

= Lexus =

Lexus (????? , Rekusasu) is the luxury vehicle division of Japanese automaker Toyota . The Lexus marque is marketed in over 70 countries and territories worldwide , has become Japan 's largest @-@ selling make of premium cars , and has ranked among the ten largest Japanese global brands in market value . Lexus is headquartered in Nagoya , Japan . Operational centers are located in Brussels , Belgium , and the U.S. in Torrance , California .

Lexus originated from a corporate project to develop a new premium sedan , code @-@ named F1 , which began in 1983 and culminated in the launch of the Lexus LS in 1989 . Subsequently , the division added sedan , coupé , convertible , and SUV models . Until 2005 Lexus did not exist as a brand in its home market and all vehicles marketed internationally as Lexus from 1989 @-@ 2005 were released in Japan under the Toyota marque and an equivalent model name . In 2005 , a hybrid version of the RX crossover debuted , and additional hybrid models later joined the division 's lineup . In 2007 , Lexus launched its own F marque performance division with the debut of the IS F sport sedan , followed by the LFA supercar in 2009 .

From the start of production , Lexus vehicles have been produced in Japan , with manufacturing centered in the Ch?bu and Ky?sh? regions , and in particular at Toyota 's Tahara , Aichi , Ch?bu and Miyata , Fukuoka , Ky?sh? plants . Assembly of the first Lexus built outside the country , the Ontario , Canada ? produced RX 330 , began in 2003 . Following a corporate reorganization from 2001 to 2005 , Lexus operates its own design , engineering , and manufacturing centers .

Since the 2000s (decade) , Lexus has increased sales outside its largest market , the United States . The division inaugurated dealerships in Japan 's domestic market in 2005 , becoming the first Japanese premium car marque to launch in its country of origin . The brand was introduced in Southeast Asia , Latin America , Europe , and other regions . The division 's lineup also reflects regional differences for model and powertrain configurations .

= = History = =

= = = 1980s : The F1 project = = =

In 1983 , Toyota chairman Eiji Toyoda issued a challenge to build the world 's best car . The project , code @-@ named F1 (? Flagship One ?) developed the Lexus LS 400 to expand Toyota 's product line in the premium segment . The F1 project followed the Toyota Supra sports car and the premium Toyota Mark II models . Both the Supra and Mark II were rear @-@ wheel drive cars with a powerful 7M @-@ GE or 7M @-@ GTE inline @-@ six engine . The largest sedan Toyota built at the time was the limited @-@ production , 1960s @-@ vintage Toyota Century , a domestic , hand @-@ built limousine , and V8 @-@ powered model , followed by the inline @-@ six @-@ engined Toyota Crown premium sedan . The Century was conservatively styled for the Japanese market , and along with the Crown not slated for export , after a complete restyle in 1982 . The F1 designers targeted their new sedan at international markets and began development on a new V8 engine .

Japanese manufacturers exported more expensive models in the 1980s due to voluntary export restraints , negotiated by the Japanese government and U.S. trade representatives , that restricting mainstream car sales . In 1986 , Honda launched its Acura marque in the U.S. , influencing Toyota 's plans for a luxury division ; the initial Acura model was an export version of the Honda Legend , itself launched in Japan in 1985 as a rival to the Toyota Crown , Nissan Cedric / Gloria , and Mazda Luce . In 1987 , Nissan unveiled its plans for a premium brand , Infiniti , and revised its Nissan President sedan in standard wheelbase form for export as the Infiniti Q45 , which it launched in 1990 . In 1988 , Mazda began selling the Luce as the Mazda 929 in North America , and later began plans to develop an upscale marque , to be called Amati , but its plans did not come to fruition .

Toyota researchers visited the U.S. in May 1985 to conduct focus groups and market research on luxury consumers . During that time , several F1 designers rented a home in Laguna Beach , California to observe the lifestyles and tastes of American upper class consumers . Meanwhile , F1

engineering teams conducted prototype testing on locations ranging from the German autobahn to U.S. roads . Toyota ' s market research concluded that a separate brand and sales channel were needed to present its new sedan , and plans were made to develop a new network of dealerships in the U.S. market .

=== Brand development ===

In 1986 , Toyota ' s longtime advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi formed a specialized unit , Team One , to handle marketing for the new brand . Image consulting firm Lippincott & Margulies was hired to develop a list of 219 prospective names ; Vectre , Verone , Chaparel , Calibre and Alexis were chosen as top candidates . While Alexis quickly became the front runner , concerns were raised that the name applied to people more than cars (being associated with the Alexis Carrington character on the popular 1980s primetime drama Dynasty) , and as a result the first letter was removed and the " i " replaced with a " u " to morph the name to Lexus .

