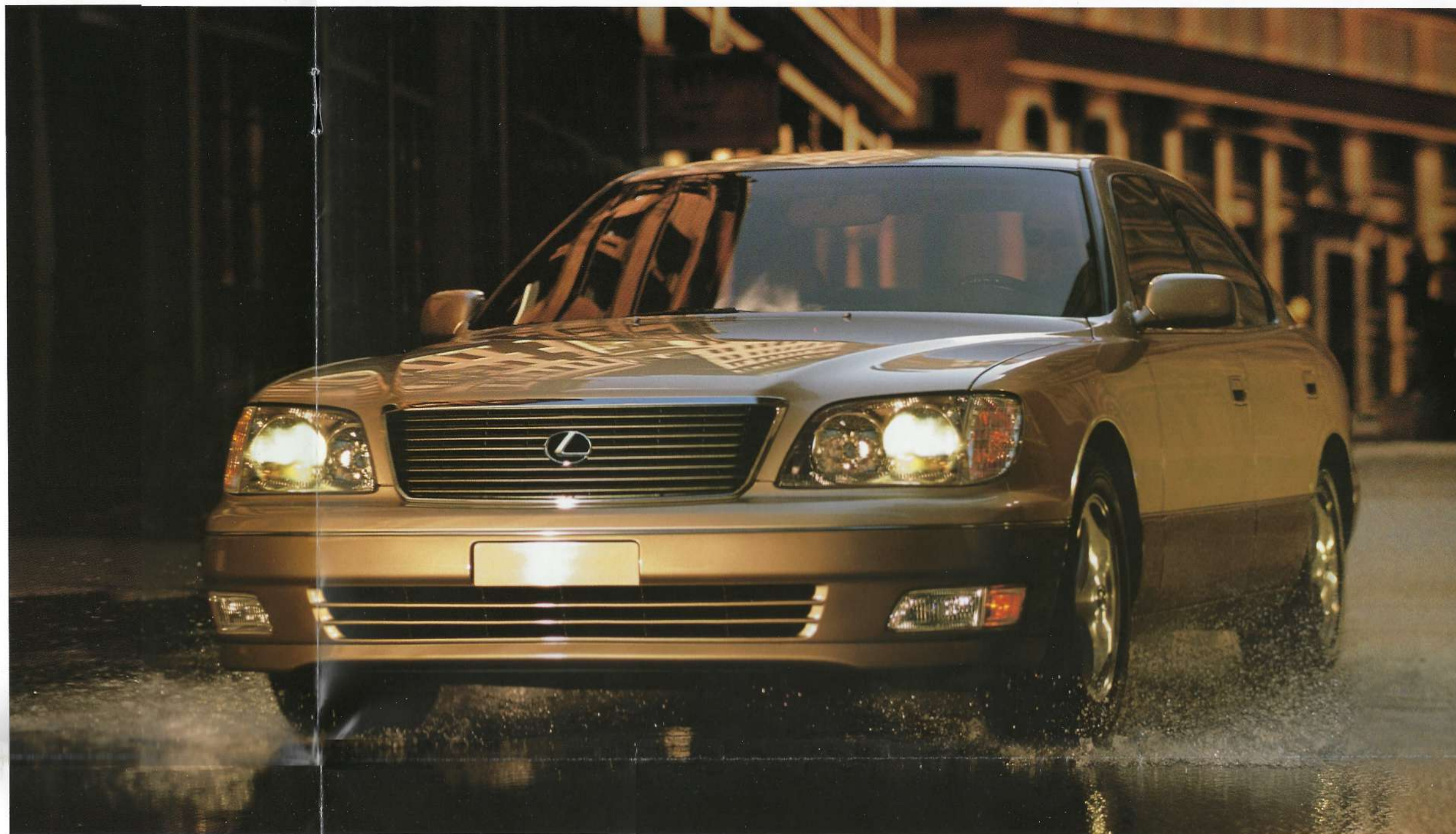
Closure. One final technology snippet. The LS 400's new High Intensity Discharge (HID) headlights project twice as much light as conventional halogen lamps, beaming a brilliantly-white light both further and wider – without dazzling oncoming traffic. Housed in round, tunneled enclosures and surrounded by

multi-faceted, crystal-like reflectors, the new Lexus lights are also self-leveling.

They invariably point where they should. Night driving has never been so relaxed; passengers who peer nervously out into the void have never been less nervous.

