

LIVING LA VIDA LEXUS



BY BILL ADAM

Whenever car enthusiasts get together and talk about great “GT” cars – those wonderful rare vehicles that can devour vast stretches of road in comfort and speed with ease – the names of Porsche, Mercedes Benz, Audi and Nissan are amongst the most common choices and for good reason. Their histories have all been made with this type of car and their products have been perfected through decades of engineering refinement and racing. However, Lexus is a name that has never been included in such a group until now.

The new Lexus RC F Coupe is really a stunning vehicle, if you can get past that huge glaring grille. Why the company has chosen to make this a signature design element on all of their vehicles is beyond my understanding, as it over-

powers all other exterior features and seems to be much larger than any possible reason would dictate. But, much like some people preferring blondes and some preferring brunettes, this might be a matter of personal taste. Regardless, the rest of the bodywork is drop dead beautiful, with flowing, sensual lines leading to muscular flaring over the wheel wells, drawing admiring looks from young and old alike. There is an abundance of two door coupes on the market, making it difficult to create something different and attractive, but Lexus has succeeded admirably here. The brand has created a truly handsome vehicle.

The interior is even more dramatic, with what may be the best looking seats to be found in any car. Looking almost as if they are straight ▶



out of a GT racer, true “bucket seats” hold the driver securely on even the most twisting roads. While the seats in some cars leave one with the feeling that they are sitting on them, these seats make drivers feel like they are sitting *in* them. Finished in a soft leather, they coddle passengers with support *and* comfort.

The whole cockpit displays attention to both the design and the function of driving. With a combination of that same soft leather, alcantara and flawless carbon fiber trim, it blends using simple and elegant lines. It would have been easy for the designers to use the “bling” that you can find in so many interiors, where shiny chrome or polished bezels are put around edges and gauges. Wonderful to look at and admire when the car is stopped, but these touches of glitter can

Good looks and a dash of excitement make the Lexus RC F Coupe the perfect model



become huge distractions as you drive, when the sun reflects off them. Kudos must be given to Lexus designers for the use of the “track pad” mounted on the console near the gear shift to control the information screen on the dashboard. Far too often I’ve cursed the “touch screen” found in so many cars since they attract fingerprints. Using the Lexus pad allows the screen to stay crystal clear.

The heart of this beauty is a 5 liter, 467 HP V-8 that is a joy for drivers. Under “normal” driving circumstances, it’s as quiet as you’d expect from the Lexus brand. But when one puts his or her foot down hard, the RC F lunges ahead, with the engine taking on a completely different and wonderful sound that even Dale Earnhardt Jr. would love. Mated to a silky smooth 8 speed automatic transmission, with paddle shifters and multiple selectable modes, it gives the driver the option of idly enjoying remarkably silent travel, or actively participating in a bit of spirited driving.

That same spirited driving won’t be muted by a suspension that isn’t up to the task; this really is where Lexus has made a considerable breakthrough. In past years, Lexus had just not been able to discover the magic combination for providing both a comfortable ride *and* good handling. Get behind the wheel of a German car – any German car – and one will instantly feel the difference with confidence of control, as they give comfort *and* handling with their sublime blend of proper springs and shock absorbers. Previous generations of Lexus “floated” over the road but this truly superb model feels like it might well have been made in Germany. Lexus finally got it right.

In the early 90’s when Lexus brought out their SC300 and 400 coupes, I admired their beautiful aerodynamic styling, but the lack of “personality” was such a conundrum for me. Such is not the case with their new RC F Coupe; this is a car that will surely be enjoyed by everyone. **CL**

