

Pure Class



Ian Lamming takes comfort from the sumptuous Lexus RX450h

OLD school, definitely old school and proud of it, which is why the biggest Lexus SUV is so great.

Modern cars are becoming far too hi-tech for my liking. Many dashboards are dominated by tablets, touch screen digital devices that have to be swept, dabbed and pinched to get the vehicle to function – and with the left hand at that.

The youth of today won't struggle, of course, with their digital dexterity honed on texting, polished by social media.

But then the youth of today won't be buying the RX450h, that's more likely to be a mature geezer like me with whitening locks and thumbs on every finger.

How great is it to see then on the latest Lexus RX450h ye olde conventional switches, especially for the important stuff like the climate control.

I can't tell you how many times I've nearly crashed trying to dab, sweep and eventually punch through myriad menus to get the screen to demist when a simple switch with the windscreen symbol does the job so well.

There is still a screen and it's a big one, which you can split, but it is operated by a mouse which falls easily to hand on the transmission tunnel. It must be easy as I can use it and it

doesn't distract you from your driving like the touchy types do.

Lexus also has a CD slot so I can play my extensive collection of music, built over many years, of albums containing tracks that never made it to the charts and I love for that.

Downloads to your phone are fine but it's nice to have a choice. Perhaps next year they will introduce a vinyl record deck. I'd buy one.

Now don't get the wrong impression; there's nothing last year, retro or quaintly old fashioned about the RX, which remains cutting edge. It's just that Lexus wisely recognises the technological failings of a man of a certain age.

RX looks gorgeous from any angle but especially from the front where the spindle grille is large enough to grate enough parmesan for the whole of Italy. It marries sleek with angular and must surely be one of the most stunning SUVs on the road.

Then there is the sheer quality. It literally is made by little men in white coats in hermetically sealed chambers and the quality simply shines through. It is such a lovely thing, so opulent, so quiet, comfortable and relaxed.

It's a fortnight's holiday by the pool free from other tourists with only the staff to bring you pina colodas.

But when you are in the mood it is a driving sensation too thanks to a lusty 3.5 litre V6 with electric support offering a combined force of 335hp.

In EV it is completely silent, with only a little more noise being produced when cruising on a whiff of throttle. But use the sport modes, or floor the accelerator to overtake slow moving traffic and it boasts a glorious V6 roar.

SUVs live in a very competitive sector but the RX remains a firm favourite with me showing that Lexus continues to have its finger on the button and long may that continue.

Fact File

- Lexus RX450h F Sport
- Engine: 3.5 litre V6 petrol plus electric
- Power: 335hp combined
- 0-62mph: 7.7 secs
- Top speed: 124mph
- Transmission: Electric CVT
- Combined MPG: 51.4
- CO2 g/km: 127