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The RX finds a home in many driveways thanks to its flashy styling, softly sprung suspension, refined ride, and comfortable interior. Its optional hybrid powertrain is appealing to fuel-conscious buyers, and a new three-row variant provides a little extra space for people and cargo. Our complaints center on driving dynamics—which may or may not matter to most buyers—and the lackluster infotainment system. Even so, there's still a lot to love about the cushy RX.What's New for 2018? A three-row variant joins the lineup for 2018 in the form of the RXL. Its wheelbase is the same as the two-row model's, but its overall length grows 4.4 inches to allow for the two-seat third row. The 450h receives a new entry-level model in its lineup that reduces its price. A new Premium package for the 450h adds wood and leather interior trim, power-folding exterior mirrors, and memory settings for the driver's seat, steering wheel, and mirrors. PricingOriginal MSRP:RX350: \$44,495RX450h: \$46,920RX350L Premium: \$48,695RX350 F Sport: \$50,145RX450hL Premium: \$51,645RX450h F Sport: \$52,280RX350L Luxury: \$53,710RX450hL Luxury: \$56,660 We're partnering with Carvana because we want to make it easy for you to find the exact vehicle you're looking for. Finding InventoryEngine, Transmission, and PerformanceTwo available powertrains—one of which is a hybrid—provide adequate but uninspiring motivation for the RX. There's a 3.5-liter V-6 that produces 295 hp and comes mated to an eight-speed automatic transmission. The fuel-efficient hybrid models combine the V-6 with electric power for a total of 308 hp; these drive through a continuously variable automatic transmission (CVT). Both powerplants are smooth, polished, and efficient, which is perhaps what's most important to luxury shoppers. The RX glides along the road delivering a silky ride and pampering occupants inside its quiet cabin. And for many buyers, that's probably exactly what they want. Fuel Economy EPA fuel-economy testing and reporting procedures have changed over time. For the latest numbers on current and older vehicles, visit the EPA's website and select Find & Compare Cars. Interior, Comfort, and CargoAs with its exterior, the RX's interior boasts a bold styling theme and complements it with a comfortable driving position and upscale features. Both front and rear seats in the two-row model are spacious, adult friendly, plush, and supportive. Opt for the new RX350L or RX450hL and you'll find a pop-up third row of seats in the extended cargo area. These offer little space for adults. Impressive cargo capacity makes the RX handy for weekend errands. For day-to-day storage of small items, the cabin and cargo areas provide adequate space. Infotainment and Connectivity, USB ports, and a nine-speaker audio system with SiriusXM satellite radio. Options include a 12.3-inch touchscreen, navigation, and a premium sound system. Unfortunately, the Lexus infotainment system lacks many of the automotive world's most sought-after features, such as Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, and onboard Wi-Fi. Its infotainment screen is controlled by a touch-sensitive pad that is aggravating to use, and the system's response times are painfully slow. Safety Features and Crash Test RatingsFor more information about the Lexus RX's crash-test results, visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) websites. WarrantySome older vehicles are still eligible for coverage under a manufacturer's Certified Pre-Owned (CPO) program. For more information visit our guide to every manufacturer's CPO program. HomeCarsLexus RX2018 Lexus RXTRIMOriginal MSRPClean Retail Price reflects a reasonable asking price by a dealership for a fully reconditioned vehicle (clean title history, no defects, minimal wear) with average mileage.5-Year Cost to Own / Rating\$43,470\$41,407\$54,607 / Average\$43,470\$41,407\$54,607 / Average\$44,870\$42,957\$56,516 / Average\$45,895\$46,207\$61,394 / Poor\$47,670\$42,557\$56,126 / Average\$49,070\$43,782\$57,865 / Good\$50,520\$44,857\$57,865 / Good\$50,520\$44,857\$57,850 / Good\$50,520\$44,857\$57,850 / Good\$50,520\$44,857\$57,850 / Good\$50,520\$44,857\$57,850 / Good\$50,520\$44,857\$57,850 / Good\$50,520\$44,857\$57,850 / Good\$50,520\$44,857 N.A.\$54,085Coming Soon / N.A.