The etymology of the Lexus name has been attributed to the combination of the words " luxury " and " elegance , " and another theory claims it is an acronym for " luxury exports to the U.S. " According to Team One interviews , the brand name has no specific meaning and simply denotes a luxurious and technological image . Just prior to the release of the first vehicles , database service LexisNexis obtained a temporary injunction forbidding the name Lexus from being used as they stated it might cause confusion . The injunction threatened to delay the division ' s launch and marketing efforts . The U.S. appeals court lifted the injunction , deciding that there was little likelihood of confusion between the two products .

The original Lexus slogan , developed after Team One representatives visited Lexus designers in Japan and noted an obsessive attention to detail , became " The Relentless Pursuit of Perfection . " The Lexus logo was developed by Molly Designs and Hunter Communications . The final design for the Lexus logo featured a stylized " L " within an oval , and according to Toyota , was rendered using a mathematical formula . The first teaser ads featuring the Lexus name and logo , designed by Team One , appeared at the Chicago , Los Angeles , and New York auto shows in 1988 .

=== Launch ===

The F1 project was completed in 1989 , involving 60 designers , 24 engineering teams , 1 @, @ 400 engineers , 2 @, @ 300 technicians , 220 support workers , approximately 450 prototypes , and over US \$ 1 billion in costs . The resulting car , the Lexus LS 400 , had a design that shared no major elements with previous Toyota vehicles , with a new 4 @. @ 0 L V8 gasoline engine and rear @-@ wheel drive . The car debuted in January 1989 at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit , and went on sale the following September at a network of 81 new Lexus dealerships in the U.S. The LS 400 was sold along with the smaller ES 250 , a rebadged Toyota Camry . The launch of Lexus was accompanied by a multimillion @-@ dollar advertising campaign .

The LS 400 was praised for its quietness , well @-@ appointed and ergonomic interior , engine performance , build quality , aerodynamics , fuel economy , and value , although it was criticized by some automobile columnists for derivative styling and a suspension regarded as too compromising of handling for ride comfort . In some markets , it was priced against mid @-@ size six @-@ cylinder Mercedes @-@ Benz and BMW models , and was rated by Car and Driver magazine as better than the higher priced Mercedes @-@ Benz 420 SEL and BMW 735i in terms of ride , handling , and performance . The LS 400 also won motoring awards from automotive publications including Automobile Magazine and Wheels Magazine . Lexus quickly established customer loyalty and its debut was generally regarded as a shock to existing luxury marques . BMW ' s and Mercedes @-@ Benz ' s U.S. sales figures dropped 29 % and 19 % , respectively , with BMW executives accusing Lexus of dumping in that market , while 35 % of Lexus buyers traded in a Lincoln or Cadillac .

In December 1989 , Lexus initiated a voluntary recall of all 8 @, @ 000 LS 400s that were sold based upon two customer complaints over defective wiring and an overheated brake light . A 20

@-@ day operation to replace the parts on affected vehicles included technicians to pick up , repair , and return cars to customers free of charge , and also flying in personnel and renting garage space for owners in remote locations . This response was covered in media publications and helped establish the marque 's early reputation for customer service .

By the end of 1989 , a total of 16 @,@ 392 LS 400 and ES 250 sedans were sold in the four months following the U.S. launch . Although sales had begun at a slower pace than expected , the final tally matched the division 's target of 16 @,@ 000 units for that year . Following initial models , plans called for the addition of a sports coupe along with a redesigned ES sedan .

= = = 1990s : Growth and expansion = = =

In 1990 , during its first full year of sales , Lexus sold 63 @,@ 594 LS 400 and ES 250 sedans in the U.S. , the vast majority being the LS model . That year , Lexus also began limited exports to the United Kingdom , Switzerland , Canada , and Australia . In 1991 , Lexus launched its first sports coupe , the SC 400 , which shared the LS 400 ' s V8 engine and rear @-@ wheel drive design . This was followed by the second generation ES 300 sedan , which succeeded the ES 250 and became Lexus ' top seller . At the conclusion of 1991 , Lexus had become the top @-@ selling premium car import in the U.S. , with sales reaching a total of 71 @,@ 206 vehicles . That year , Lexus ranked highest in J.D. Power and Associates ' studies on initial vehicle quality , customer satisfaction , and sales satisfaction for the first time . The marque also began increasing U.S. model prices past those of comparable American premium makes , but still below high @-@ end European models ; by 1992 , the LS 400 's base price had risen 18 % .

In 1993 , Lexus launched the mid @-@ size GS 300 sports sedan , based on the Toyota Aristo using the Toyota " S " platform from the Toyota Crown , which had sold for two years prior in Japan . The GS 300 was priced below the LS 400 in the marque 's lineup . That same year , Lexus also became one of the first marques to debut a certified pre @-@ owned program , with the aim of improving trade @-@ in model values . In 1994 , the marque introduced the second generation LS 400 . In May 1995 , sales were threatened by the U.S. government 's proposal of 100 % tariffs on upscale Japanese cars in response to the widening U.S.-Japan trade deficit . SUVs were exempt from the proposed sanctions . Normal sales operations resumed by late 1995 when the Japanese auto manufacturers collectively agreed to greater American investments , and the tariffs were not enacted .

