




BEYOND

BY LEXUS

A JOURNAL ON DESIGN AND CRAFTSMANSHIP



<p>THE ONE » P17</p> <p>Exploring the progressive side of automobile design, the compelling Lexus LF-C2 concept coupe turns heads in stunning summer climes.</p>	<p>THE REVEAL » P33</p> <p>In a dynamic visual presentation, the scenic bends of New York's State Route 97 provide the athletic Lexus RC F Carbon Package with a suitably iconic backdrop.</p>	<p>BLUEPRINT » P44</p> <p>From a humble wooden workshop in Toki, Japan's pottery hub, Ryota Aoki produces some of the world's most acclaimed ceramics. We pay the potter a visit.</p>
<p>THE ROAD » P82</p> <p>Morgan Collett, co-founder of cult fashion brand Saturdays Surf NYC, takes a Lexus NX 200t to Long Island to catch some waves and connect with the local communities.</p>		<p>THE LAB » P108</p> <p>In an exclusive look behind the scenes, we tour Lexus's dramatic aerodynamics laboratory, featuring an extraordinarily cavernous wind tunnel.</p>

INTRODUCTION

For the past 25 years, Lexus has developed into one of the most renowned automobile manufacturers in the world, lauded for its commitment to craft, design and progressive technology. Our brand has achieved significant success since its founding in 1989, frequently setting higher automobile standards with new releases. We're proud of what we've achieved – but we're just getting started.

The high standard of Lexus design and engineering is evident throughout a special feature in this issue of BEYOND BY LEXUS. A celebration of sorts, this extra section, halfway through the magazine, includes an exploration of the 25 key moments, technologies and innovations that have defined Lexus over the first quarter century of its existence. It is an important record of our history so far, not least because it provides evidence of the solid foundations on which we will build our future.

Elsewhere in the magazine, our stories take us around the world. We tour an RC F – Lexus's impressive performance coupe – through Hawk's Nest, with its iconic, wonderfully winding section of New York highway. We broaden our cultural horizons by talking to five international chefs about eggs and quizzing an acclaimed Japanese potter about his unique work process. And we include a dynamic presentation of the LF-C2, a new Lexus concept sports coupe meant to be enjoyed in sunny climes.

That last story, in particular, reflects our commitment to producing vehicles of the highest possible quality. Rest assured that, at 25 years old, we're not taking our successes for granted. Expect a lot more to come from us.

TOKUO FUKUICHI

President
Lexus International



Cartier

TANK MC MANUFACTURE MOVEMENT 1904 MC

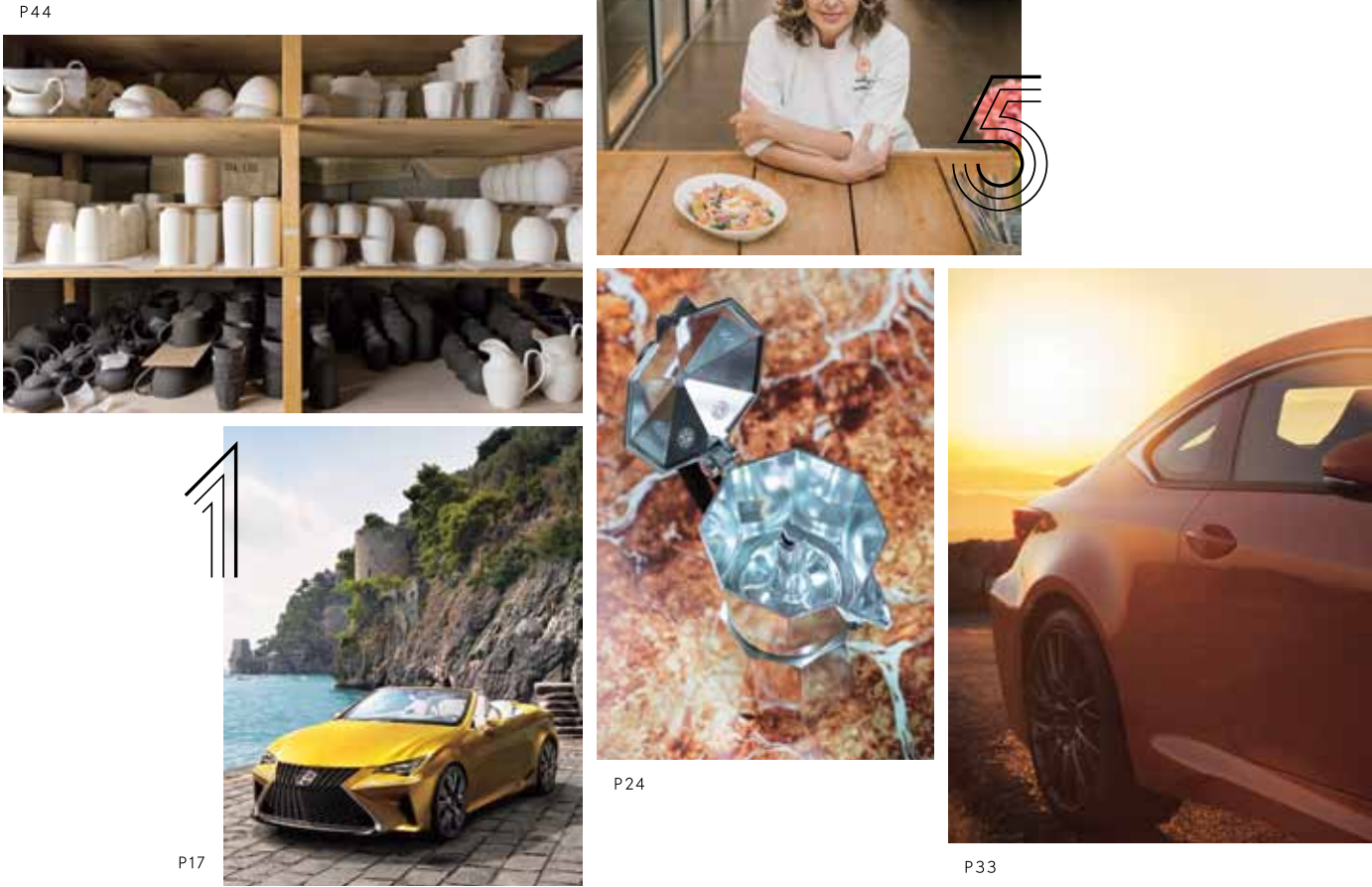
SINCE THE CREATION OF THE FIRST TANK WATCH IN 1917, THE TANK COLLECTION HAS CONTINUED TO BREAK NEW GROUND. THE INCREDIBLY REFINED AESTHETICS OF THE NEW TANK MC WATCH ARE FITTED WITH THE CARTIER MANUFACTURE MOVEMENT 1904 MC. ESTABLISHED IN 1847, CARTIER CREATES EXCEPTIONAL WATCHES THAT COMBINE DARING DESIGN AND WATCHMAKING SAVOIR-FAIRE.



The master watchmakers of 'La Fabrique du Temps Louis Vuitton' have captured the 24 time zones on a hand-painted dial whose color palette draws inspiration from legendary cities around the world. The hours move around the dial while at the center, the yellow arrow remains motionless.



BEYOND BY LEXUS



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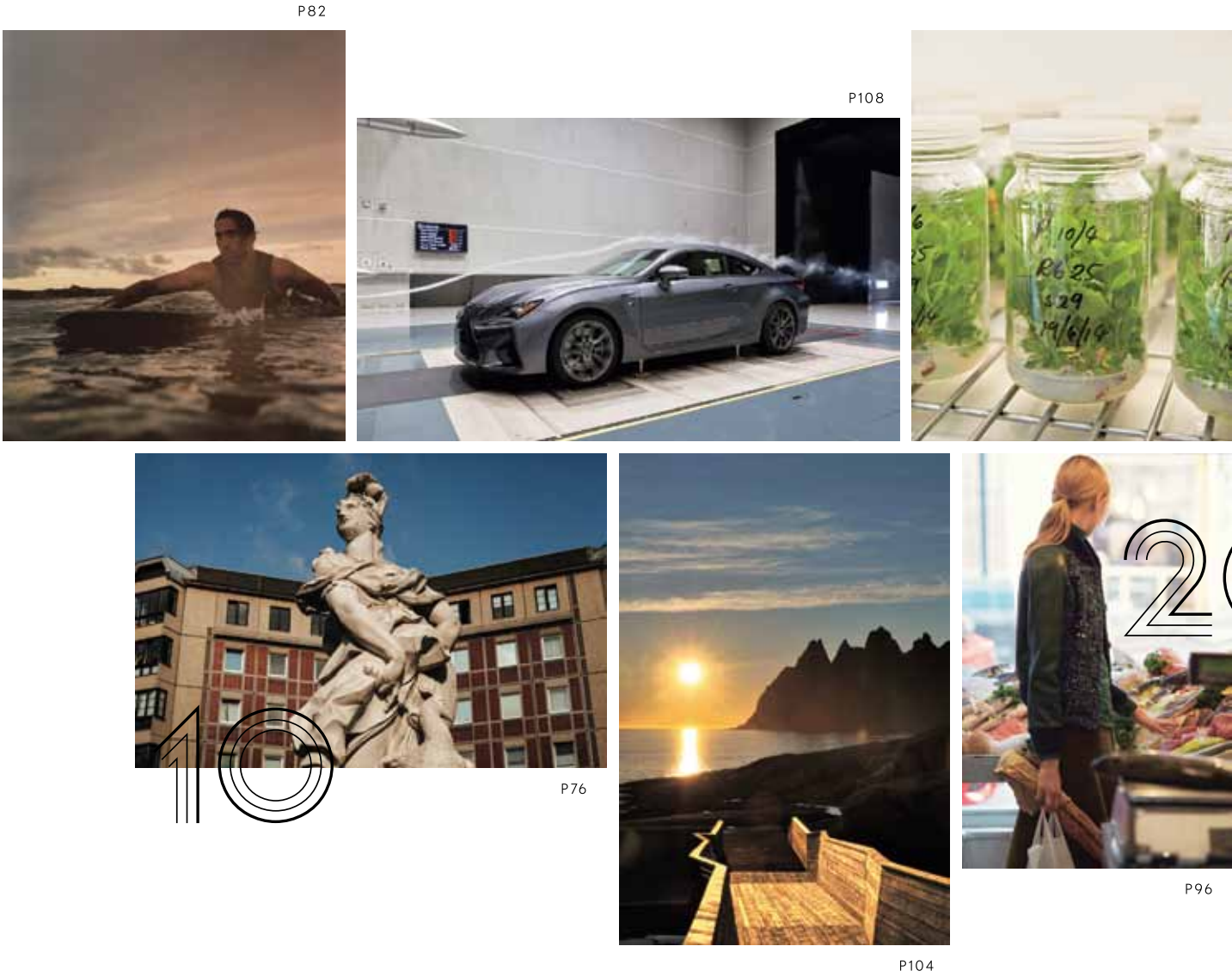
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Vehicle specifications are correct at the time of going to press. The car models shown may not be available in all countries. Please contact your local Lexus dealership for more information.

