

The Lexus RX 350 F Sport is large and in charge



By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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As a motoring journo, I have driven a myriad of SUVs; small, medium and large, but the Lexus RX 350 had to stand out as one of the best.

Everything about this large SUV is exactly that. Large. And it's in charge! From the outside, it looks the part and is really a standout. Step inside the cabin and you know that you are in for an extraordinary ride.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

Once I strapped myself in, I adjusted my seating and steering, which is controlled with the touch of a button. I drove off with a heavy growl from the engine, as the gearbox changed seamlessly to lower gears. Providing a decidedly sporty cherry on top of a very talented range is the all-new F Sport model in RX 350 guise.

Luxury meets performance meets technology meets design

The RX has a proud history of innovation, not least in being the first vehicle in the luxury segment to offer the choice of a self-charging hybrid powertrain.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

On the design front, the changes are led by new, evolutionary styling that maintains the RX's powerful and sporty appearance, while introducing more elegant elements and creating a flow from front to rear, giving the vehicle a stronger, more harmonious profile. A revised side character line sweeps down from the floating roof to the rear, to slim the overall rear expression, creating a coupe-like silhouette.

Moving to the rear, a more cohesive and powerful look has been created with a redesigned lower bumper that links smoothly to the rear wings. Elements such as the lights, reflectors, under guard and exhaust outlets are arranged on a strong horizontal axis to emphasise the vehicle's width and sense of purpose, while new LED combination lights have been changed to a new mirrored L-motif design that contributes to greater brand recognition.

All models come standard with 20-inch alloy wheels (all-new design for the EX and F Sport variants) and electrically-operated sunroof.

A friendly cabin

The interior has been vastly improved courtesy of a new 12.3-inch central display featuring touchscreen functionality. To accommodate this new feature, the screen has been moved further forward on the centre console, giving a wider viewing angle and placing it within easy reach of the driver and front passenger.

The multimedia functions can also be operated using a new trackpad version of Lexus's Remote Touch Interface or with voice control. The new RX also provides seamless smartphone connectivity via Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. Voice control can also be enabled via Apple's Siri or Google Assistant if using an Android device. This is complemented by an additional four USB ports.

Rev me up!

The Lexus production team worked closely to improve areas of the car's performance that contribute to driving pleasure and agile handling. This included increasing body rigidity and making detailed adjustments to the suspension.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

In terms of engine performance, it's a case of 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'. Petrol variants are equipped with the monumental Lexus 3.5-litre V6 engine featuring direct and port fuel injection for ample grunt and efficient fuel economy. Combined with a quick-shifting eight-speed transmission, and delivering 221 kW and 370Nm @ 4600 rpm (RX 350) or 216 kW and 358 Nm @ 4600 rpm (RX 350 L), both models offer dynamic performance at every curve.

Safe! Safe! Safe!

Safety is a defining characteristic of every single Lexus model and the RX is no exception. In addition to the full suite of passive and active safety systems ranging from 10 airbags to the latest VSC system with Active Cornering Assist, all RX models now feature a Blind Spot Monitor with Rear Cross-Traffic Alert.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

With reference to the latter, a new parking support brake system uses intelligent clearance sonar and rear cross-traffic sensors to avoid or mitigate collisions that commonly occur during parking manoeuvres.

In addition to an audible warning, the system can reduce drive force and apply the brakes to reduce the possibility of contact with static objects in the direction of travel, or static objects and moving vehicles when reversing.

Cost of ownership

The Lexus RX models retail from R1,012,000 for the EX grade and R1,087,000 for the RX 350 EX L. The RX 350 F Sport model retails for R1,132,200 while the top of the range, RX 450 h SE, is available for R1,315,800. The entire RX range boasts a Lexus best-in-class 7-year/105 000km Warranty and Full Maintenance Plan. (The warranty on the hybrid battery is 8 years/195,000km.) The vehicle service intervals are at every 15,000km, alternatively once a year.

ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

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