

# LEXUS RC F

By Jim Mc Cauley



There has to be a conflict within a company that at one end can produce world-leading environmentally friendly vehicles and at the other a 168 mph, 5 litre V8 coupé. It's a brave move to both balance your public image and go into battle against the Germans who currently dominate the large capacity multi-cylinder coupé market. It may not be the market sector that keeps the accountants singing, but a flagship coupé that slingshots to 60 mph in around 4 seconds has to keep a lot of engineers happy.

Sharing its V8 with the similarly 'F' badged GS saloon, the RC F Coupé is aggressively creased with a grille that looks as though it would prefer to swallow the car in front rather than overtake it. The metallic red paintwork of the test car however, added a little sophistication and eased its aggressiveness a little compared to the brighter solid colours that are also available.

It's a big car at 4.7 metres long and over 1.8 metres wide, but the bulk is more to accommodate the powerhouse than the occupants, with the snug cabin providing a wrap-around environment either side of the transmission tunnel which sweeps down from the central dash. It's what you want in a coupé – a cockpit that fits – and there is no doubting the quality of the appointments.

Nor is there any doubting the power of the car – 471bhp and a massive 530Nm of torque in what is the most powerful V8 production performance car that Lexus has ever built. Yet the power is fed controllably to the rear wheels through the 8-speed automatic transmission. The driver can measure its application carefully and enjoy the progression as opposed to constantly having to balance the throttle where the power surges out aggressively. It is a car that can control its performance without pressuring the driver. But it has other claims to fame and although the test session with



restricted to rather ordinary roads, the car has also aspirations for track day use with a choice of five selectable modes allowing the packaged technologies to modify the powertrain, steering and chassis, varying the level of protection and assistance required by the driver.

With track days in mind, the test vehicle was fitted with the optional torque-vectoring differential which has two selectable performance options in addition to its standard default setting which provides the ideal everyday balance of agility and stability.



For road use, the car comes with bespoke luxury appointments including the instruments, seating and interior trim as well as a 17-speaker Mark Levinson audio system monitored by a 7-inch console screen and remote touch interface.

Accommodation-wise, the car is a two-door coupé with neat rather than generous provision for rear seat passengers. However, for those seeking similar performance with an ultimately more forgiving ride, then the same engine and transmission installation can be found in the GS F four-door saloon. Safety support for the driver comes in the form of lane departure and blind spot monitoring while the test vehicle was also fitted with the company's 'Pre-Crash Safety

System' which monitors the closing speed on a vehicle or object ahead, and if the driver fails to respond to the alerts, will automatically supplement any braking effort to reduce the vehicle's speed to 37mph.

Overall, the Lexus RC F can be seen as a viable alternative to the Teutonic status quo who dominate the high performance production coupé market. Its design may be a construction of featured elements rather than a flowing holistic solution but the softer metallic red of the test car eased the sharpness. It is an interesting newcomer into a narrow niche market, but the Lexus name will provide the confidence for the buyer to go the different route.

The Lexus RC F is priced at £60,995 and is in Group 48E for insurance purposes. With regards to running costs the car has an official combined fuel consumption of 26.2 mpg and with a CO2 emissions of 252 gms/km is in Band L for annual car tax.