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WRITER

Belton is a London-born, Sydney-based design writer and editor who has worked for the likes of Tom Dixon and *The World of Interiors*. For this issue’s Human Nature feature, she visited PlantBank, in the Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan. Belton’s favorite road trip? A 32-day drive through Patagonia.

RAMON HAINDL
PHOTOGRAPHER

Haindl trained as a graphic designer but quickly turned to photography and film-making. For this issue he left his home-town, Frankfurt, to shoot the culturally up-and-coming city of Leipzig for The Ten. His dream road trip would take him through Canada’s scenic landscape, crossing the country from Toronto to Vancouver.

DEREK HENDERSON
PHOTOGRAPHER

Henderson is one of New Zealand’s most celebrated photographers, known for his skill in evoking the mysterious beauty of everyday scenes. His approach can be witnessed in this issue’s Human Nature feature. Henderson’s dream road trip would take him from Nairobi to the mountain gorillas at Bwindi National Park.

JESSICA BRIDGER
WRITER

Bridger is an American urbanist, journalist and consultant based in Berlin, whose work focuses on content creation and strategy for projects related to the built environment. This issue took her south to Leipzig, where she explored the city’s thriving art and design scene for The Ten. Bridger dreams of one day taking part in the Paris-Dakar rally.

LINNEA APELQVIST
SET DESIGNER

A Swedish-born, London-based set designer, Apelqvist creates playful sets for shoots, events and window displays of a range of fashion brands and publications, including Adidas and British *Vogue*. She styled this issue’s The Twenty section. Apelqvist’s dream road trip? Passing through each of the US states in a big caravan.

KENJI HALL
WRITER

Hall, who wrote this issue’s Blueprint story, covers diplomacy, business and design as the Tokyo-based Asia editor at large for *Monocle*. He was previously a reporter for *Businessweek* and the *Associated Press*. He dreams of crisscrossing New Zealand’s South Island on a road bicycle, stopping in small towns and camping in the wild.

AROUND THE WORLD

TWELVE INTERNATIONAL GOINGS-ON
WORTH TAKING NOTE OF THIS WINTER

ART



SETTING THE STAGE SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE

“Asia is a segmented region with many different voices, societies and cultures,” says Kum-Hoong Kong, the driving curatorial force behind Art Stage Singapore, an annual contemporary art festival. “This fair is a platform for dialogue and a bridge for Asia to use to meet.” Founded in 2010, Singapore’s preeminent art expo now regularly attracts close to 50,000 visitors, each on the lookout for work by the 1,000 artists represented by an international mix of high-profile galleries. The festival’s effect on the region’s art scene is palpable. “In 2011 the first edition of Art Stage Singapore presented, alongside the fair, several fringe visual art activities that created a festive ambience and atmosphere celebrating contemporary art,” Kong explains. “In 2014, over 70 visual art activities were independently organized around Art Stage Singapore, a testament to the fair’s key role in the region’s visual arts sector. Plans for events and activities for Singapore Art Week 2015 are currently under way, underscoring our fair’s strategic importance.”

JANUARY 22-25, 2015
ARTSTAGESINGAPORE.COM

Q&A: ANSELM FRANKE CURATOR, SHANGHAI BIENNALE

The Shanghai Biennale is the most established contemporary art festival in China, a vast, citywide expo that highlights noteworthy work by local artists and their international peers. This year the event is celebrating its 10th birthday with a program built around a single question: to what degree can we plan and produce society? Anselm Franke, the biennial’s curator, reveals what visitors can expect.

WHO WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN THIS YEAR’S FESTIVAL?

More than 70 artists, about half of them from China – people like Hu Liu, Zhao Liang, Ran Huang and Wang Bing – as well as some architects and writers. And we will have a special focus on filmmakers, on new forms of documentary filmmaking particularly.

WHOM IS THE FESTIVAL FOR?

It is an event for everybody interested in contemporary art and contemporary culture. It is China’s foremost exhibition of contemporary art, so it has a large attendance, especially in a city like Shanghai, which is leading in the creative sector.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO?

I’m excited about how experimental musicians Yan Jun and Peter Ablinger will contribute to the biennale. Music is an important part of the exhibition this year.

NOVEMBER 22 TO MARCH 31, 2015
SHANGHAIBIENNALE.ORG



NEW FORMS NEW YORK CITY, USA

Following the cancellation of Francesco Vezzoli’s hotly-anticipated show at MoMa PS1 last year – which was pulled after the artist was prevented from exporting pieces of the Madonna del Carmine church from Southern Italy, which were central to the exhibition – Vezzoli will finally make his debut at the New York gallery in October, with Teatro Romano. The exhibition will showcase five ancient Roman busts that have been reinterpreted by Vezzoli, with the help of an extensive team of archaeologists, conservators and polychrome specialists. The intention is to paint these busts in the manner in which they would originally have been decorated. The Milan-based artist and film-maker – whose previous works have included performances by Lady Gaga and Helen Mirren, and an advertising campaign for a fictitious perfume named ‘Greed’ – uses this exhibition as an in-depth study of the use of color in ancient times and as part of his ongoing exploration of the power of popular culture. The gallery explains: “Dating from the first and second centuries A.D., Vezzoli’s Roman Imperial busts restore to contemporary imagination the decorated surfaces that have faded away over nearly two thousand years.”

OCTOBER 26 TO MARCH 8, 2015
MOMAPSI.ORG



FOOD & RETAIL



RETAIL FIX ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

Since it opened in October 2014, Markthal has combined eating, shopping and living all under one roof. Initiated in the late 2000s following a new Dutch law that requires covered spaces for food retail, the market hall was designed by renowned Dutch architecture firm MVRDV, who created an effective solution in the form of a large, horse-shoe-shaped arch. The curved structure covers a surface that can hold some 100 food stalls, while housing 228 apartments as well as permanent retail units. On the inside of the arch, Dutch artist Arno Coenen has created a sprawling digital mural of market goods. “Markthal is an important addition to the city’s architectural landmarks, which include the Rem Koolhaas-designed De Rotterdam building and the striking Centraal Station,” explains Ronald Schneider, Rotterdam’s vice mayor for Urban Development. “But more than any of these buildings, the new market hall is set to make life and business in the city center flourish.”

MARKTHALROTTERDAM.NL

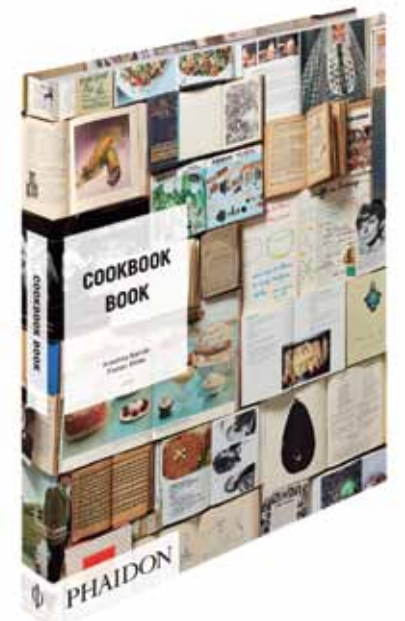
THE KITCHEN SHELF GLOBAL

Not all food books only teach you how to cook. We select three recently released culinary tomes – one with recipes, two without – that every self-respecting foodie should always have to hand.

01 COOKBOOK BOOK, PHAIDON
An introduction to some of the world’s most influential cookbooks, from tried-and-true classics – the encyclopedic *Larousse Gastronomique*, say – to quirkier titles like *The Mafia Cookbook* (featuring mafioso anecdotes) and the arty *Les dîners de Gala*, Salvador Dalí’s lavishly illustrated surrealist cookbook.

02 NEVER TRUST A SKINNY ITALIAN CHEF, PHAIDON
A tribute to the three-Michelin-starred chef Massimo Bottura, revealing the inspirations, ingredients and techniques behind the Italian’s signature approach to skillfully deconstructing a dish (complete with try-at-home recipes).

03 KNIFE AND FORK, GESTALTEN
A showcase of eye-catching visual identities in the food business, featuring the inventive branding of some of the most exciting independent culinary companies, from purveyors of coffee to crêperies.



DESIGN

AN EYE ON DESIGN

ISTANBUL, TURKEY

In the autumn haze of global design weeks the Istanbul Design Biennial, launched in 2012, stands out. “It has had an enduring influence on the design debate by identifying a critically important issue: the impact of 3-D printing and other digital production technologies on the future relationship of designers, makers and users,” says critic Alice Rawsthorn.

This second edition examines design’s relationship to daily life through the theme “The future is not what it used to be.”

