

LEXUS RX ICONS: SECOND GENERATION

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When it first debuted at the North American International Auto Show in 1998, the Lexus RX 300 was the world's first-ever luxury crossover utility vehicle (CUV). By combining the best features of a luxury sedan and a sport utility vehicle (SUV), the RX ushered in a new standard of comfort, design and performance for manufacturers worldwide.

Approximately 42,000 RX 300s were sold that year alone, and CUVs have been growing in popularity ever since. Nearly a quarter century later, the fifth generation of the RX is now getting ready to go on sale later this year. Completely redesigned from the wheels to the roof rails, the [all-new 2023 Lexus RX](#) features some of the same luxury and performance-driven qualities that have always distinguished it from the rest: a comfortable and quiet in-cabin atmosphere, refined ride comfort, and excellent grip and drive force control.

Equipped with a new global platform, two all-new grades, Lexus Safety System+ 3.0 and Lexus Interface Multimedia System, the 2023 Lexus RX is in a class all its own.

This series will look at the preceding generations and how the RX maintains a modern feel and design while staying true to the original RX 300 concept of seamlessly blending luxury and capability.



Second Generation: 2004 – 2009

Luxury and Sustainability Without Sacrifice

The second generation of the Lexus RX offered more of everything: a more powerful engine, more legroom and more options like 40/40/40 split design rear seats. The 2004 Lexus RX 330 boasted a 230-horsepower 3.3-liter V6 engine and five-speed automatic transmission, paired with a strengthened structure and a revised available all-wheel drive system for a more comfortable and controlled drive.

Its hybrid counterpart, the RX 400h, came to be known as the world's first luxury hybrid sport utility vehicle. With the same engine as its gas counterpart but paired with three electric motor/generators, the front-wheel drive 2006 Lexus RX 400h had an EPA-rated city/highway fuel economy 28/25 miles per gallon without sacrificing speed or cargo space. The hybrid history maker no doubt made an impact on what guests can currently choose from when it comes to electrified powertrains in the RX portfolio as well as the rest of the Lexus lineup.

Throwback facts:

- The RX 400h was Lexus' first hybrid model. In just over 10 years following the launch of RX 400h, Lexus sold more than one million hybrid vehicles worldwide.

- The RX 400h was also one of the first Lexus vehicles to offer intuitive Vehicle Dynamics Integrated Management (VDIM), which was designed to help the driver keep better control of the vehicle by adjusting its speed, throttle, braking, steering and headlights.

The Lexus RX continues to redefine the luxury crossover vehicle. The latest generation is no exception: Innovative computing, enhanced materials and high-stress performance testing have made the [2023 Lexus RX](#) the best one yet.