The new LS 400: More speed, more quiet, more luxury – more light.

More car.



Who needs luxury?

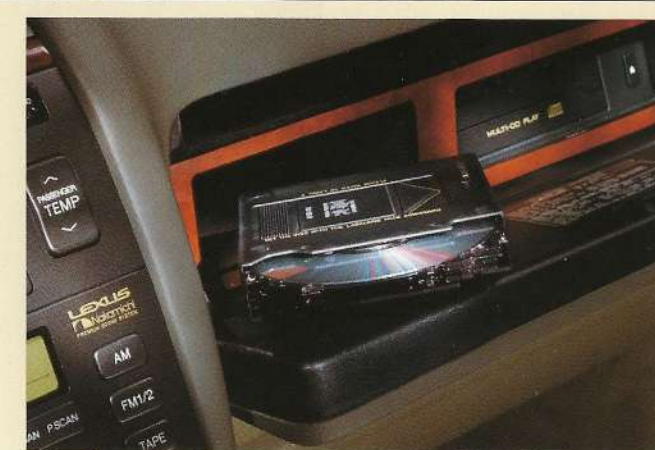
Strictly speaking, nobody. Certainly, you don't need to pay the price of a Lexus to be moved around capably and comfortably.

Suggestion: Switch off the logical mind for a few moments and switch on the emotions. Immerse yourself in the photographs: The glow of immaculate paintwork; the flowing contours and supple leathers; the subtle accents of burled walnut; the promise of superb sound – or blissful silence.

If such a car makes you feel good, is it worth it? If it calms you when that's desirable, excites you when you want it to, and panders to you every time you enter it... is it worth it?

The following "inside stories" may help prompt the process.

Seat leathers are not only buttery-soft, they resist side-slip forces by clinging gently to cloth. In league with leather-wrapped steering wheel and gearshift knob, they



Six-pack CD changer, leather, walnut accents spacious glove box, transmit constant visual and tactile reminders.

Aesthetics and good ergonomics unite on the dash. Attractive white-on-black instruments (black on white in GS) are large and well-placed, as are controls for heating and air conditioning, radio and CD. All read at a glance. The glove box is spacious; a six-CD auto-changer is adjacent.

Who needs luxury? Mmm.



New ES 300: "Faster, stronger, safer".

In these technologically-fevered days, nothing stands still for long – especially one's competition – and the ES 300 had reached a "mature age".

It was time for change.

Lexus engineers and designers opted to protect the core character of the well-thought-of former model, while introducing a raft of advances affecting luxury, comfort, aesthetics.

And especially performance.

On-the-fly suspension. A radical new driver-adjustable suspension system, AVS (for Adaptive Variable Suspension) topped the class with this observer.

Via an electronically-activated, easily-reached rotary switch, AVS matches ride to road or mood of the moment – "on the fly", in response to a flick of the driver's finger.

Sixteen subtle gradations of the suspension system, prompted by driver commands, are available. Astonishing.

In this writer's case, reaction was deemed next to immediate (.5 of a milli-second is the Lexus engineers' figure) as switch settings were used to shift back and forth between a limousine-smooth ride to the comfortable/reassuring mid-

new suspension system is optional, people are choosing AVS because: Just one thorough test drive suffices to impress; its cost is modest.

"Tracked flawlessly."

The following facts and opinions were

and both wind and road noises were amazingly low... When combined with the more powerful engine, its 88-lb. lighter weight enables the ES 300 to jump out of the gate with noticeably more verve."

Note: Since the above report was tabled, VVT-i technology (see page 1) has been engineered into the ES 300 powerplant.