“We started the process last summer by talking to people about the challenges of art and design,” says curator Zoë Ryan. “Turkey is in a very special moment of social change, where how we think of the world in which we live is being rethought.” The 58 projects, from about

20 countries, will be displayed on both sides of the Bosphorus, highlighting the city’s unique ability to meld the cultures of its inhabitants. German perfumer Sissel Tolaas is distilling the essence of Istanbul, while Japanese architects Atelier Bow-Wow are inviting students to create a public drawing on the Galata Bridge. Many pieces are new commissions, with a strong presence from the local community. “It’s amazing how many young people have lived abroad and come back to Istanbul because they feel it has so much potential,” says Ryan. “It’s an exciting moment as they bring all this knowledge back to the city and marry it with what’s already there.”

THROUGH DECEMBER, 2014
TASARIMBIENALI.IKSV.ORG/EN



SECOND SIGHT

NEW YORK CITY, USA

Over the past six years, the Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, housed in the iconic Carnegie Mansion along the east-side of Central Park, has been undergoing a transformation. The museum, which is modeled after the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, is the only museum in the US devoted entirely to historical and contemporary design. Since 2008, its impressive collection – over 217,000 objects ranging from business cards to chairs to 1,700 pop-up books spanning 30 centuries – has been displayed in travelling exhibitions around

the world and various pop-ups in New York City as 60 percent more exhibition space and a world-class design library were added to its home. The newly renovated museum, which opens on December 12, 2014, will offer a cutting-edge experience to its visitors, including an opening exhibition that will examine tools such as axes and arrowheads sourced from nine other Smithsonian collections. The show will examine 1.85 million years of objects that have augmented our ordinary lives.

FROM DECEMBER 12, 2014
COOPERHEWITT.ORG

FASHION FORWARD

GLOBAL

Around the world, a new breed of innovative young designers is generating serious buzz in the fashion industry. We put the spotlight on three making a difference.

01 TIM COPPENS, NEW YORK

Belgian-born Coppens launched his own label in 2011 after a stint at Ralph Lauren’s performance division. His collections mix American sportswear staples with a European minimalism, much like Helmut Lang, another European designer who transposed himself to New York City. Like Lang, Coppens pieces texture and material together to make appealing graphic compositions.

02 SIMON PORTE, PARIS

Simon Porte is almost entirely self-taught. Moving to Paris from southeastern France, he attended fashion school for a few months before launching his own label, Jacquemus, named for his mother. Porte creates sporty collections that combine color and proportion, such as oversized, asymmetrical T-shirts and coats in single colors and fabrics – a uniform he often adopts himself.

03 SIMONE ROCHA, LONDON

Since graduating in 2010 from the esteemed MA course at Central Saint Martins in London, Rocha has become a key part of the city’s fashion week. Her collections combine cut with unexpected textures and materials to create original looks (*see below*) that possess an easy refinement: effervescently feminine, yet rooted in reality.



FILM & MUSIC



DUTCH DANCE

AMSTERDAM, THE HAGUE & UTRECHT

Russian American dance innovator George Balanchine got the idea for *Jewels* (1967), an acclaimed three-part ballet, on his daily walk past the sparkling window displays of the Fifth Avenue store of Van Cleef & Arpels. An ode to three of the most glittering precious stones, Balanchine’s trilogy honors the French, American and Russian styles of ballet that influenced his work – with elegant “Emeralds”, which recall 1920s Paris; jazz-inspired “Rubies”; and the majestic finale “Diamonds”, which is set to Tchaikovsky’s music. In February 2015, the Dutch National Ballet – one of a select group of companies that is permitted to stage Balanchine’s work – is performing *Jewels* in Amsterdam, The Hague and Utrecht. “Balanchine’s work is an important benchmark for the world’s leading classical ballet companies,” says Richard Heideman, of the Dutch National Ballet. “We are proud to be one of them.”

THROUGH FEBRUARY, 2015
OPERABALLET.NL

A NEW PLATFORM

DUBAI, UAE

Since its inception in 2004, Dubai Film Festival, which typically runs for a full seven days, has served as the region’s most important platform for Arab filmmakers at an international level. Besides featuring screenings, live events, workshops and seminars at venues throughout Dubai, the event is also home to the renowned Muhr award series, which celebrates great work by directors from the region.

Testament to the festival’s importance in the area is its 2012 awarding of the Muhr Arab Feature prize, in the Best Film and

DIRECTOR’S CUT

GLOBAL

In the spirit of fostering creative talent, Lexus has joined forces with the Weinstein Company for its second annual Lexus Short Films series. Launched in 2013, the program supports the work of young and promising directors. This year Lexus follows up with an exciting second series of Lexus Short Films that addresses the theme “Life Is Amazing”. The program will focus on the work of two up-and-coming young filmmakers, both of whom were mentored through their creative processes: Jon Goldman and Satsuki Okawa, who co-wrote the script for her film with Ken Ochiai. Goldman’s film *Market Hours* is inspired by the work of Wong Kar-wai and follows a shy security guard who overcomes his inner fears;

whereas Okawa’s film, *Operation Barn Owl*, examines the relationship of two best friends and entails an American-style wedding proposal. The films are currently available to watch online on the Lexus Short Films website.

LEXUS-INT.COM/LEXUSSHORTFILMS/



ON THE FRINGE

ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA

The Adelaide Fringe Festival counts as the largest and most diverse annual arts event in the Southern Hemisphere. Over the course of a month, the festival takes over the entire city of Adelaide with some 900 events, spanning cabaret, comedy,



dance, film, theater, music, visual art and design. Because of the festival’s open-access nature, anyone with a show, exhibition or cultural event is allowed to register and take part. Unlike curated festivals of this kind, Adelaide Fringe steers away from staging too many of its shows in traditional locations such as theaters, art galleries or concert halls, and instead encourages participation at independent venues, from abandoned warehouses to park kiosks. Last year’s edition included performances at locations such as river cruise boats and street lanes, underlining the festival’s premise that everywhere is a stage.

FROM FEBRUARY 13 TO MARCH 15, 2015
ADELAIDFRINGE.COM.AU

Best Actress categories, to Saudi Arabian female director Haifaa al-Mansour for her film *Wadjda*, which then went on to win Best Foreign Film at the 2014 Bafta Awards and was the first film from Saudi Arabia ever submitted for the Oscars.

While the credo of Dubai Film Festival is “Bridging Cultures. Meeting Minds”, its diverse program is just as much about uniting the cinematic community of the Middle East.

DECEMBER 10-17, 2014
DUBAIFILMFEST.COM



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THE ONE




A TURN
TO THE BRIGHT

» » » » » » » »

A SPORTS CAR WITH A STYLISH SWAGGER, THE BOLD LF-C2 SPORTS CONCEPT COUPE
SHOWCASES THE DARING SIDE OF LEXUS DESIGN

TEXT BY SHOGO HAGIWARA AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREG WHITE



A vibrant yellow Lexus LF-C2 concept car is parked on a paved road. In the background, a colorful cliffside town with many small, multi-story buildings is built into a steep hillside. The town is surrounded by lush greenery and overlooks a blue body of water. The car is a convertible with a sleek, aerodynamic design. The text "LF-C2" is visible on the rear of the car.

WE'VE IMPLEMENTED DESIGN FEATURES IN THE LF-C2 CONCEPT COUPE THAT DEMONSTRATE THE SEAMLESSNESS BETWEEN THE CAR INTERIOR AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD

“We took the LF-C2 to the extreme,” says Yasuo Kajino, group manager of the design division at Lexus and the man behind the firm’s latest concept coupe.

Designed as an experimental concept, the LF-C2 caused a stir when it was unveiled at the Los Angeles auto show in November 2014, not least for its eye-catching color – a striking shade of yellow that changes with the light.

It was not an easy color to play with, but it was a strategic choice by the Lexus team. “We all agreed that using yellow was a must, because the color resonated with the emotional value of Lexus,” explains Kajino. To achieve the exact shade took time and lots of experimentation. The Lexus team used a number of paint layers, including a silver base layer that they invented. It’s this that gives the LF-C2 its dazzling shine. “It has definitely breathed life into this vehicle,” says a beaming Kajino.

Underneath this striking exterior, the concept car is beautifully crafted in the Lexus tradition. But the LF-C2 concept coupe was a unique opportunity for Lexus to showcase a bold, unrestrained side to its design language. “This car was a design study,” says Kajino. “We experimented with the overall profile of the car as a sporty roadster coupe. Then we moved on to details that strengthened the emotional brand image of Lexus.”

The daring design is a treat for the senses. When viewed from the side, the body has a distinctive, sculptural chassis that resembles an arrow. The sleek, finlike shape of the rear diffusers and underbody, together with the tightly knitted, five-spoke wheels, add to the sporty feel.

But it’s the details that set this concept vehicle apart. At the back, the triangular rear lights subtly reference the Lexus logo. At the front, the signature spindle grille is reshaped into a braided mesh that dramatically fans out at the bottom to emphasize the dynamic appearance of the vehicle’s snout.

The interior cabin combines space, comfort and advanced technology, with a slick instrument cluster and intuitive screens controlled by a central console. Surrounded by LED lighting, including a strip running along the length of the interior below the windows, the driver can enjoy a personal in-car light show while snugly cocooned inside the cockpit.

“We’ve implemented design features that demonstrate the seamlessness between the car interior and the outside world,” says Kajino. “If you look at the rear, the trunk lid in the back merges into the center console and runs toward the front as one sheet of yellow metal, blurring the border between the interior and exterior.”