In 1996 , Lexus debuted its first sport utility vehicle , the LX 450 , followed by the third generation ES 300 sedan . The marque 's plans for developing an SUV model had accelerated during the U.S.-Japan tariff discussions of 1995 . In 1998 , Lexus added the first luxury @-@ branded crossover SUV , the RX 300 , and the second generation GS 300 and GS 400 sedans . The RX crossover targeted suburban buyers who desired an upmarket SUV but did not need the LX 's off @-@ road capability ; it was particularly successful , becoming the marque 's top @-@ selling model ahead of the ES 300 . The same year , Lexus made its debut in South America 's most populous country when it launched sales in Brazil . In 1999 , Lexus recorded its one @-@ millionth vehicle sold in the U.S. market , and was ranked as the top @-@ selling premium car maker in the U.S. overall .

= = = 2000s : Global reorganization = = =

In 2000 , Lexus introduced the IS line , a series of entry @-@ level sport sedans . In 2001 , the first convertible was introduced , as well as the SC 430 , a redesigned ES 300 , and the third generation LS 430 . The GX 470 mid @-@ size SUV debuted in 2002 , followed by the second generation RX 330 in 2003 . The following year , Lexus recorded its two @-@ millionth U.S. vehicle sale , and the first luxury @-@ branded production hybrid SUV , the RX 400h . This vehicle used Toyota 's Hybrid Synergy Drive system that combined gasoline and electric motors .

In 2005 , Lexus completed an organizational separation from parent company Toyota , with dedicated design , engineering , training , and manufacturing centers working exclusively for the

division . This effort coincided with Lexus ' launch in its home market of Japan and an expanded global launch of the brand in markets such as China . Executives aimed to increase Lexus sales outside of its largest market in the U.S. To accompany this expansion , next generation Lexus vehicles were redesigned as " global models " for international release . In the European market , where Lexus had long faced struggling sales owing to low brand recognition , few dedicated dealerships , and 1990s import quotas , the marque announced plans to introduce hybrid and diesel powertrains , increase the number of Lexus dealerships , and expand operations in emerging markets such as Russia .

Lexus ' arrival in the Japanese market in July 2005 marked the first introduction of a Japanese premium car marque in the domestic market . New generation LS , IS , ES , GS , and RX models subsequently became available in Japan along with the SC 430 , ending domestic sales of Toyota @-@ branded models under the Celsior , Altezza , Windom , Aristo , Harrier , and Soarer nameplates , respectively . The Altezza and Aristo were previously exclusive to Japanese Toyota retail sales channels called Toyota Vista Store , the Windom was exclusive to Toyota Corolla Store , the Celsior and Harrier were exclusive to Toyopet Store , and the Soarer was previously available at both Toyota Store and Toyopet Store locations . Lexus models sold in Japan featured higher specifications and a price premium compared with their discontinued Toyota counterparts . Sales for the first half @-@ year were slower than expected , affected by the contraction of the domestic auto market and price increases , but improved in subsequent months with an expanded lineup .

Through the mid @-@ 2000s , Lexus experienced sales successes in South Korea and Taiwan , becoming the top @-@ selling import make in both markets in 2005 ; the marque also sold well in the Middle East , where it ranked first or second among rivals in multiple countries , and in Australia , where Lexus reached third in luxury car sales in 2006 . Division executives in 2006 announced an expansion goal from 68 countries to 76 worldwide by 2010 . By the end of the decade , this expansion resulted in official launches in Malaysia and South Africa in 2006 , Indonesia in 2007 , Chile in 2008 , and the Philippines in 2009 .

= = = = Hybrids and F models = = = =

In 2006 , Lexus began sales of the GS 450h , a V6 hybrid performance sedan , and launched the fourth generation LS line , comprising both standard- and long @-@ wheelbase V8 (LS 460 and LS 460 L) and hybrid (LS 600h and LS 600h L) versions . The fifth generation ES 350 also debuted in the same year . The LS 600h L subsequently went on sale as the most expensive sedan ever produced in Japan . By the end of 2006 , Lexus ' annual sales had reached 475 @,@ 000 vehicles worldwide . In January 2007 , Lexus announced a new F marque performance division , which would produce racing @-@ inspired versions of its performance models . The IS F , made its debut at the 2007 North American International Auto Show , accompanied by a concept car , the LF @-@ A.

In October 2007 , Lexus entered the Specialty Equipment Market Association show in the U.S. for the first time with the IS F , and announced its F @-@ Sport performance trim level and factory @-@ sanctioned accessory line . Increased emphasis on sporty models was an effort to target rivals from Mercedes @-@ Benz 's AMG and BMW 's M divisions . Models such as the SC 400 and GS 400 had received favorable reactions from sport luxury buyers , most Lexus models had been characterized as favoring comfort over sporty road feel and handling , compared with European rivals . By the end of 2007 , Lexus annual worldwide sales had surpassed 500 @,@ 000 vehicles , and the marque ranked as the top @-@ selling premium import in China for the first time . The largest sales markets in order of size for 2007 were the U.S. , Japan , the UK , China , Canada , and Russia .