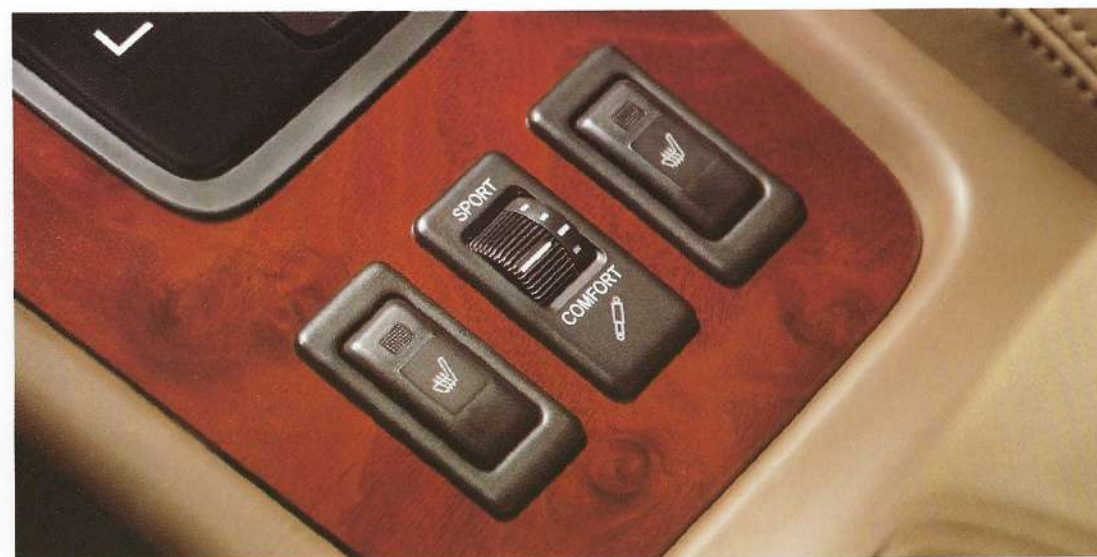
Performance has been boosted further: horsepower to 210, 0-60 mph acceleration to 8.3 seconds.

MOTOR TREND weighed in: "Reassuringly stable at speed, the new ES tracks cleanly through corners, transitioning

from neutrality to benign understeer as it crosses the limits of adhesion."

"Smart" safety. On the subject of safety, CAR AND DRIVER noted: "Seatbelt pretensioners have been added – the belts automatically cinch tighter at the moment of a crash."

(Note: The seatbelts "let go", too.



zone (which is where we guess most drivers will settle for most of the time) to no-compromise sports-firm.

All the while, sensors monitored steering and wheel speed, emitting signals to negate undesirables such as dive, squat, lean and roll.

Though the ES 300's extraordinary

culled from reviews of the ES 300, published by leading automotive magazines. ROAD & TRACK:

"...the most noteworthy thing about the top-speed run in the new ES 300 was the impressive stability and quietness it displayed. The car tracked flawlessly on the straights and the banked corners,

would move with the occupant. And not be left behind.

Stiffer, safer, quieter.

Further contributions from the correspondents included:

1. Structural rigidity of the ES (already outstanding in its predecessor) was upped further – by almost one-third: "The engineering team... methodically revised and reinforced nearly all of the basic unibody structure. The upgrade process netted a gain of more than 30 per cent in overall rigidity while improving crash resistance in class-leading standards in front offset, and side impacts."

2. Drag was reduced significantly: "A more pronounced wedge shape, combined with better aerodynamic detailing, helped trim the coefficient of drag from 0.32 to 0.29." (a jump which places the ES 300 among the world's top performers in this fuel-saving, quiet-inducing category).

Amateur hour. To conclude, "regular" (i.e. non-professional) drivers who were familiar with both the former and the new ES 300, were invited

The things they say!

Customer responses from
questionnaires, letters and surveys:

Q. If you had the opportunity to suggest changes to your Lexus, what would you recommend?

A. "Nothing, I like it just the way it is!"

– L.B., Cochrane, Alberta

Q. What make/model are you considering to replace your Lexus?

A. "Buying the LS 400 is the best decision I ever made... I can't drive anything else!"

– S.R.P., Regina, Saskatchewan

"The most personalized service I have had in 33 years of driving."

– R.M., Ottawa, Ontario

"They treat me like a king... and they dazzle me with their service. Everybody else talks about "the customer always comes first", but your Lexus people are the first ones I have seen that truly practise it."

– P.K., Vancouver, B.C.

"I was overwhelmed by the service, courtesy and professionalism. Too bad all businesses cannot follow suit."

– S.&M.P., Yellowknife

"The service and friendliness at this dealership will keep its customers from even considering Infiniti or the German cars."

– G.F., Edmonton, Alberta

From a customer who had bought his third Lexus from a dealership he found:

"...serious about customer satisfaction... BMW and Mercedes could learn from these folks."

– D.B., Waterloo, Ontario

"Best car, best dealer, I have ever experienced."

– B.G., Regina, Saskatchewan

"Perfection is hard to beat."