With its bold looks, this majestic, 4.7-meter-long concept car is a multisensory driving experience that is going to attract some serious attention. //

THE MIDAS TOUCH



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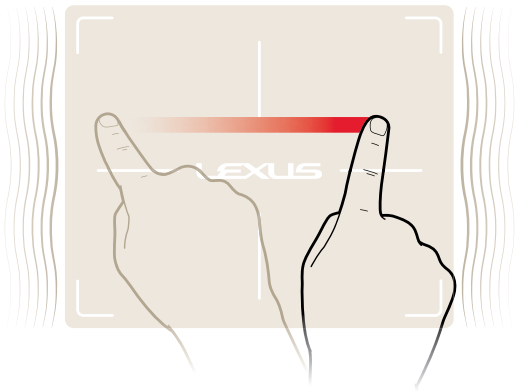
LEXUS'S RESPONSIVE NX REMOTE TOUCH INTERFACE
IS A GLIMPSE INTO THE AUTOMOTIVE FUTURE

TEXT BY SHOGO HAGIWARA

As a result of its tireless research, Lexus has developed one of the world's most advanced automobile interface systems, the NX Remote Touch Interface. Operated by a controller next to the driver's seat, the touch screen's numerous functions control everything from the car's air-conditioning to its audio, and tasks can be executed in an instant thanks to the clear and easy-to-use interface. If you would prefer your control-

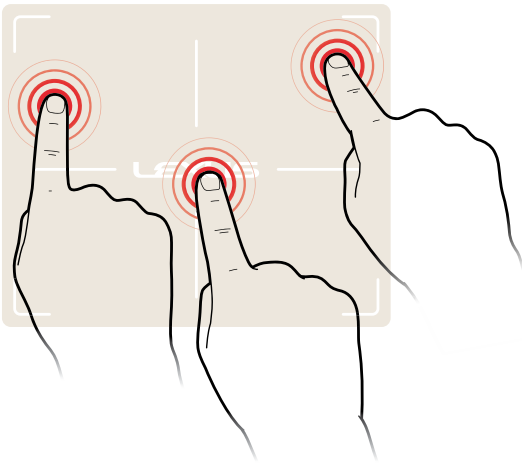
ler to be customized – if you want to draw a circle with your finger to locate audio, for example – the controller can be configured exactly the way you like. The unique application of haptic technology allows the multi-touch pad to vibrate so that users can easily select their desired buttons. That means all eyes stay fixed on the road in front of the vehicle without ever having to change the driving position. //

THE TRACK PAD



BIG VIBRATIONS

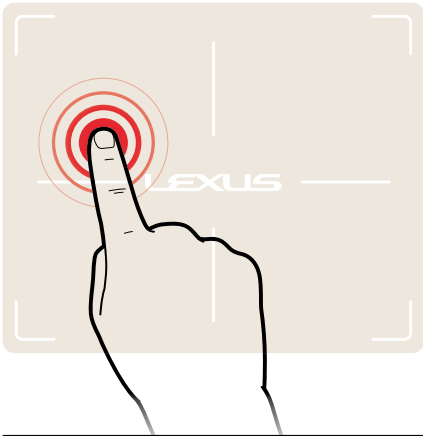
First introduced in 2010 in the Lexus RX 350 and Lexus RX 450h models, the track pad initially started life in the form of the traditional joystick that controlled the on-screen cursor. This has now evolved into the slickly designed and easy-to-use track pad interface that uses a vibrant feedback system. This technology is also referred to as haptic feedback and means that the screen delivers physical sensations such as vibrations. The revolutionary multi-touch screen measures a hefty 60mm x 50mm, by far the largest in the automotive industry.



CONSISTENT OPERATION

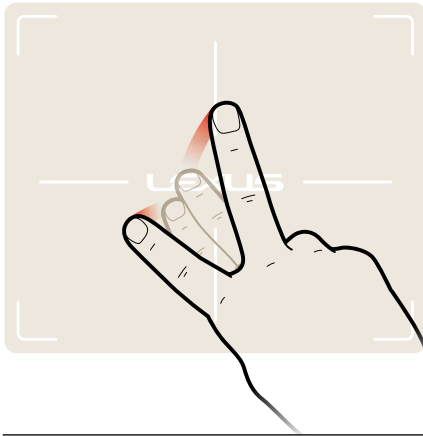
Lexus has worked hard to ensure that its smart interface has a consistent feel right up to the edge of its surfaces. Wherever the driver presses the pad, it will have the same ease of use. "We have developed a special internal stabilizer that enables the pad's surface to go down exactly the same length whichever part of the pad is pressed by the driver," says the NX's chief engineer Takeaki Kato. Although this may seem like a small detail, it is a huge technological advancement in interfaces for the automotive industry.

TECHNOLOGY AT YOUR FINGERTIPS



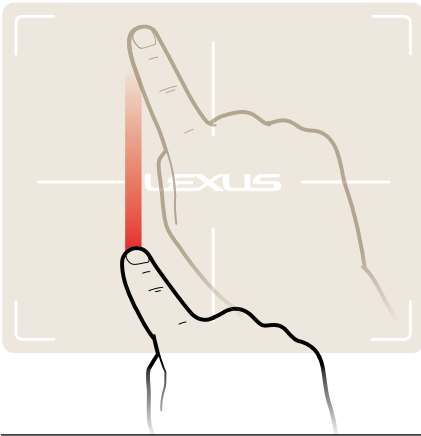
TAP

With a simple double tap, you can select a wealth of functions from the NX Remote Touch Interface including music playlists, navigational maps and even air-conditioning.



PINCH

Just like other familiar mobile devices, you simply move your fingers closer together or further apart, pinching the interface to zoom in or zoom out from display screens such as navigational maps.



FLICK

With a swift and efficient swipe of the touch screen, drivers can deftly move between the display screens and scroll up and down through lists and maps.

THE ICON

FULL STEAM AHEAD

» » » » » »

HOW AN ITALIAN ENGINEER CHANGED COFFEE FOR GOOD

TEXT BY ANNICK WEBER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS ALBDORF



Sometime in 1918, the Italian engineer Alfonso Bialetti watched his wife do the laundry, and stumbled on an idea. Bialetti, who owned a metal workshop in Piedmont, in northwestern Italy, had recently returned from a stint working in the French aluminum industry, and now he sat absorbed by the workings of the washing machine, a simple appliance that drew soapy water upward through a central pipe and distributed it over the pair's dirty clothing. Bialetti concluded that a similar mechanism – a three-piece aluminum machine that would rely on pressurized steam developed from the interplay between heat and water – could be used to brew coffee. And so he began to create it.

Fifteen years and many prototypes later, the world's most famous stovetop espresso maker – the Bialetti Moka Express – entered the market, bringing café-quality coffee into the Italian home. Overnight, espresso making became a democratic domestic ritual. As a Bialetti billboard proclaimed,

Alfonso's small machine – which produced an espresso rich in color and crema, as deep and flavorsome as those served in bars throughout the country – allowed Italians from all walks of life to enjoy “*in casa un espresso come al bar*.”

More than perhaps any other product of its era, Bialetti's machine reflects the changes that Italy underwent in the 1930s. As people struggled through an economic downturn that forced many of them to cut out their daily café-bought espresso, the Moka Express provided the country with a much-needed way to stay caffeinated.

And it ticked political boxes, too. To project an image of 1930s Italy as a forward-thinking nation, Benito Mussolini placed an embargo on heavy metals such as stainless steel, favoring instead the commercial use of aluminum, which he considered representative of energy and dynamism – a material of the future. The Moka Express quickly became an icon of modernity, a highly technological achievement.

“It connects traditional Italian craftsmanship with an emotional fabric of conviviality, the home and daily rituals,” explains Gaia Mazzon, head of communications at Bialetti Industrie. “It is a unique case of industrial design in the simplicity of its shape, its functionality and exceptionally long life.” To this day, the bottom boiler unit is handmade in Italy by expert craftsmen, just as it was when it was released in 1933. In fact, only minor updates have been made to the design and production process over the years.

The machine's most important addition appears in the shape of the beloved *l'omino coi baffi*, or “the mustachioed little man”, who began to adorn Bialetti's machine in 1953 and has since become inseparable from it. Together, they have seen and bonded a nation in transition. And with a place in nine out of 10 Italian households (and in the design collections of institutions like the Museum of Modern Art in New York, say, and the Science Museum, London), and with more than 300 million units sold globally, the Moka Express enjoys a popularity as long-lasting as the simple but ingenious mechanism behind it. //

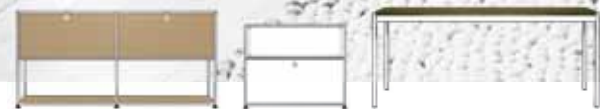


HOW TO BREW THE PERFECT ESPRESSO

Coffee: Blends work best. Use a rich roast, combined with a fruity single-origin variety. The grind should be coarse, not powdery.

Method: 1. Fill the bottom chamber with cold, filtered water to the level of the safety valve. The water should not come through the holes of the middle filter. 2. Insert the dry middle funnel into the bottom chamber and fill it generously with coffee. Make sure you don't press the coffee down with a spoon; instead, knock the bottom chamber on a flat surface to level the coffee off. 3. Screw the upper chamber in place and put the pot on the stove. Use a low flame to prevent the coffee from burning. 4. The coffee is ready as soon as you can hear a bubbling noise. The flame must be extinguished immediately.

Maintenance: Don't clean the pot too thoroughly after use; coffee residues add flavor and depth to future pours.



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THE FIVE

5

GOOD EGGS

FROM A LONDON LEGEND TO A DUTCH COOK GROWING HIS
RESTAURANT'S PRODUCE IN A GREENHOUSE, FIVE EXCITING
CHEFS AROUND THE GLOBE CELEBRATE THE SPLENDID
VERSATILITY OF THE HUMBLE EGG





01

BAS WIEGEL

DE KAS, AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

TEXT BY ELEANOR MORGAN AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRENT MCMINN

“The food we serve is pretty basic,” says Bas Wiegel, chef at the restaurant and nursery De Kas in Amsterdam, “but with a lot of respect for nature.” The cooking at De Kas is all about simplicity and flavor, using seasonal produce that is grown on-site to its fullest natural potential in an adjacent garden and greenhouse. “Everything we serve is Dutch – even down to the cheese.” Naturally, a local farmer delivers their eggs.

“You always need eggs,” says Bas, “and I like to know where they come from. I’ve been to the farm we use, and they provide some of the best eggs I’ve ever tasted.” Wiegel stresses the importance of using unpasteurized eggs for a “fuller, more rounded” flavor – a high priority when creating vegetarian dishes, a particular passion of his.