\$54,555Coming Soo faced and sulky, the criminal informant sits at a conference table in a government office. A federal agent is framing out his new life in the witness-protection program: a new name, a new house, and a "perfectly inconspicuous" SUV. She slaps down a photo of a Lexus RX. His face twists in disappointment. Smash cut to the doomed bastard wheeling away in an Audi Q5. "I'll take my chances," he says. In the mind of the marketer, this recent TV spot for Audi's volume crossover is "ideal self-conception" psychology at work. The Q5 is the "passionate lover" and the RX a "prison of the spirit." It's the oldest trick in the book, and it works because the sales-leading Lexus is conventional by definition. But if you're really paying attention, you'll note that Audi's little passion play is undone by cognitive dissonance: The O5 looks like a pot of Sleepytime tea on all-season tires, while the hawk-like Lexus appears ready to claw the Mafia's eyes out. In fact, from its samurai-mask grille to the facets and origami-like folds that intersect, mingle, and collide in Byzantine combinations, the Lexus RX enjoys some of the rowdiest sheetmetal in the industry. It's an inexplicably daring act of automotive design in a space that had previously seen inconspicuousness rewarded with cash. And the market has spoken: The RX continues to crush its competitors in the midsize luxury crossover space, and sales have been on an upward climb since its radical redesign for the 2016 model year. Recently, I pulled our test RX 350, painted in matte-like Satin Cashmere, into an empty parking lot and had a good look at it. (I see 50 of these a day in the NYC metro area, but I've never actually looked at one.) Character lines ascend and descend in counterpoint, creating a range of surfaces that absorb or reflect light, adding depth to body panels or lifting them to the surface. Metal and plastic edges come together to form deep creases, through which one can imagine the laws of fluid dynamics working their Newtonian magic as the RX exits Earth's atmosphere on its way to a dinner date in the Crab Nebula. For the "safe choice" the RX wears quite an avant-garde costume. Still, Audi can get away with chiding the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the Lexus for its lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as working the lackluster driving dynamics—which we'll address in a bit—as well as worki that's as interesting to look at as it is completely uninteresting to drive. That sounds like a negative. It's not. Mike Spinelli Mike Spinell buyers raised on mecha anime, but the post-2016 Lexus RX 350 is, hand-down, the least mundane thing to look at in day-to-day traffic. Critics hate it in the same way they hated progrock and the movie Waterworld, but critics aren't always right. Sales figures bear out the risk Lexus took with this design. It's a winner. Interior design. Lexus excels where it always has, in creating a spacious, luxurious cabin that doesn't overload the senses. Materials and interior space that employs enough angular shapes to keep your beta brainwaves occupied, without taxing the alphas. It's like a talk show's "green room" without the green. Overall comfort. When a bank manager gets in her RX at the end of a rough day doing, er, bank managing, she wants not to be messed with. With a smooth powertrain and compliant chassis, the RX 350 is quiet, comfortable on bad pavement and in dodgy construction zones, and effortless to maneuver. It's the ultimate urban-driving bullshit filter. Infotainment woes. While easy to use, Lexus's proprietary, walled-garden system doesn't accommodate Apple CarPlay (yet) or Android Auto, though it does have apps like Yelp and iHeartRadio. Navigating the screens is generally intuitive, but would be easier if the block-like Remote Touch controller were less sensitive, and required less attention.Don't expect excitement. The RX's sheltering ethos makes for some devastatingly uninteresting moments behind the wheel. Even with "sport mode" engaged, the RX 350 is only slightly more engaging than the omelet station at a hotel brunch. Quick steering doesn't do much to bridge the vast distance between a driver's touch senses and the road. Zero to 60 miles per hour in 7.7 seconds feels downright glacial for 2018. Performance: 2/5 Comfort: 4/5 Luxury: 4.5/5 Hauling People: 5/5 Hauling Stuff: 4/5 Curb Appeal: 5/5 Wow" Factor: 3.5/5 Overall: 4/5 The Bottom LineLexus knows a large portion of crossover buyers don't care which SUV rocks the slalom at the test track hardest. As such, the RX 350 is a made-to-measure luxury crossover stolen from the dreams of millions of stressed drivers, purpose-built to mitigate the demands of urban motoring: traffic, crap roads, construction zones, heavy weather, and overall sensory overload. It's a rolling stress reducer created only to satisfy drivers for whom "steering feel" is another word for "drives rough." Never before has a vehicle left so much space between its legion of loyal buyers and the automotive press. You might say the RX is truly a crossover for its times. The Audi Q5 may be quicker and more nimble, but let's face it: That only matters if you're running from a Mafia hit crew, right? The 2018 Lexus RX 350, by the Numbers: Base Price (as tested, incl. destination): \$44,670 (\$61,533)Powertrain: 3.5-liter V6, 290 horsepower, 268 pound-feet of torque; eight-speed automatic; all-wheel-driveFuel Economy: 19 city, 26 highwayPassenger Volume: 121.3 cu. ft. Cargo Volume (flat-floor with seats folded down): 18.4 cu. ft. (56.3 cu. ft.) MORE TO READ