– S.F., Vancouver, B.C.

The instant G-forces become too strong for the body to absorb, tension is released.)

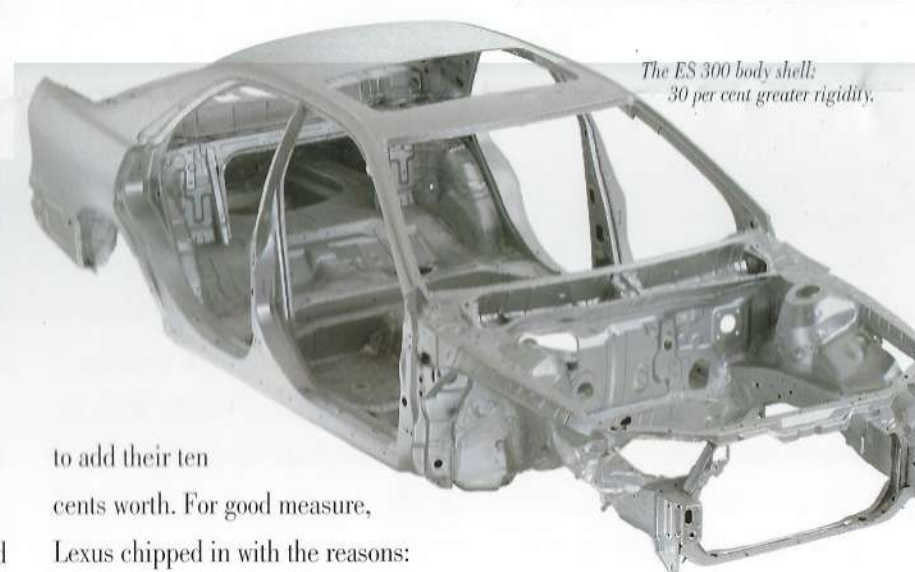
Protection follows.

When Lexus decided to incorporate side air bags into their new ES, the question arose: Where would they be fitted?

The usual, and easy, answer is to build the bags into the doors. But is that the right answer? The Lexus safety team decided "no". Their reasoning:

1. In a Lexus, the seats are designed to yield on impact: to shift backward – before (to put it crudely) the body breaks.

2. Logic decreed that if the airbags were tucked into the side of the seatbacks (shown deployed, page 3) protection



The ES 300 body shell:
30 per cent greater rigidity.

to add their ten cents worth. For good measure, Lexus chipped in with the reasons:

"It seems to hold the road more firmly", said one, who also "loved the quiet cabin." Lexus' explanation: Wider, low-profile Michelin tires grip the road surface; rolling resistance was reduced

by 15 percent (cuts noise and saves gas); sound volume in the cabin was halved by using various measures, mostly engineering in nature but some through insulation, e.g. a metal barrier between

engine and cabin and the extraordinary resonance-muffling metal used by Lexus.

"It doesn't lean into corners", said another. Lexus explained: A stiff body and high roll centre result in better ride and handling.

"Improved steering feel; it holds a really straight line – ditto for the braking." Lexus reasoning: Tires with tread characteristics matched to the needs of the chassis; revised steering geometry and front suspension; a sophisticated ABS braking system.

The pros' wrap-up:

"...Lexus will undoubtedly have another winner on its hands." – ROAD & TRACK.

Subsequent experience: They have!



QUIET!

"Obsession" is an extreme word, to be used with discretion. However, if there's anything that Lexus engineers might be said to be excessive about, it's silence.

When Lexus entered the luxury automobile world, they were widely praised for being astonishingly quiet. Other makers determined to catch up. The result: By the second half of the nineties, the passenger quarters of all luxury cars were noticeably quieter.

But they still had a way to go. In the opinion of experts and critics, the LS 400 remains "the quietest car in the world."



In a Lexus, quiet is not just designed in. Or built in. Or added on. It's all three. With the emphasis on the first: *Analyzing the source of noise and fixing it at the source.*

Instance a dramatic demonstration that makes a dramatic difference.

Hit a sheet of metal with a hard object, and gong-like sound waves resonate through the sheet. In automobiles, it's a major source of noise. But not in a Lexus. Vulnerable body panels are treated with a patented process that dampens vibration



"Leather 'n wood and all that's good. That's what a Lexus is made of."

waves. Gong-like resonance is eliminated; the most dramatic of clangs – e.g. the impact of a loose rock on a dirt road – become muted thuds, more like striking fiberglass than metal. It's a major source of Lexus Quiet.