“My father always said that it’s more difficult to cook perfect vegetables than fish or meat,” he says. “I think it’s a marker of a good chef. Obviously, eggs

are great in that respect because they can offer a richness, a sense of luxury with the clean, natural flavors of vegetables.” Freshness, however, is key.

“We often poach an egg for a main dish – a process that demands absolute freshness,” says Bas, “but we also use them a lot in our dairy ice creams. Our prune ice cream has been a particular favorite in the past.”

Eggs are an essential feature of the restaurant’s pastry offering. At any one time Wiegel might go through “up to 1,000 eggs a week”, particularly if the much-fabled chocolate nemesis – a giant, sliceable truffle – is on the menu. “It’s a method that, again, requires freshness,” he explains. “When you make a parfait, the mix takes the air better when the egg is fresh and the flavor is more even. People come back and ask for this dish even when we don’t have it.”

restaurantdekas.nl

CHOCOLATE NEMESIS

Makes one cake

Melt 675 grams of bitter chocolate and 450 grams of butter together in a bain-marie. In a separate bowl, mix 10 fresh eggs and 450 grams of sugar together until the sugar is incorporated. Add the egg mixture to the melted chocolate. Mix gently and, when it comes together, add 50 grams of cocoa powder. Bake at 150 degrees C (about 300 degrees F) for approximately 25 minutes. Allow the nemesis to cool completely before slicing.



02

MARGOT HENDERSON

ROCHELLE CANTEEN, LONDON, UK

TEXT BY ELEANOR MORGAN AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRENT MCMINN

Henderson, the New Zealand-born chef-proprietor of Rochelle Canteen in London, co-owner of the hugely successful Arnold & Henderson catering business and, of course, wife of Fergus Henderson, co-founder of the restaurant St. John and an all-around food legend, loves eggs: “I think they’re one of the most wonderful things you can eat,” she enthuses.

Gulls’ eggs are Margot’s favorite. “Black-headed gulls’ eggs with celery salt on top is probably up there on the last-meal list for me,” she says. “They’re so expensive, glamorous and ultra-delicate. I love the romance of their incredibly short season – around three to four weeks from May 1 – and the way they are collected.” The dusky-blue speckled eggs can only be gathered from their steep, cliffside nests by licensed eggers who will guard the gulls’ nests from foxes and other predators. “They’re gentle things but taste

slightly gamey. Often on my birthday Fergus will bring trays of them home and invite people round for lunch. We’ll all crowd round the table to eat these wonderful treasures.”

Another favorite egg of Henderson’s is that laid by bantams. “They’re quite small eggs with lovely blue shells,” she says. “A soft-boiled Bantam egg on a piece of gem lettuce with a good anchovy is a heavenly bite, and one that always goes down well on catering jobs.”

“Eggs can also make an excellent sauce,” Henderson continues. “There is nothing nicer than a well-made mayonnaise, which of course is made from raw egg yolks. I also love sauce gribiche, a mayo-like egg sauce from France that blends hard-boiled egg yolks and mustard with oil and spiky things like capers, cornichons and herbs like tarragon, parsley and chervil. It’s fantastic over poached leeks.” *arnoldandhenderson.com*



LEEKS GRIBICHE

Serves four

For the gribiche, soft-boil 6 eggs and set aside. Chop 4 leeks, 2 tablespoons of cornichons, 1 tablespoon of tarragon, 1 tablespoon of curly parsley, 1 tablespoon of chervil and 2 cloves of garlic. In a bowl, whisk together a large dash of white wine vinegar, the juice of one lemon and 2 teaspoons of Dijon mustard. Slowly add 400 milliliters of extra-virgin olive oil while whisking to create an emulsion. Finely chop the 6 eggs and stir into the emulsion with the chopped ingredients and 2 tablespoons of fine capers. Wash and trim the leeks, removing the dark green portion. Split halfway down the middle and blanch in a large pot of boiling water until cooked. Put the leeks on a plate and pour the gribiche sauce over one end.



03

KAMILLA SEIDLER

GUSTU, LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

TEXT BY LAUREN HOLMES AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY CRISTOBAL PALMA

When the Danish chef Kamilla Seidler was invited by Claus Meyer, who co-founded Noma, to co-run the restaurant and culinary school at the groundbreaking Gustu in Bolivia, it was like starting from scratch, despite her training at the two-Michelin-starred Mugaritz and Le Manoir aux Quat’Saisons. “I had never come across 70 percent of the ingredients we now use,” says Kamilla. Entirely product-driven, the menu evolves every three months around seasonal produce, with new ingredients – from Amazonian larvae to cochayuyo seaweed – introduced daily. “We are under a constant, comfortable pressure to experiment – you don’t want to miss exploring an ingredient’s potential before it disappears for another year,” she explains. Innovating with ingredients is just part of Kamilla’s ongoing adaptation process. “La Paz is located at almost 4,000 feet, so even the most basic principals of cooking are different,” she says. “Take

boiling an egg – the low air pressure reduces the boiling point to 86 degrees.” Like everything at Gustu, eggs are 100 percent Bolivian-produced, sourced from a farmer who tends 1,000 Spanish hens 373 kilometers (about 232 miles) from La Paz, which produce “beautiful, big yellow yolks with rich shells.” Save for whites used in desserts and cocktails, eggs feature prominently in just one dish that has remained on the menu since the 2012 launch. The Bolivian carbonara combines palm heart spaghetti sourced from the Tucano tribe in the Amazon, alpaca jerky (charque) from the Altiplano and organic brown butter and eggs. “We cook the eggs for 40 minutes at 52 degrees Celsius in a bain-marie – the secret is a minute per gram – so the yolk poaches perfectly but the egg white falls away when cracked.” A labor-intensive dish that takes about 35 seconds to consume. *restaurantgustu.com*



BOLIVIAN PALM HEART CARBONARA
Serves one

Shred 17 grams of palm hearts as finely as possible into long strands. Keep refrigerated. Then poach the egg at 58 degrees C (136 degrees F) for 50 minutes. Melt 13 grams of brown butter over low heat until the milk solids become brown. Poach the charque (South American meat jerky) in warm water for 2 hours, then boil for 30 minutes. Shred meat as finely as possible into long strands. Fry in oil for 30 seconds until crispy.



04

DUANGPORN SONGVISAVA AND DYLAN JONES

BO.LAN, BANGKOK, THAILAND

TEXT BY ELEANOR MORGAN AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER WISE

Bo.lan, in the smart Sukhumvit district of Bangkok, is world renowned for its vibrant dishes that are equally lively on the palate. Run by the husband-and-wife chef team Duangporn “Bo” Songvisava and Dylan “Lan” Jones, Bo.lan – a portmanteau of the chefs’ names – eschews the oversweetened green curries loved by tourists, offering instead a modern, seasonally driven interpretation of Thai cuisine through its mix of high-end, palace-style cooking and fiercely spiced street food characteristic of the region. Think of dishes like pineapple-cured fish simmered in coconut cream served with grilled quail, or stir-fried Ranong squid with salted duck egg. Eggs play a significant role as an accompaniment in Thai cuisine, says Duangporn. “We eat spicy,” she says, “so having a soft-boiled egg, with the creaminess from the yolk, provides a foil for the fierceness we love, like the

way yogurt is used in the Middle East. We have a grilled aubergine salad dish on the menu with a very potent dressing that is soothed by a soft-boiled egg on the side.” The richness and texture of eggs is also used to form the base of dishes. “Preserved eggs, for example, a much-loved thing in the past, have been turned into salads, relishes and curries,” says Dylan. As in other nations, eggs provide a common source of comfort for people in Thailand. “My ultimate comfort dish would be a soft-boiled or poached egg over rice,” Duangporn says, “with lots of fish sauce and chili over the top.” For the Australian-born Dylan, his relationship with eggs has changed slightly since being in the East. “Eggs have always served a greater purpose in Thai food, but I still love my two eggs on toast in the morning.” *bolan.co.th*

GRILLED AUBERGINE SALAD WITH RIVER PRAWN
Serves one

Grill 2 mini aubergines and let them cool before removing the skins. Grill 1 river or king prawn until medium to well done, covering it toward the end to make the meat puff up. Combine 2 to 3 tablespoons of lime juice, 1 teaspoon of chili powder, 2 tablespoons of sugar and 3 tablespoons of fish sauce to create the dressing, maintaining a balance of hot, sour, salty and sweet. Toss the aubergine, prawn – with head removed – and dressing together and plate with 1 tablespoon of toasted rice, 1 tablespoon of dried prawn floss, 2 small deep-fried chilies and 1 soft-boiled duck egg on the side.





05

MICHELLE BERNSTEIN

MICHY’S, MIAMI, USA

TEXT BY LAUREN HOLMES AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL SHEA

As a child training to be a prima ballerina, the Miami-born Michelle Bernstein would fall asleep over her mother’s cookbooks, dreaming of dishes intrinsic to her Latin-Jewish heritage. After ballet got the boot when she turned 18, she dived into her primary passion, working in Washington, D.C., under Michelin-starred mentor Jean-Louis Palladin until her culinary DNA was wired like that of a meticulous French master. Bernstein developed a unique style focused on clean, powerful flavors during four years at Azul, in the Mandarin Oriental in Miami (2001-2005), and that carried over to Michy’s, which she opened in 2006.

