



# LEXUS RX450H

The Japanese marque is close to perfection with the refined RX450h, writes Tim Barnes-Clay

Take even a short drive with the Lexus RX450h and you'll find refinement, luxury, and comfort in equal measures. The Lexus RX450h is powered by a combination of petrol and electric – petrol in the form of a 3.5-litre six-cylinder engine, and electric in the form of an electric motor on each axle. Lexus knows that with a hybrid setup there is a greater sense of finesse. The engine is hushed on pick up, only really starting to purr when your right foot pushes hard on the accelerator. When it does make any noise it's very pleasant – a distinctly six-cylinder tune emanates from under the bonnet. It makes a great change from the clatter of diesel engines found in its German or Swedish rivals. The refinement of the powertrain makes the RX450h a top cruiser, and the comfy and soft set-up of the ride adds to this sense of self-possession on the road. The car can soak up and disperse the irregularities in our road network effortlessly, always providing you and your passengers with a soothing driving experience.





This Lexus doesn't just do comfort though; the all-wheel drive system provides oodles of grip in corners, so there's real road security on top of the sophistication.

There can be no doubt that Lexus is, at this time, providing some of the most modern and forward-looking designs on the motoring market. The design department is ablaze, but whether the work of the Lexus design team is to your taste is all a matter of personal opinion. Whatever you may think of it, there's no disputing that the RX450h stands out.

In the cabin, there is more of the well-engineered luxury finish that Lexus has built such a solid reputation in providing. The quality of materials is outstanding, and it really does feel special, even if it doesn't quite look as modern as the arresting exterior. The seats, with soft, supple leather, offer supportive cushioning and, of course, they are electrically adjustable too.

In the rear there is a lot of head and legroom for passengers and there's also a useful flat floor, with no transmission tunnel in the centre, meaning the third middle seat is a real option. Building on the practicality in the back is the boot. Handily, it has a flat lip, allowing the loading of heavier objects to be made a little bit easier, and there's bags of room. The rear seats can also be folded away to provide even more space.

There are four trim levels on offer; SE, Luxury, F-Sport, and Premier. All versions come with leather, heated and electrically adjustable seating, dual-zone climate control, satellite navigation, DAB digital radio, a reversing camera and LED headlights.

This is as competitive as car segments get, and challengers, such as the BMW X5 and Volvo XC90 are both highly accomplished cars. However, there is something to be said for Lexus's brilliant design, and the Japanese automaker focuses on comfort and refinement above all else. The only issues the Lexus RX450h has are technical oversights.

The decision not to offer a diesel engine is a business judgment by Lexus, and in terms of refinement it is utterly right, but in terms of delivering a package that UK buyers can really get behind, Lexus is missing a trick. BMW and Volvo will sell far more vehicles purely because they are offered with some oil-burners.

At the end of the day, if you're looking for a certain kind of SUV, the Lexus RX450h will deliver a fantastic package. Nevertheless, an absence of forethought with engine options will irritate some, as the Lexus RX450h is clearly very near to being something exceptional.