Take care of the pennies...

There's a saying: "Take care of the pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves". In other words: "Take care of myriad small matters and the large picture will unfold as planned". Lexus engineers apply the principle "relentlessly", as the slogan expresses it.

An "obsessive" example:

In micro-surgery, tiny "snake lights" let surgeons see what they're doing from outside the scene of the action. Lexus engineers employed the equivalent *inside the muffler*. They discovered that baffle plates wriggle around under varying pressures. Vibration results. Remedy: Stiffen the plates. Now there's nary a quiver.

LX 470: Creating the ultimate SUV.

"How does the LX compare with the RX?" The question was met with a shrug of the shoulders. It's like being asked "who was the better footballer, Joe Montana or Jim Brown?" They're not the same thing at all.

Taming the exhilarating curves of the Whistler highway, before climbing an old logging trail to stand before the

470 will get you into – and out of – places that would defeat other SUV's.

On-highway. In fast highway driving, sensors constantly monitor steering and wheel speed, emitting signals to negate undesirables such as dive, squat, lean and roll.

Putting out 230 horsepower and a noteworthy 320 lb. ft. of torque, the LX

470's 4-camshaft/32-valve, 4.7-litre V-8 is an exceptionally brawny powerplant.

Result: The LX surges from 0-60 mph in 9.9 seconds – outstanding for an on/off-road 4WD of its size and heft.

Power-assisted discs, ventilated

up front and ABS all around, result in impressive braking prowess.

To drive or not to drive? Strangely enough, *piloting* an LX would seem to be a markedly different experience from being a *passenger* in one.

To drive an LX is to be enthroned high above the action, master of the scene, confident that those gi-normous wheels and tires are planting a whole load of reassuring rubber on whatever surface is down there, and that if you *do* run into trouble the weight and bulk of an LX, together with its crumple zones, soft-form interiors and other Lexus safety measures, will serve you well.

Inside stories. To be a *passenger* in an LX is to soak in an environment that is surpassingly spacious,

comfortable and tasteful. Amenities include stereo sound the equal of that offered in Lexus sedans (praise indeed). Leather seats and trim, with hand-crafted wood accents, are the sedans' equal, too.

The LX's cavernous interior seats eight, easily reconfigured for five or two. Its appetite is huge – for fare as diverse as a massive antique armoire or a pack of 16-year-old hockey Midgets (now *there's* a misnomer for you!).

To wrap up this subject, traveling as a passenger in an LX is like being in a Lexus sedan, whereas *driving* an LX is not at all like driving *any* sedan. In the one role you are part of the action, in the other you are above it. They are different experiences.

Vive la différence!



Down switch, step

out. If you're less than six feet or less than athletic, entering or exiting the LX could be a workout. And to a skirted lady, disconcertingly revealing. Except for this. The LX has *three* heights.

The highest setting is for the roughest terrain and/or deep snow. The lowest is for getting in and out. In between is for superior highway performance. So... flip the switch, down she goes and out you step!

16 settings. Similarly, for a sportier ride, a softer one or anywhere in between, you simply dial in your choice of the moment.

Named AVS (for Adaptive Variable Suspension) this computer-driven marvel was first plucked from the Lexus ES 300 world, then further developed to suit the particular needs of the LX.

Reaction is next to immediate (.5 of

a millisecond) as AVS enables the driver to switch suspension settings "on the fly". A four-setting rotary switch provides electronic links between *sixteen* different damper rates – from "sport" to "comfort". **Conclusion.** On the highway, the LX was expected to ride with the most civilized of citizens, i.e. a Lexus

sedan. To the surprise of this particular observer, the LX accomplished the feat. Credit its engine speed-sensing, power-assisted rack & pinion steering, AVS – and adjustable ride height control: Notch that formidable chassis down to tuck closer to the tarmac and 4x4 tilt/lean are banished to uneasy memory.

At the other end of the performance spectrum, the LX's lockable differentials and steep (32 degrees) approach angle make small fry of deep gumbo, large river rocks, and gullies where the trail used to be.

Overall, the word that leaps to mind to describe progress in the LX: Majestic.



Outside, the LX 470 is impressively upstanding; inside, it is impressively commodious. Surprise! Some ten centimetres shorter than the LS 400, the LX fits comfortably in most any garage.