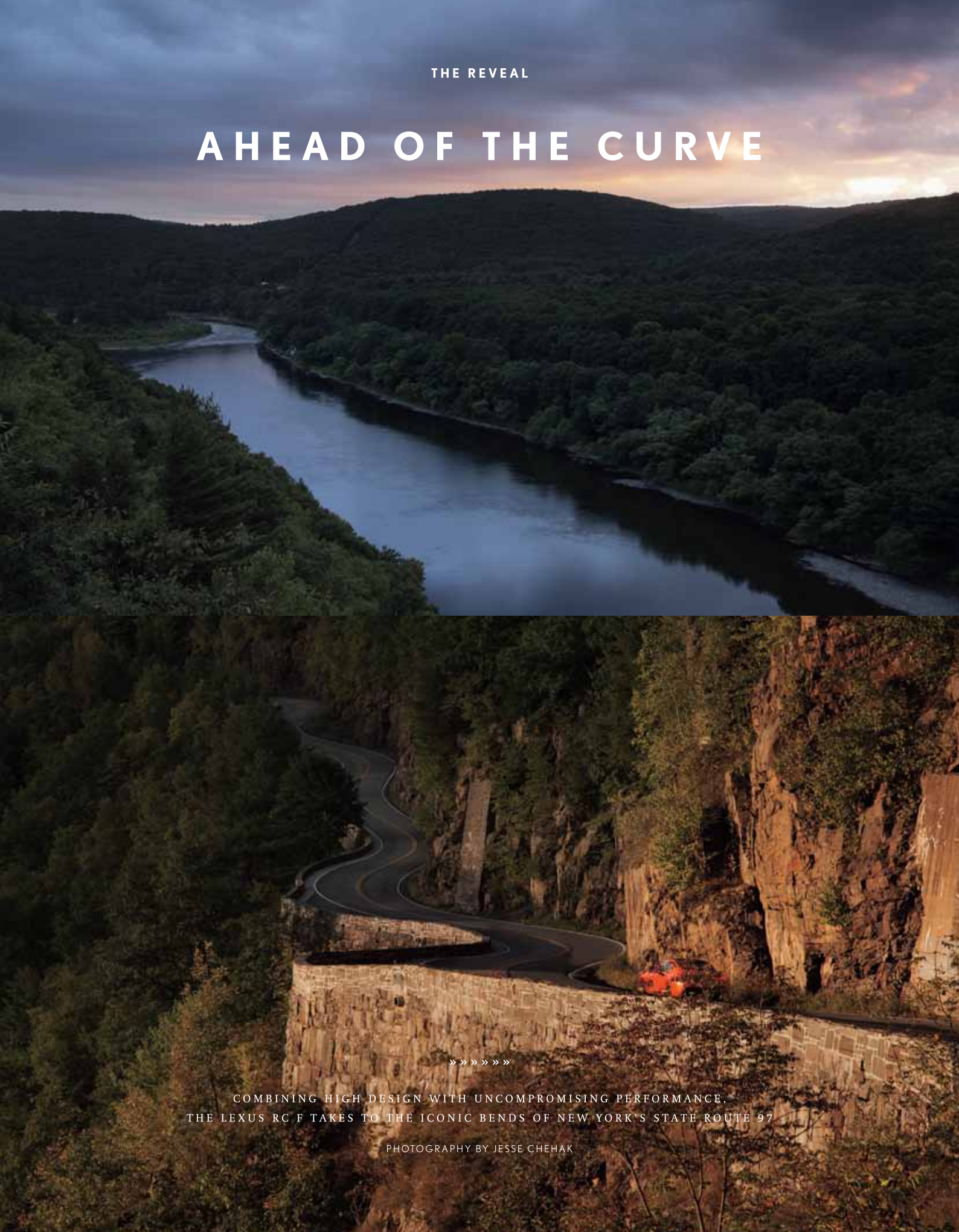
At Michy’s, a restaurant where Bernstein deftly combines locally sourced Asian ingredients with Latin inspirations and classic French techniques, eggs provide a backbone to a menu that changes monthly. A sign of Miami’s changing times, 60 percent of the ingredients are now locally sourced,

an impossibility 10 years ago when the region had but a handful of producers, though local organic produce remains a luxury. Sixty dozen eggs, often double-yoked, are delivered weekly to Michy’s, to be poached atop creamy polenta or whipped into a sherry zabaglione, or to provide the sous vide dipping center for a white pizza.

Bernstein’s love of eggs is such that she also offers them as sides, with style recommendations indicated by an asterisk next to each dish. Come December, Michy’s will reopen after a makeover, dressing down from its fine-dining roots to attract a younger crowd to sip cocktails, share small plates overlooking the once-edgy Biscayne Boulevard, and observe the open-plan kitchen, where homemade pasta dangles from the ceiling. Bernstein reviews her new menu and comments, “You’ll be able to order an egg with almost anything,” *michysmiami.com*

OPEN-FACED LASAGNA WITH POACHED VEGETABLES, EGGS AND DASHI
Serves four

Blanch 2 cups of chopped carrots, 16 green beans, 8 yellow heirloom cherry tomatoes and 2 cups of trimmed broccoli florets until tender, and then shock in cold water. Blanch 8 shiitake mushrooms, cut in half and allow to cool. Add 2 tablespoons of butter and the vegetables to ½ cup of reduced, homemade dashi broth. Poach 4 eggs and set aside. In a pot of boiling water, cook eight 2-inch-square sheets of homemade lasagna, then drain and toss with 1 tablespoon of butter. Place one sheet of pasta in 4 separate bowls. Top each bowl with vegetables, dashi broth and finish with the poached egg, then another sheet of pasta.



THE REVEAL

AHEAD OF THE CURVE

» » » » » »

COMBINING HIGH DESIGN WITH UNCOMPROMISING PERFORMANCE,
THE LEXUS RC F TAKES TO THE ICONIC BENDS OF NEW YORK'S STATE ROUTE 97

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESSE CHEHAK



INTO THE WOODS

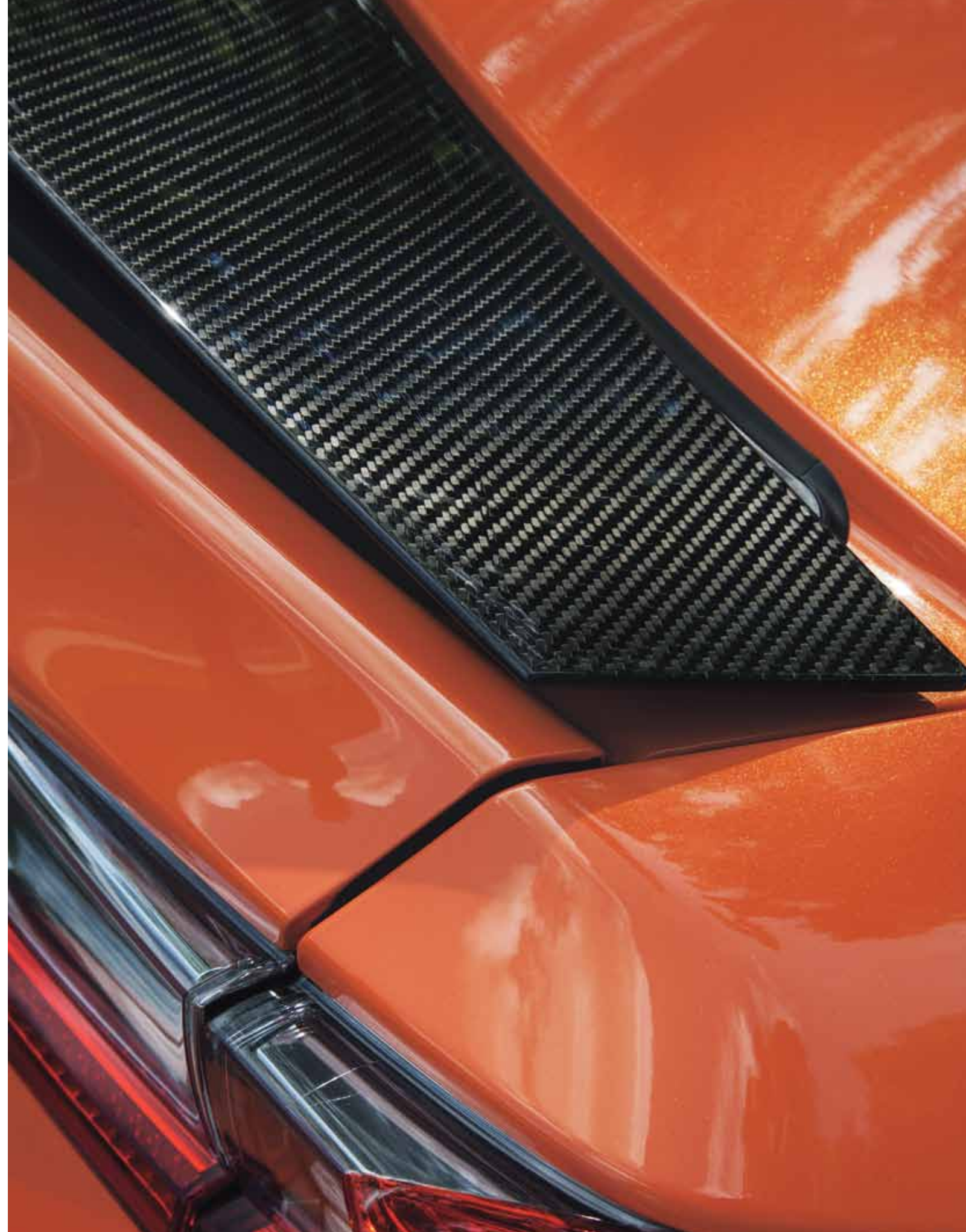
The Lexus RC F Carbon Package stands out for its striking orange color and sleek, athletic silhouette. Designed for driving enthusiasts, the Lexus RC F Carbon Package is a versatile and performance-oriented vehicle that is as at home on the highways as it is on the more demanding racing circuit.





DARK MATERIALS

The distinctive RC F Carbon Package boasts a carbon fiber roof, hood and active rear spoiler, which raises itself automatically when the driver reaches top speeds to improve the vehicle's dynamics and stability. The package also functions to lower the vehicle's center of gravity if needed. The rear carbon fiber spoiler is accented by the beautiful pattern of diagonally woven carbon fibers. Depending on the strength required, between 3,000 and 24,000 intricate carbon fibers are woven together into a fabric for the car.