In 2008 , amidst the late @-@ 2000s recession and a weakened world car market , global sales fell 16 % to 435 @,@ 000 , with declines in markets such as the U.S. and Europe where deliveries fell by 21 % and 27 @.@ 5 % , respectively . In 2009 , the marque launched the HS 250h , a dedicated hybrid sedan for North America and Japan , the RX 450h , the second generation hybrid SUV replacing the earlier RX 400h , and later that year debuted the US \$ 375 @,@ 000 production LFA

exotic coupe . In late 2009 , citing higher sales of hybrid models over their petrol counterparts , Lexus announced plans to become a hybrid @-@ only marque in Europe . By the end of the decade , Lexus ranked as the fourth @-@ largest premium car make in the world by volume , and was the number @-@ one @-@ selling premium car marque in the U.S. for ten consecutive years .

= = = 2010s : Recent developments = = =

In 2010 , Lexus underwent a gradual sales recovery in North America and Asia as the marque focused on adding hybrids and new model derivatives . Sales in the U.S. held steady despite the 2009 ? 2010 Toyota vehicle recalls , several of which included Lexus models . The ES 350 and certain IS models were affected by a recall for potentially jamming floor mats , while parent company Toyota bore the brunt of negative publicity amid investigations over its series of product recalls and problem rates per @-@ vehicle . The redesigned GX 460 was also voluntarily recalled in April 2010 for a software update , one week after Consumer Reports issued a recommendation not to buy the SUV , citing a possible rollover risk following the slow stability control response to a high @-@ speed emergency turn . Although the publication knew of no reported incidents , the GX 460 received updated stability control software .

In late 2010 and early 2011 , Lexus began sales of the CT 200h , a compact four @-@ door hybrid hatchback designed for Europe , in multiple markets . Sales of lower @-@ displacement regional models were also expanded , beginning with the ES 240 in China followed by the RX 270 ; Japan , Russia , and Taiwan were among markets which received model variants intended for reduced emissions or import taxes . In March 2011 , the T?hoku earthquake and tsunami caused severe disruption to Lexus ' Japan @-@ based production lines , hindering the marque 's near @-@ term sales prospects . Lexus ' U.S. executives stated that due to vehicle shortages amidst close competition from BMW , Mercedes @-@ Benz , and Audi , the marque would not remain the country 's top @-@ selling premium car brand .

Cumulative sales results for 2011 indicated a 14 % sales drop in the U.S. market , along with sales increases of 40 % and 27 % in Europe and Japan respectively , for a global sales total of 410 @,@ 000 units . Lexus ' streak of eleven consecutive years as the best @-@ selling luxury marque in the U.S. ended that year , with the title going to BMW followed by Mercedes @-@ Benz . For 2011 while 45 percent of Lexus sales in the United States relied upon the RX luxury crossover SUV , rival Mercedes @-@ Benz 's best @-@ selling offering was the E @-@ Class mid @-@ luxury sedan which commands considerably higher prices . Subsequently , Toyota chairman Akio Toyoda vowed to restore passion to the marque and further increase its organizational independence , admitting that " ... back then we did not regard Lexus as a brand , but as a distribution channel " . As a result of Toyoda 's organizational changes , Lexus senior managers report directly to the chairman for the first time in the marque 's history .

In January 2012 , the marque began sales of the fourth generation GS line , including GS 350 and GS 450h variants , as well as a lower @-@ displacement GS 250 model for select markets . In April 2012 , the sixth generation ES line , include ES 350 and ES 300h variants , debuted at the New York International Auto Show .

In April 2014 , Lexus unveiled the five @-@ seater NX crossover . The vehicle features a very first for a Lexus vehicle : a turbocharger . Its nomenclature is denoted as the 200t . In August 2014 , Toyota announced it would be cutting its Lexus spare parts prices in China by up to 35 % . The company admitted the move was in response to a probe foreshadowed earlier in the month by China 's National Development and Reform Commission of Lexus spare parts policies , as part of an industry @-@ wide investigation into what the Chinese regulator considers exorbitantly high prices being charged by automakers for spare parts and after @-@ sales servicing .

In March 2016 , Lexus announced that it will be producing a new flagship vehicle : the two @-@ door LC 500 . The vehicle will be produced for late 2017 in a V8 version putting out 467 horsepower . The LC 500h , a V6 hybrid variant , could potentially become available in late 2017 or early 2018 .