Over the rough, on the smooth and in the slippery, the new LX 470 reigns supreme.

Lexus 1999 Specifications & Features*

LS 400

Dimensions

Overall Length – 4995 mm (196.6 in.)
Width – 1830 mm (72.0 in.)
Curb Weight – 1775 kg (3913 lbs.)
Fuel Tank Capacity – 85.0 l
(18.7 imp. gal.)



Engine

Engine Type – V8, 4.0 litres (3969 cc)
Valvetrain – 4 camshafts/32 valves, Variable Valve Timing (VVT-i)
Horsepower – 290 hp (216 kW) @ 6000 rpm
Torque – (max) 300 lb. ft. (407 N.m) @ 4000 rpm

Drivetrain

Transmission – 5-speed electronically-controlled overdrive automatic (ECT-i)
Drive Wheels – Rear wheel drive with Traction Control (TRAC), Vehicle Skid Control (VSC)
Suspension – 4-wheel independent, double wishbone
Steering – Vehicle speed sensing power rack & pinion
Brakes – 4-wheel, power assisted, ventilated discs with A.B.S.
Wheels/Tires – 16 x 7JJ aluminum alloy wheels, P225/60R16 V-rated steel-belted radials

Performance Capabilities

Acceleration, 0-60 mph – 6.6 seconds**
Top Speed – 240 km/h (149 mph)**

Interior/Exterior Features

Leather package
Premium Nakamichi AM/FM MPX ETR with cassette.
Glass-imprinted diversity antenna
Dash mounted 6-disc CD auto-changer
High Intensity Discharge (HID) headlamps
Automatic climate control with driver and front passenger temperature controls
Fully integrated theft deterrent system
Power tilt-and-telescopic steering wheel
Lexus Driver Memory System
Driver and front passenger airbag
Driver and front passenger seatbelt pretensioner
Pre-wired for cellular phone

Optional Equipment

Chrome wheels
Wood Trimmed Steering Wheel & Shift Knob

GS 300 / 400

Dimensions

Overall Length – 4805 mm (189.2 in.)
Width – 1800 mm (70.9 in.)
Curb Weight – GS 300: 1665 kg (3671 lbs.)
GS 400: 1690 kg (3726 lbs.)
Fuel Tank Capacity – 75.0 l (16.5 imp. gal.)

Engine

Engine Type – GS 300: In-line 6 cylinder, 3.0 litres (2997 cc)
GS 400: V8, 4.0 litres (3969 cc)
Valvetrain – GS 300: 2 camshafts/24 valves, Variable Valve Timing (VVT-i)
GS 400: 4 camshafts/32 valves, Variable Valve Timing (VVT-i)
Horsepower – GS 300: 225 hp (168 kW) @ 6000 rpm
GS 400: 300 hp (224 kW) @ 6000 rpm
Torque – GS 300: 220 lb. ft. (298 N.m) @ 4000 rpm
GS 400: 310 lb. ft. (420 N.m) @ 4000 rpm

Drivetrain

Transmission – 5-speed electronically-controlled overdrive automatic (ECT-i)
Drive Wheels – Rear wheel drive with Traction Control (TRAC), Vehicle Skid Control (VSC)
Suspension – 4-wheel independent, double wishbone
Steering – Vehicle-speed sensing progressive rate power rack & pinion
Brakes – GS 300: 4-wheel, power assisted, ventilated front/solid rear discs with A.B.S.
GS 400: 4-wheel, power assisted, ventilated discs with A.B.S.
Wheels/Tires – GS 300: 16 x 7.5 JJ aluminum alloy wheels, P225/55VR16 V-rated high performance all-season radials
GS 400: 17 x 8.0 JJ aluminum alloy wheels, P235/45ZR17 Z-rated high performance radials



Performance Capabilities

Acceleration, 0-60 mph – GS 300: 7.6 seconds**
GS 400: 6.0 seconds**
Top Speed – GS 300: 230 km/h (143 mph)**
GS 400: 239 km/h (149 mph)**

Interior/Exterior Features

Leather package
Lexus/Pioneer Premium AM/FM MPX ETR with cassette
Dash mounted 6-disc CD auto-changer
High Intensity Discharge headlamps (HID)
Lexus Driver Memory System
Fully integrated theft deterrent system
Power tilt-and-telescopic steering wheel
Driver and passenger front and side airbag
Driver and front passenger seatbelt pretensioner
Steering wheel mounted "E-Shift" automatic transmission control (GS 400)