(Clockwise, from top): Lexus designers have a meticulous eye for detail and have worked the distinctive L-shape motif into the vehicle's rear lamps; the signature Lexus spindle grille gets an update; the electronic rear wing is built into the trunk lid

(Clockwise from top left): The vehicle's sleek interior cabin; the unique Remote Touch Interface, a touch type controller; the smart carbon fiber hood of the muscular RC F Carbon Package has an integrated central air vent to keep the powerful engine cool



PEAK PERFORMANCE

The Lexus RC F and its sporty chassis is offset by its shiny 19-inch forged alloy wheels with a unique and eye-catching five-spoke pattern. "With its improved performance and refined design direction, the RC F has ushered Lexus into a new chapter of sports car production history," says chief engineer Yukihiro Yaguchi.

RC F Carbon Package	
LENGTH	4,705mm
HEIGHT	1,390 mm
WIDTH	1,845 mm
WHEELBASE	2,730 mm
SEATING CAPACITY	4 person
DRIVEN WHEELS	FR
ENGINE TYPE	2UR-GSE
CYLINDERS	8 cylinders, V type
ENGINE OUTPUT	351 / 7,100 kW/rpm
TORQUE	530 / 4,800-5,600 Nm/rpm
TRANSMISSION	8AT
SUSPENSION	FR: Double Wishbone, RR:Multi-link
TIRE	FR: 255/35/R19, RR: 275/35/R19

Product and specifications may vary by country





BLUEPRINT

MODERN MATERIALS

» » » » »

IN A HUMBLE WORKSHOP IN TOKI, JAPAN'S POTTERY CAPITAL, RYŌTA AOKI IS PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF TRADITIONAL CERAMICS

TEXT BY KENJI HALL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KOHEI TAKE



01



02

Not long after opening his pottery studio 12 years ago in a wooden barn in Toki, central Japan, Ryota Aoki tacked a Japanese flag to one wall. Nothing else adorns the surface he faces when he sits on a foldout stool to work at his potter's wheel, bathed in the light of bare fluorescent bulbs. The flag – a red circle against a white background – is a constant reminder of one of Aoki's loftier personal goals. "I want to represent Japan," he says. "If my work survives 2,000 or 3,000 years from now, I would like people to think of me as one of Japan's top ceramic artists of the 21st century."

Aoki drops this casually into conversation, and he seems not to be embarrassed by the scale of his own ambition. In a country with a ceramics tradition that dates back 15,000 years, this aspiration – and his quick rise to stardom – makes him a polarizing figure. Even the most celebrated of Japan's potters – the acclaimed ceramicists Hiroshi Nakajima and Akihiro Maeta, say, or the renowned celadon artist Seiko Minegishi – could spend decades honing their craft without ever gaining the kind of international renown that Aoki now enjoys.

Aoki's reputation rests on his ability to challenge old notions of what ceramics should look like. His repertoire is original: he favors elegantly simple contours with eye-catching glazes that would be a better fit in a modern, Western home than a traditional Japanese teahouse. He has coated a small sake drinking cup in a shiny platinum-like glaze and turned silica-clay into eggshell-white Duralex Picardie tumblers and wineglass look-alikes. He makes lifelike skulls in a matted gold finish and round vases covered in what appears to be a hardened shell of lava. The rarest of these can fetch sums in the tens of thousands of dollars, and orders pour in from New York, Taiwan, Tel Aviv and Zurich. "I usually end up making things that I would want for myself," he says.

But this experimentation with new forms can be nerve-racking at times. Next door to his workshop, in the prefab building that serves as office and archive, Aoki has taped to the wall a calendar showing the entire year. Every few weeks, there is a cluster of red dots – exhibitions, art fairs, pottery conventions.

01 Ryota Aoki's commute between his home and workshop is a five-minute bicycle ride
02 When Aoki works at his potter's wheel, he sits facing a Japanese flag, a reminder of his personal goal of joining his country's greatest ceramic artists



03



04

When we meet, he is working on his next big exhibition, in Chicago and Oakland, for which Aoki has been commissioned to produce a series of ceramic lamps. He has never made one, so he traveled to nearby cities to learn firsthand about basic electrical wiring. Lampshades from Ikea and brass light bulb fittings and switches litter his work space. Since lunchtime, he has been searching online for an artisan who can make some washi paper shades for him.

In person, Aoki, who is 36, is slight and boyish, a goatee sprouting from his chin. He sports a black turban, which holds the thicket of hair he hasn't cut for a decade, and metal rings he made while at university dangle from each of his ears. For events and exhibition openings, he dresses in *Comme des Garçons*. But at his workshop in Toki he prefers a simple black *samue* – a cotton robe and loose-fitting trousers – and yellow Birkenstocks.

Aoki was a latecomer to ceramics. He isn't from a family of potters, never studied fine arts and never apprenticed with a pottery master. Pottery was a fallback option for him: after dabbling in fashion and jewelry design while at university, he came across a pottery magazine, took a class and was hooked. Instead of trying to go back to university, he applied to city-run pottery vocational programs, enrolling in the Tajimi City Pottery Design and Technical Center, in Gifu Prefecture, because the area has produced more of the country's best potters – Living National Treasures – than any other area. "I was determined to become a Living National Treasure," he says, with a chuckle.



05

03 A row of handles hangs on a wall, a reference chart for Aoki's teacup series 04 Tools Aoki uses when trimming, carving and shaping his creations while they spin on his potter's wheel 05 Inside his studio, moulds for cups, bowls and plates adorn the metal racks near his potter's wheel

Staying in Gifu Prefecture made it easier to find tools and clay. Toki has one of the highest concentrations of pottery kilns in the country. The area's traditional *mino-yaki*, a style that has been traced back 1,300 years, accounts for more than half of the ceramics produced in Japan. Staying in the prefecture also put him near some of the country's most respected potters and ceramics scholars, whom he can call upon for advice about techniques, materials and history.

The idea of setting up his workshop in an old barn seemed a better option than a pricey, bland studio. After getting the owner to rent it to him for almost nothing, Aoki weatherproofed the building and installed electrical wiring. He hasn't done much to the place since then. The only sign with his name on it is propped inconspicuously on a mailbox that sits on the ground near the entryway. Inside, Styrofoam peeks from behind the plasterboard walls, electrical wires snake everywhere along the ceiling and a few 50-kilogram (110-pound) sacks of pottery clay cover the walls near the entrance. Everywhere there are makeshift shelves

06 Aoki kneads the clay by hand. For his eggshell-white Duralux Picardie tumblers, Aoki massages the glaze into the clay 07 "I let the clay speak to me," says Aoki. He can spend months to years experimenting with new forms before deciding on the shape he wants 08 At the workshop in a room Aoki calls his "lab", he mixes and measures ingredients for the experimental glazes 09 Aoki brushes a test glaze onto a rectangular piece of clay, one of dozens that he makes before deciding on the one that he likes



06

I USUALLY END UP MAKING THINGS THAT I WOULD WANT FOR MYSELF

crammed with molds for cups and plates and countless ongoing projects. Three ash-colored jugs that resemble ancient pottery from Taiwan offer evidence of Aoki's boundless curiosity about different cultural forms. Near the doorway, three electric kilns are cooling, their lids open. They're used almost daily – unusual for a potter – indicating the strong demand for Aoki's work. From a back room, Eminem's "Cinderella Man" blares from speakers. "I've been listening to a lot of Eminem lately, especially 'Lose Yourself'," he says. "The music feels like it's saying, 'Get it done!'"

Unless he's finishing a last-minute project, Aoki keeps to a rigid work schedule. He arrives before 9 a.m. from his apartment, a five-minute bicycle ride away, gives a pep talk to his staff and interns from Japan, Germany, Taiwan and Hong Kong, and leads them through a few minutes of *rajio taiso* (radio calisthenics). One of his interns, Taisuke Mori, a soft-spoken 26-year-old Kyoto native with an architecture background, is hovering near the kilns when Aoki suggests that Mori show a visitor what he has been working on in his spare time. Mori fetches a small plate made of pebble-sized chunks and coated in a shiny chrome-like glaze. "A chef who visited liked it so much he bought one," says Aoki. "It's so original, don't you think?"

Aoki says ideas come to him while he's working on his potter's wheel. "I let the clay speak to me," he says. He might tinker with a new shape for months or years. It took him two years, for instance, to figure out how to make a wineglass-shaped cup without it collapsing or bending during the final firing in the kiln – and he refuses to explain how it's done. "Even now my success rate can be as low as six out of 100," he says.

The point of difference for an Aoki piece is usually the glaze, and he regularly credits the legendary and late Dame Lucie Rie, an Austrian-born British potter, for her pioneering work on glazing techniques. He came across her work in a book by chance and was influenced enough by her methods to build his own library of textures and colors.

In a room at his workshop, he keeps more than 200 rectangular and cylindrical plastic containers filled with colorful powdery substances. Here he mixes and measures down to a tenth of a milligram, testing how different minerals and precious metals react with each other in a kiln until he's satisfied with a recipe. "It's



07



08



09

similar to baking: you can be off with the measurement of an ingredient by one percent and it can have an impact on the result,” he says. “I have about 100 original recipes for glazes that I use a lot. But I’ve probably made and tested about 100,000.”

Aoki’s biggest hope is that his work will get ordinary people excited about ceramics. “The reaction I want is, ‘So cool!’” he says. Overseas, where high-quality ceramics tend to stay in the refined realm of galleries, it’s a tall order. At home, where there’s a tradition of serving tea in handmade bowls and eating meals off small well-made ceramic plates of different shapes and sizes, it should be a lot easier. And yet it’s not. Most Japanese are used to the high standards of everyday ceramics, so it takes a lot to impress them.

There’s also a scarcity of potters in Japan who are willing to break away from the long-established traditional and regional styles and forms to create something entirely original. This is partly why Aoki devotes a lot of time to helping a younger generation of potters. Having a nationwide community, he figures, is also a good way to encourage friendly competition.

For the past seven summers Aoki has hosted Ikeyan, a gathering of 100 young art students and aspiring potters from around Japan. Over several days, they drink together out of cups they crafted, play games and get career tips. “It’s a chance to make friends, share ideas and learn how to reach the point where you can exhibit your work,” says Aoki. The best are selected to participate in a traveling exhibition headlined by Aoki.