= = Corporate affairs = =

== Management ==

Lexus International , headed by managing officer Tokuo Fukuichi , coordinates the worldwide operations of Toyota 's luxury division . Other executives at Lexus ' global headquarters , located in Nagoya , Aichi , include Mark Templin , executive vice president of Lexus International , and managers of the marque 's Japan Sales & Marketing and global Product & Marketing Planning divisions . While organizationally separate from its parent company , Lexus International reports directly to Toyota chief executive officer Akio Toyoda .

In the U.S. , Lexus operations are headed by Jeffrey Bracken , group vice president and general manager of the U.S. Lexus division , located in Southern California . In Europe , Lexus operations are headed by Alain Uyttenhoven , vice president of Lexus Europe , located in Brussels . Companion design facilities are located in Southern California and central Japan , with the head design studio devoted entirely to Lexus models in Toyota City , Aichi .

== Regional operations ==

Lexus sales operations vary in structure by region . In many markets , such as the U.S. , the dealership network is a distinct organization from corporate headquarters , with separately owned and operated Lexus showrooms . By contrast , in Japan all 143 dealerships in the country are owned and operated by Lexus . Several markets have a designated , third party regional distributor ; for example , in the United Arab Emirates , sales operations are managed by Al Futtaim Motors LLC , and in Costa Rica , Lexus vehicles are sold via regional distributor Purdy Motors S.A. Other officially sanctioned regional distributors have sold Lexus models prior to the launch of , or in absence of , a dedicated dealership network .

== Sales ==

Global sales of Lexus vehicles reached an all time high in 2007 , with a total of 518 ,000 . Sales decreased in subsequent years due to the effects of the 2008 recession and the Japanese tsunami of 2011 . Following this , sales recovered and reached a new high of 523 ,000 in 2013 .

In 2014 , the Lexus brand set a new global sales record after selling 582 ,000 vehicles . This made Lexus the fourth best selling luxury brand in the world , trailing only BMW , Audi and Mercedes Benz .

Global sales of Lexus vehicles increased by 12 % in 2015 to reach another annual sales record with 652 ,000 units sold world wide .

Global cumulative sales of Lexus brand hybrid electric cars reached the 500 thousand mark in November 2012 . The 1 million sales milestone was achieved in March 2016 . The Lexus RX 400h / RX 450h ranks as the top selling Lexus hybrid with 335 ,000 units delivered worldwide as of March 2016 , followed by the Lexus CT 200h with 267 ,000 units .

== Financial performance ==

Financial data of Lexus operations are not disclosed publicly . However , automotive analysts estimate that the Lexus division contributes a disproportionate share of Toyota 's profits , relative to its limited production and sales volume . Interviews with retired division officials indicate that depending on sales volume , vehicle product development cycles , and exchange rates , Lexus sales have accounted for as much as half of Toyota 's annual U.S. profit in certain years . Division executives have employed pricing strategies aimed at sustaining profit margins rather than sales volume , with historically fewer price incentives than rival brands . In 2006 , Lexus entered Interbrand 's list of the Top 100 Global Brands for the first time , with an estimated brand value of

approximately US \$ 3 billion annually . In 2009 , Interbrand ranked Lexus as Japan 's seventh largest brand , between Panasonic and Nissan , based on revenue , earnings , and market value .

= = Automobiles = =

= = = Vehicle lineup = = =

The global Lexus lineup features sedans of different size classes , including the compact IS and HS models , mid @-@ size ES and GS models , and the full @-@ size LS . Convertibles include the IS C models . Sport @-@ utility vehicles range in size from the compact NX and RX crossover , to the mid @-@ size GX and the full @-@ size LX . Hybrid models include the CT hatchback , HS sedan , and variants of the GS , LS , and RX . The F marque line produces a variant of the IS sedan and the LFA coupe .

= = = F marque = = =

Lexus produces its highest @-@ performance models under its F marque division . The name refers to Flagship and Fuji Speedway in Japan , whose first corner , 27R , inspired the shape of the " F " emblem . F marque models are developed by the Lexus Vehicle Performance Development Division . The first F marque model , the IS F , went on sale in 2007 , followed by the LFA in 2009 . A related F @-@ Sport performance trim level and factory @-@ sanctioned accessory line is available for standard Lexus models such as the IS 250 and IS 350 . F @-@ Sport succeeded an earlier in @-@ house tuning effort , the TRD @-@ based L @-@ Tuned , which had offered performance packages on the IS and GS sedans in the early 2000s (decade) .

The latest editions to the performance F marque include the Lexus RC F and Lexus GS F.