Optional Equipment

Premium Nakamichi AM/FM MPX ETR with cassette and CD (GS 400)
16 x 7.5 JJ aluminum alloy wheels, P225/55VR16 V-rated high performance all-season radials (GS 400)
Rear spoiler with integrated highmount stoplamp
Chrome wheels

ES 300

Dimensions

Overall Length – 4830 mm (190.1 in.)
Width – 1790 mm (70.5 in.)
Curb Weight – 1505 kg (3318 lbs.)
Fuel Tank Capacity – 70.0 l (15.4 imp. gal.)

Engine

Engine Type – V6, 3.0 litres (2996 cc)
Horsepower – 210 hp (156 kW) @ 5800 rpm
Torque – 220 lb. ft. (298 N.m) @ 4400 rpm

Drivetrain

Transmission – 4-speed electronically-controlled overdrive automatic
Drive Wheels – Front-wheel drive with Traction Control System (TRAC)
Suspension – Front: gas-filled MacPherson struts
Rear: independent dual link MacPherson strut type
Steering – Engine RPM sensing power rack & pinion
Brakes – 4-wheel, power assisted discs with A.B.S.
Wheels/Tires – (4) 15 x 6JJ 5-spoke alloy wheels, (5) P205/65VR15 MXV4 high performance all-season radials

Performance Capabilities

Acceleration, 0-60 mph – 8.3 seconds**

Interior/Exterior Features

Lexus/Pioneer Premium AM/FM MPX ETR with cassette
Fully integrated theft deterrent system
Lexus Driver Memory System
Leather trimmed: seats, headrests, steering wheel, shift knob and console box lid
Tilt steering wheel
Driver and front passenger airbag and front seatbelt pretensioner



Optional Equipment

Package 1 includes: one-touch open tilt & slide power moonroof with sunshade, dash mounted Pioneer 6-disc CD auto-changer
Package 2 includes: one-touch open tilt & slide power moonroof with sunshade, dash mounted Pioneer 6-disc CD auto-changer, Adaptive Variable Suspension (AVS)
Package 3 includes: one-touch open tilt & slide power moonroof with sunshade, dash mounted Pioneer 6-disc CD auto-changer, Adaptive Variable Suspension (AVS), (4) chrome alloy wheels
Dealer-installed cellular telephone
Dealer-installed CD auto-changer
CD cartridge
Block heater

LX 470

Dimensions

Overall Length – 4890 mm (192.5 in.)
Width – 1940 mm (76.4 in.)
Height (unloaded) – 1850 mm (72.8 in.)
Wheelbase – 2850 mm (112.2 in.)
Curb Weight – 2450 kg (5401 lbs.)
Cargo Capacity (3rd row removed/2nd row folded) – 2.51 cu. m (88.6 cu. ft.)
Fuel tank capacity – 96 l (21.1 imp. gal.)

Engine

Engine Type – V8, 4.7 litre (4664cc)
Horsepower – 230 hp (172 kW) @ 4800 rpm
Torque – 320 lb. ft. (434 N.m) @ 3400 rpm

Drivetrain

Transmission – 4-speed electronically-controlled (ECT) automatic with overdrive
Drive Wheels – Full-time 4-wheel drive with lockable centre differential
Suspension – Four wheel coil spring suspension with Adaptive Variable Suspension (AVS).
Front: Double wishbones with lower torsion bars.
Rear: Rigid axle with control arms
Steering – Engine speed sensing power-assisted rack & pinion
Brakes – 4-wheel, power assisted, ventilated discs with A.B.S.
Wheels/Tires – 16 x 8JJ aluminum alloy wheels, P275/70R16 LTX M/S radials, full-size spare

Performance Capabilities

Acceleration, 0-60 mph – 9.9 seconds**
Towing Capacity – 2948 kg (6,500 lbs.)

