



Three Years at Number One: Why the Lexus RX is Still Britain's Top-Rated Luxury SUV

30 April 2019

It takes something very special to be rated Britain's best large luxury SUV, not once, but three years in succession. That's the achievement of the Lexus RX, which has yet again been named the best car in its class in the *Auto Express* Driver Power survey.

To understand what sets the RX apart from its prestige market rivals, you need only to consider its history of innovation. It has been at the heart of the Lexus range in the UK since the original model was introduced here in 2000, pioneering the concept of a luxurious SUV. Its status as a pathfinder for game-changing new technology was confirmed just five years later with the debut of the RX 400h, Lexus's first self-charging hybrid model.

Since those early days, the RX has been continuously improved, meeting and anticipating the changing needs and preferences of customers in its performance, hand-crafted luxury detailing, versatility and practicality. It has amassed more than 50,000 sales in the UK, and is now in its fourth generation.

The 3.5-litre self-charging hybrid powertrain provides smooth, seamless and responsive performance appropriate for a car of the RX's size, but with exceptional fuel and emissions efficiency: official combined cycle figures are from 35.15 to 37.39mpg (WLTP data) with CO₂ emissions from 132g/km (NEDC correlated data). With the benefit of Lexus's compact and lightweight E-Four system, the RX also provides a useful degree of all-wheel drive, automatically engaged when low-grip conditions are detected.

The Driver Power survey showed the RX achieving the highest rating of any vehicle for the quality of its interior and comfort. The spacious cabin strikes a balance between luxury and intuitive functionality, with Japanese takumi craftsmanship evident in detailing such as the stitching of quilted leather upholstery and the laser-etched wood trim inlays. Seating comfort, including generous head, leg and elbow-room, is offered for all occupants. Front seats have power adjustment, heating and ventilation, while the rear seats can be specified with an integrated heating and a convenient power-folding function to extend the load space.

The dual-zone climate control system intelligently detects which seats are occupied to focus heating and cooling performance; it's also available with nanoe technology, which adds moisturising ions to the airflow to improve cabin air quality. Onboard entertainment, information and connectivity provisions include a bespoke 15-speaker surround sound system, created by Mark Levinson, Lexus's exclusive premium audio partner. High-tech equipment features available in the RX range include a colour head-up display, a Blind Spot Monitor and Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Intelligent Parking Assist

and 360-degree Panoramic View Monitor, giving the driver an all-round view of the vehicle's surroundings.

All RX models benefit from Lexus Safety System+, a suite of active safety functions that addresses many common accident risks, helping avoid an impact, or mitigate the consequences if an impact does occur. Notably, the RX has a top five-star rating in independent Euro NCAP safety testing, setting a new benchmark high performance for vehicles in its class at the time of its assessment.

The current model is also the first RX to offer the option of a seven-seat interior. The RX L was specifically engineered to accommodate a third row of seats, being slightly longer overall than the five-model and with a reprofiled rear window to secure extra headroom.

Among the thousands of car owners who responded to this year's Driver Power survey, RX drivers were the most satisfied with their vehicle. Their positive views gave it an exceptional 95.56 per cent rating, sealing its gold medal-winning status

"Lexus is a frequent high-flier in our Driver Power surveys, and with models as well received as the RX, it's easy to see why," *Auto Express* reported. As well as the overall category title, the RX had the highest rating among all cars for interior and comfort, and was second placed for reliability."

Other highlighted qualities include the driving experience, with "quiet engines and strong acceleration complementing the smooth ride and responsive brakes" and practicality courtesy of "the large boot and plentiful interior storage options."

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