= = = Model nomenclature = = =

Lexus production models are named alphanumerically using two @-@ letter designations followed by three digits . The first letter indicates relative status in the Lexus model range (ranking) , and the second letter refers to car body style or type (e.g. LS for ' luxury sedan ') . The three digits indicate engine displacement in liters multiplied by a factor of one hundred (e.g. 350 for a 3 @.@ 5 L engine) . A space is used between the letters and numbers . The same letter may be used differently depending on the model ; ' S ' can refer to ' sedan ' or ' sport ' (e.g. in LS and SC) , while ' X ' refers to ' luxury utility vehicle ' or SUV . On hybrids , the three digits refer to the combined gasoline @-@ electric output . For certain models , a lower case letter placed after the alphanumeric designation indicates powerplant type (' h ' for hybrid , ' d ' for diesel , ' t ' for turbocharged) , while capital letter (s) placed at the end indicates a class subtype (e.g. ' L ' for long @-@ wheelbase , ' C ' for coupe , ' AWD ' for all @-@ wheel drive) . On F marque models , the two @-@ letter designation and the letter ' F ' are used with no numbers or hyphens (e.g. IS F) .

= = Design and technology = =

Lexus design has traditionally placed an emphasis on targeting specific vehicle development standards . Since the marque 's inception , design targets have ranged from aerodynamics and ride quality to interior ergonomics . The backronym " IDEAL " (" Impressive , Dynamic , Elegant , Advanced , and Lasting ") is used in the development process . Each vehicle is designed according to approximately 500 specific product standards , known as " Lexus Musts , " on criteria such as leather seat stitching . Design elements from the marque 's concept vehicle line , the LF series (including the 2003 LF @-@ S and 2004 LF @-@ C) , have been incorporated in production models

Vehicle cabins have incorporated electroluminescent Optitron gauges , SmartAccess , a smart key

entry and startup system , and multimedia features . Beginning with the 2010 RX and HS models , the Remote Touch system , featuring a computer mouse @-@ like controller with haptic feedback , was introduced ; other models have featured touchscreen controls (through the 2009 model year) as a navigation screen interface . 2014 saw the introduction of the next version of Lexus ? remote @-@ touch innovations ? the Remote Touch Interface Touchpad in the new RC Coupe .

In 1989 , Lexus became among the first premium car marques to equip models with premium audio systems , in partnership with stereo firm Nakamichi . Since 2001 , optional surround sound systems are offered via high @-@ end audio purveyor Mark Levinson . For reduced cabin noise , the first LS 400 introduced sandwich steel plating , and later models added acoustic glass . In 2006 , the LS 460 debuted the first ceiling air diffusers and infrared body temperature sensors in a car . Telematics services include G @-@ Book with G @-@ Link in Asia and Lexus Enform in North America .

In 2006 , Lexus incorporated the first production eight @-@ speed automatic transmission in an automobile with the LS 460 , and the gearbox was later adapted for the GS 460 and IS F models . Continuously variable transmissions , regenerative brakes , and electric motors have been used on all Lexus hybrid models . In 2007 , Lexus executives signaled intentions to equip further models with hybrid powertrains , catering to demands for a decrease in both carbon pollution and oil reliance . Hybrid models have been differentiated by separate badging and lighting technology ; in 2008 , the LS 600h L became the first production vehicle to use LED headlamps .

Safety features on Lexus models range from stability and handling programs (Vehicle Stability Control and Vehicle Dynamics Integrated Management) to backup cameras , swivel headlights , and sonar warning systems . The Lexus Pre @-@ Collision System (PCS) integrates multiple safety systems . In 2007 , Lexus introduced the first car safety systems with infrared and pedestrian detection capabilities , lane keep assist , a Driver Monitoring System with facial recognition monitoring of driver attentiveness , and rear pre @-@ collision whiplash protection , as part of the LS 460 PCS . As a safety precaution , Lexus GPS navigation systems in many regions feature a motion lockout when the vehicle reaches a set speed ; to prevent distraction , navigation inputs are limited , while voice input and certain buttons are still accessible . This safety feature has attracted criticism because passengers cannot use certain functions when the vehicle is in motion . Pre @-@ 2007 models came with a hidden manufacturer override option , and updated European models allow operation in motion .

Production models in development have included convertibles , crossovers , and dedicated hybrids . Under the F marque , Lexus plans to produce high @-@ performance vehicles with its first expressions being the IS F and the LFA . Lexus officials have also discussed standard production model usage of varying platforms . The LS uses a dedicated platform , while the entry @-@ level Lexus ES had been criticized for being too similar to the Toyota Camry , with which it shared platforms until its sixth generation , in both styling and powertrain design . The Nürburgring test track in Germany has also seen Lexus prototype testing .