Interior/Exterior Features

Leather package
Lexus/Pioneer Premium AM/FM ETR with cassette
In-dash 6-disc CD auto-changer
Walnut trim
Driver and front passenger airbag
Driver and front passenger seatbelt pretensioners & force limiters
Fully integrated theft deterrent system
Power windows and door locks



Multi-adjustable power assisted and heated driver and front passenger seats
Two setting memory system
Power tilt and slide moonroof with sunshade
Dual heated power remote-controlled side mirrors
Automatic climate control
Illuminated entry system
Cruise Control
60/40 split and fold-down 2nd row seats
50/50 split/foldable/removable 3rd row seat
Power swing-out rear quarter windows
Power tilt-and-telescopic steering wheel
Projector fog lamps
Two-piece lift up/pull-down tailgate
Tachometer, coolant temperature, oil pressure and voltmeter gauges
Heavy duty rear window defogger
Variable intermittent front wipers
Outside temperature indicator
Keyless remote entry system
Pre-wired for cellular phone

Running boards
Carpeted floor mats
Cargo area mat
Alloy wheel locks
First aid kit
Tool kit
Digital clock

Available Accessories

Dealer-installed cellular phone with command module
Roof rack with optional ski/snowboard/bike carrier
Class III receiver hitch
Block heater

RX 300

Dimensions

Overall Length – 4575 mm (180.1 in.)
Width – 1815 mm (71.5 in.)
Height (unloaded) – 1670 mm (65.7 in.)
Wheelbase – 2620 mm (103.1 in.)
Curb Weight – 1770 kg (3902 lbs.)
Ground Clearance – 185 mm (7.3 in.) at front sub-frame
Cargo Capacity (rear seat down) – 2.124 cu. m (75.0 cu. ft.)
Fuel tank capacity – 65 l (14.3 imp. gal.)

Engine

Engine Type – V6, 3.0 litres (2995 cc)
Horsepower – 220 hp (164 kW) @ 5800 rpm
Torque – 222 lb. ft. (301 N.m) @ 4400 rpm

Drivetrain

Transmission – 4-speed electronically-controlled overdrive automatic (ECT-i)
Drive Wheels – Full-time 4-wheel drive
Suspension – MacPherson strut type
Steering – Progressive rate power rack & pinion
Brakes – 4-wheel, power assisted, ventilated front discs with A.B.S.
Wheels/Tires – (4) 16 x 6.5JJ aluminum alloy wheels, (5) P225/70R16 all-season tires



Performance Capabilities

Acceleration, 0-60 mph – 8.8 seconds**
Towing Capacity – 1587 kg (3500 lbs.)

Interior/Exterior Features

Lexus/Pioneer Premium AM/FM ETR with cassette
Dash mounted 6-disc CD auto-changer
Driver and front passenger airbag
Seat mounted side-impact airbag for front seats
Driver and front passenger seatbelt pretensioner & force limiter system
Fully integrated theft deterrent system
Multi-function Keyless Remote Entry
Cruise control
Heavy duty rear window defogger
Roof Rails
Power door locks
Cargo area tonneau cover
Remote fuel lid release
Variable intermittent wipers
Illuminated entry system
Power windows with driver central control
Dual heated power remote-controlled side mirrors
Projector fog lamps
Walnut trim
Automatic climate control
Outside temperature indicator
60/40 split and fold-down rear seat
Power assisted driver and front passenger seats
Under front passenger seat storage tray
Tachometer, dual trip odometer and digital clock
Carpeted floor mats
Cargo area mat
First Aid kit
Alloy wheel locks

Optional Equipment

Package 1 includes: electrochromic automatic dimming side mirrors, driver seat memory system, integrated garage door opener, dust & pollen filtration system, power tilt & slide moonroof, automatic dimming electrochromic day/night mirror, leather trimmed seats & headrests, front seat heaters
Package 2 includes: Package 1 + Nakamichi Audio (230 watts)
Package 3: Package 1 without electrochromic side mirrors
Package 4: Package 2 without electrochromic side mirrors

Warranty

Comprehensive coverage:
48 months/80,000 km
Powertrain and major components:
72 months/110,000 km
Corrosion Perforation:
72 months/unlimited mileage
Roadside Assistance:
48 months, 24 hour roadside assistance with free travel planning

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**Performance figure is shown for comparison only, and was obtained with prototype vehicles under test track conditions by professional drivers using special safety equipment and procedures. This should not be attempted on public streets or highways.

Lexus reminds you to place small children in CSA-approved car seats – in the rear seats.
To always wear your seat belts. And to drive safely.

For further information regarding Lexus vehicles or the dealer nearest you,
please call 1-800-26-LEXUS. Or visit our web site: www.lexuscanada.com
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