= = = L @-@ finesse = = =

Lexus introduced a new design language known as " L @-@ finesse " in the mid @-@ 2000s with its LF series concepts and the 2006 Lexus GS . L @-@ finesse is represented by three Japanese kanji characters which translate as " Intriguing Elegance , Incisive Simplicity , and Seamless Anticipation " . Design characteristics , including a fastback profile , lower @-@ set grille , and the use of both convex and concave surfaces , are derived from Japanese cultural motifs (e.g. the phrase kirikaeshi in arrowhead shapes) . While earlier Lexus models were criticized for reserved and derivative styling , and often mistaken for understated domestic market cars , automotive design analyses described L @-@ finesse as adding a distinctive nature and embrace of Japanese design identity . Opinions varied for L @-@ finesse 's debut on the GS ; Sports Car International 's analysis praised the vehicle 's in @-@ person appearance ; Automobile Magazine criticized the daring of its forward styling , and compared subsequent rival models for design similarities . In 2012 , the arrival of the redesigned fourth generation Lexus GS featured the introduction of a spindle @-@ shaped grille design , intended to be used on all forthcoming Lexus models . L @-@ finesse exhibitions

were presented at Milan 's Salone del Mobile from 2005 through 2009 .

= = Production = =

= = = Assembly plants = = =

The first Lexus vehicles were manufactured in Toyota 's Tahara plant , a highly sophisticated , computerized manufacturing plant in Japan . Lexus production techniques include methods and standards of quality control that differ from Toyota models . At the Tahara plant , separate assembly lines were developed for Lexus vehicles , along with new molds and specialized manufacturing equipment . Welding processes , body panel fit tolerances , and paint quality requirements are more stringent . Lexus plant workers , typically veteran technicians , are identified via repeated performance evaluations and ranked according to skill grade , with limited applicants accepted . The highest level takumi (Japanese for " artisan ") engineers are responsible for maintaining production standards at key points in the assembly process , such as testing engine performance . Production vehicles are given visual inspections for flaws , individually test @-@ driven at high speeds , and subjected to vibration tests .

Through the 2000s (decade) , most Lexus sedan and SUV production has occurred in Japan at the Tahara plant in Aichi and Miyata plant in Fukuoka . In addition to the Tahara factory , Lexus vehicles have been produced at the Miyata plant (Toyota Motor Kyushu , Inc .) in Miyawaka , Fukuoka , Higashi Fuji plant (Kanto Auto Works , Ltd .) in Susono , Shizuoka , and Sanage plant (Toyota Boshoku Corp. ; Araco) in Toyota City , Aichi . Front @-@ wheel drive cars , such as the ES and HS , are produced in the Fukuoka Prefecture . The Kokura plant in Kitakyushu , Fukuoka , which opened in 2008 , is a dedicated hybrid production site for Lexus models such as the gasoline @-@ electric RX . The North American ? market RX 350 (since the 2004 model year) is produced at the Cambridge plant (Toyota Canada , Inc .) in the city of Cambridge , in Ontario , Canada , which is the first Lexus production site located outside Japan . In late 2015 , Lexus started to assemble North American @-@ spec ES 350 sedans at the Georgetown plant (TMMK , Inc .) .

= = = Quality rankings = = =

In the 2000s (decade) , Consumer Reports named Lexus among the top five most reliable brands in its Annual Car Reliability Surveys of over one million vehicles across the U.S.

= = Service = =

Lexus has become known for efforts to project an upscale image , particularly with service provided after the sale . The waiting areas in service departments are replete with amenities , ranging from refreshment bars to indoor putting greens . Dealerships typically offer complimentary loaner cars or " courtesy cars " and free car washes , and some have added on @-@ site cafes and designer boutiques . Service bays are lined with large picture windows for owners to watch the servicing of their vehicle . In 2005 , Lexus also began reserving parking lots at major sporting arenas , entertainment events , and shopping malls , with the only requirement for free entry being the ownership of a Lexus vehicle . An online owner publication , Lexus Magazine , features automotive and lifestyle articles and is published online monthly and on a mobile site .

Since 2002 , Lexus has scored consecutive top ratings in the Auto Express and 76 @,@ 000 @-@ respondent Top Gear customer satisfaction surveys in the UK . Lexus has also repeatedly topped the 79 @,@ 000 @-@ respondent J.D. Power Customer Service Index and Luxury Institute , New York surveys in the U.S. As a result of service satisfaction levels , the marque has one of the highest customer loyalty rates in the industry . To improve customer service , employees are instructed to follow the " Lexus Covenant , " the marque 's founding promise (which states that " Lexus will treat each customer as we would a guest in our home ") , and some dealerships have incorporated

training at upscale establishments such as Nordstrom department stores and Ritz @-@ Carlton hotels .

= = Motorsport = =

Lexus first entered the motorsport arena in 1999 when its racing unit , Team Lexus , fielded two GS 400 race vehicles in the Motorola Cup North American Street Stock Championship touring car series . In its 1999 inaugural season , Team Lexus achieved its first victory with its sixth race at Road Atlanta . Led by Sports Car Club of America and International Motor Sports Association driver Chuck Goldsborough , based in Baltimore , Maryland , Team Lexus capitalized on the debut of the first generation Lexus IS by entering three IS 300s in the third race of the 2001 Grand @-@ Am Cup season at Phoenix , Arizona . Team Lexus won its first IS 300 victory that year at the Virginia International Raceway . In 2002 , Team Lexus ' competitive efforts in the Grand @-@ Am Cup ST1 (Street Tuner) class achieved victories in the Drivers ' and Team Championships , as well as a sweep of the top three finishes at Circuit Mont @-@ Tremblant in Quebec , Canada .

After the release of the Lexus brand in the Japanese domestic market in 2005 , Lexus sanctioned the entry of four SC 430 coupes in the Super GT series of the All Japan Grand Touring Car Championship in the GT500 class . In the first race of the 2006 series , an SC 430 took the chequered flag , and drivers André Lotterer and Juichi Wakisaka raced the SC 430 to capture the GT500 championship for that year . In 2007 , another SC 430 won the GT500 opening round race . In 2006 , Lexus raced a hybrid vehicle for the first time , entering a GS 450h performance hybrid sedan in partnership with Sigma Advanced Racing Development at the 24 Hours of Tokachi race in Hokkaido , Japan . Lexus Canada also entered the GS 450h in 2007 's Targa Newfoundland event . In 2009 , Lexus Super GT Team SC 430 and IS 350 racers won the GT500 and GT300 championships , respectively .

Lexus ' participation in endurance racing further includes the Rolex 24 Hours of Daytona , sanctioned by the Grand American Road Racing Association . After entering the Rolex Sports Car Series in 2004 , Lexus has won over 15 Rolex Series event races . In 2005 , Lexus was runner @-@ up , and in 2006 , it won the championship . Although Toyota has won this race in the past , it was the first time that its luxury arm emerged as the winner . In 2007 , six Lexus @-@ powered Daytona prototypes were entered in the Rolex 24 Hours of Daytona event at the Daytona International Speedway . Lexus was a repeat winner of the event , with a Lexus @-@ Riley prototype driven by Scott Pruett , Juan Pablo Montoya , and Salvador Durán of Chip Ganassi Racing finishing first ; Lexus @-@ Riley prototypes also took three of the top ten spots . In 2008 , Lexus won its third consecutive win at Daytona . For the 2010 season , Lexus departed from the Rolex Sports Car Series , and Ganassi Racing switched to BMW / Dinan engines . The LF @-@ A prototype also competed on the Nürburgring since 2008 in VLN endurance races and in the 24 Hours Nürburgring , also with the IS F. On May 14 , 2011 , a CT 200h tuned up by Gazoo Racing competed in the Adenauer ADAC Rundstrecken @-@ Trophy , a six @-@ hour endurance race .

= = Marketing = =

From its inception , Lexus has been advertised to luxury consumers using specific marketing strategies , with a consistent motif used for the marque 's advertisements . Beginning in 1989 , television ads were narrated by actor James Sloyan (the voice of " Mr. Lexus " until 2009) , and accompanied by vehicles that performed unusual stunts onscreen . The first decade of Lexus commercials (1989 ? 99) consisted primarily of disjunctive verbal descriptions , such as " relentless , " " pursuit , " and " perfection , " while vehicles were used to claim superiority in precision , idling , and interior quiet and comfort on camera . Examples included the champagne glass " Balance " (1989) and rolling " Ball Bearing " (1992) . In the 2000s (decade) , commercials included descriptions of features , or a narration of the events onscreen , and were often targeted at the marque 's German competitors . An annual " December to Remember " campaign featured scenes of family members surprising loved ones with the gift of a new Lexus . The marque returned to the

champagne glass theme in a 2006 LS 460 spot showing the sedan maneuvering between two stacks of glasses using its self @-@ parking system , and in a 2010 LFA spot showing its engine sound shattering a glass via resonance frequency .

Industry observers have attributed Lexus ' early marketing successes to higher levels of perceived quality and lower prices than competitors , which have enabled the marque to attract customers upgrading from mass @-@ market cars . A reputation for dependability , bolstered by reliability surveys , also became a primary factor in attracting new customers from rival premium makes . Lexus has since grown to command higher price premiums than rival Japanese makes , with new models further increasing in price and reaching the over @-@ US \$ 100 @,@ 000 ultra @-@ luxury category long dominated by rival European marques .

Automotive analysts have also noted Lexus ' relative newcomer status as a marketing challenge for the brand , although some have debated the requirement of a long history . European rivals have marketed their decades of heritage and pedigree , whereas Lexus ' reputation rests primarily upon its perceived quality and shared history with parent company Toyota . Several analysts have stated that Lexus will have to develop its own heritage over time by highlighting technological innovations and producing substantial products .

Lexus ' marketing efforts have extended to sporting and charity event sponsorships , including the U.S. Open tennis Grand Slam event from 2005 to 2009 , and the United States Golf Association 's U.S. Open , U.S. Women 's Open , U.S. Senior Open , and U.S. Amateur tournaments since 2007 . Lexus has organized an annual Champions for Charity golf series in the U.S. since 1989 . Endorsement contracts have also been signed with professional athletes Andy Roddick , Annika Sörenstam , and Peter Jacobsen .