“My dream was to make a living off pottery, and I was able to do it by the time I was 26. I quit my part-time job. I want to give back in some way.”//



10



12



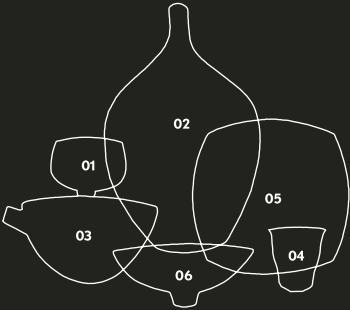
11



13

10 Scattered around his workshop, Aoki’s latest creations dry on wooden planks that serve as shelves 11 Aoki often doesn’t know what will come of his glaze experiments. It’s this constant attempt to create something new that has drawn collectors to his work 12 Aoki’s work includes ceramics with a metal glaze 13 Some glazes are meant to bubble and blister as they sit in the kiln giving pieces a lava-rock-like appearance

THE RYOTA AOKI PORTFOLIO



- 01 Manganese Gold Sake Cup
- 02 Dianthus Planet Vase
- 03 Katakuchi Black L
- 04 DuraCup SS
- 05 Square Plate (black)
- 06 Milk Lemon Vessel



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INTRODUCTION

What does a car manufacturer do when it turns a quarter-century old? Celebrate, for one. As the next 25 pages show, there have been plenty of successes to acknowledge in Lexus's short history: various market-leading vehicles, countless moments marking technological breakthroughs, even a few tales of hardships overcome. But these stories not only tell us what the brand has done so far – they also hint at the direction in which the company might travel in the future. Everyone at Lexus – from team members on the factory floor to the brand's presidents – has worked hard to ensure that its first 25 years in business have been prosperous. And they will continue to do so.

INTERVIEW

TOKUO FUKUICHI

THE LEXUS PRESIDENT ON THE COMPANY'S SUCCESS TO DATE
AND ITS QUALITY-FOCUSED POTENTIAL FUTURE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KOHEI TAKE



What does this quarter-century milestone mean to the company and to you personally?

Just before Lexus got its start in the US, I was a designer based in California. I remember seeing the L marque for the first time and thinking, I guess we really are going to launch a luxury car brand. Looking back, I feel thankful to all of our customers – and not just those in the US. Over the past 25 years Lexus has sold seven million vehicles in 90 countries around the world.

What are the greatest moments in Lexus's first 25 years?

First, the development of the LS sedan. Before the LS was launched, the Lexus design team spent three months living in Laguna Beach to experience firsthand the lifestyle of wealthy Californians. In Japan luxury-car owners tend to dress up. In California our designers were surprised to find that the person behind the wheel of an expensive car was often in shorts and a T-shirt. When the LS came out, Lexus ran ads showing a pyramid of glasses balanced on the hood of a car with its engine running. That had a huge impact. It persuaded many of the high quality and quiet ride of a Lexus. Meanwhile our dealers were offering a level of service that was unheard of in the industry at the time. Another milestone was the popular RX sport-utility vehicle. It was the first SUV designed for city driving and resembled a car, unlike other SUVs that were more like trucks. In 2004 Lexus unveiled its hybrid lineup, and journalists couldn't get their heads around the idea that a car could have both a gas and electric engine that worked so seamlessly together. And we can't forget the LFA supercar, which took nearly a decade to develop and was a regular at the global auto shows. I remember feeling the thrill of seeing the car's compact chassis with a radiator in the back.

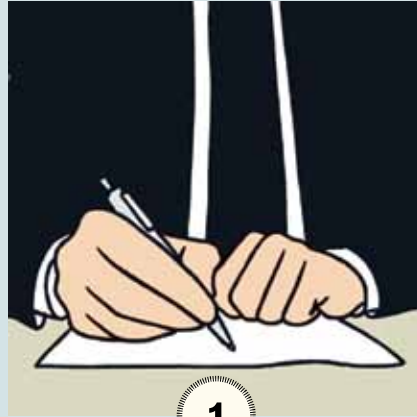
Every Lexus that has been developed since the LFA's launch has inherited some of the heart-pumping excitement you experience behind its wheel. This supercar has influenced and enhanced all recent Lexus vehicles.

Why has Lexus been so successful?

Our uncompromising pursuit of quality and craftsmanship and our industry-leading customer service at dealerships. The fact that you could drive a Lexus without worrying about the car breaking down or requiring maintenance was eye-opening for many people. When Lexus was developing the first-generation LS, Ichiro Suzuki, the chief engineer, would try to break the prototypes to make sure they could withstand abuse. To limit road noise, he had engineers develop an ultraquiet engine rather than simply wrapping the frame in sound-absorbing material. The leather for seats was only of the finest quality. And we adhered to the toughest safety standards around. That's the level of passion that went into building Lexus cars and that has been the key to our success. You might not be able to attain perfection, but you can continually strive toward it.

What will the Lexus of the future look like?

We aim to maintain a level of craftsmanship, in every aspect of what we do, that goes beyond the expectations of our customers. We will always endeavor to make great cars – vehicles that are both fantastic to look at and sensational to drive. We want our customers to love their cars. There's a risk in that kind of approach. What our customers consider valuable and how they define happiness is constantly in flux. At Lexus it's not about profits and sales. We would rather sell fewer cars if it means that every single one of our customers loves the car he or she owns. » KH



1

WRITING THE COVENANT

AT THE HEART OF THIS INTRICATE MACHINE IS THE COMPANY'S FERVENT BELIEF IN SERVING THE DRIVER

In 1987, two years before Lexus's official unveiling, Dave Illingworth called his assistant into his office and told him to take notes. In a speech that would set out the brand's values and collective identity for decades to come, Illingworth, Lexus's US-based general manager at launch, announced without affectation that Lexus vehicles "will be the finest cars ever built." He knew the company's task was monumental – "BMW, Mercedes and Jaguar have spent decades building an image of prestige," he once noted – but

remained confident. "If you think you can't, you won't," he said. "If you think you can, you will." And so they did.

By 1989, just months after Lexus's LS and ES sedans drew gasps at the Detroit auto show, Illingworth's nine-sentence philosophy had been etched into the minds of everyone associated with the brand – not least its dealers, who were now overseeing 81 Lexus dealerships across the United States as part of a meticulous plan to build a small and exclusive dealer network formed on

consistent and outstanding customer service. As Illingworth had said to his assistant back in his office, he hoped Lexus would always "treat each customer as we would a guest in our home." Dealers were asked to help owners in all circumstances. No request would be too great.

The foundations of the Lexus brand were strong – Illingworth's words still inspire Lexus employees today – but they would quickly be tested. When a minor defect was detected in an LS, the company realized customers would have to travel considerable distances to have their cars fixed because of the limited number of dealerships. Little bother. Lexus saw this as an opportunity to woo its clients: owners of impacted vehicles were shocked to find that dealers not only picked up their cars and replaced appropriate parts, but also refilled the gas, washed the bodywork until it gleamed and drove the cars back again. And the dealers did it all with a smile. As the company grew to meet global demand for its product, Lexus printed wallet-sized cards embossed with the covenant to remind employees of its oath. Today the firm's mantra and message continue to resonate far beyond its company headquarters in Aichi Prefecture, Japan. » CP



2

THE LAUNCH

IN A BOLD FIRST MOVE, LEXUS TOOK THE GAME DIRECTLY TO ITS COMPETITORS' HOME TURF

The moment the first Lexus was officially unveiled to the global press, in the spring of 1989, was one the company's directors knew they had only one chance to get right. First impressions count, after all.

And so, in a strategic move that also sent a clear message to the brand's European competitors, it was neither in Japan nor in the United States that Lexus made its debut. Instead, on a mild morning in May, the sleek curves and understated design of the LS 400 were finally revealed to a throng of reporters on the lawns of the company's offices in none other than Cologne, Germany – home turf of some of its fiercest competitors.

It was a message that was clearly felt. Keith Crain, publisher of *Automotive News*, was among those who at the time noted this declaration of intent. "See, we're not messing around," he deduced from Lexus's message. "We're good."

The decision was a savvy maneuver. The unregulated motorway speed limits in Germany made it the perfect spot for paying reporters to road-test a sports car that would put Japan on the automobile-manufacturing map.

And the move paid off. One journalist compared the soundlessness of the engine creeping over 150 miles per hour to a cat stalking its prey. » CP



THE LEXUS LOGO

The company name of Lexus was an original word chosen to represent luxury and high-end technology. Early suggestions that were dismissed included Alexis and Lexis, and it wasn't just the firm's word marque that underwent prelaunch changes. The brand's logo was also subject to a process of evolution. Three iterations of the now-familiar circle-L marque are shown below.



An early Lexus logo featured a semicircular L, which was later changed.



Another version featured a more robust and recognizable L shape within a perfect circle.



The final logo. The oval around the L is not a true ellipse but a mathematically based shape.

3

THE INAUGURAL RELEASE

AN OBSESSIVE ATTENTION TO DETAIL CHARACTERIZED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRST LEXUS, WITH AN IMMENSE TEAM WORKING TOWARDS A FLAWLESS PIECE OF ENGINEERING

Known internally as Circle F, the mission to create a new luxury flagship vehicle to rival the slickest automobiles on the market was given the go-ahead in 1983. It would be six years – and 100 prototypes – until the birth of the LS 400, in a public unveiling that would divide critics across the world.

The brief itself was simple: do what you must, no expense spared. And so it was that this project consumed 60 designers, 1,400 engineers, 2,300 technicians and 200 support workers. During its evolution, each car underwent an additional 300 inspection procedures on top of those already imposed on any other vehicle produced by the company.

It was a process so robust that it helped Lexus's new Tahara Plant in Aichi Prefecture, Japan – a facility that now creates 675 Lexus

models a day – earn the reputation as “the most fault-free production facility in the world.” Perfecting the tanning methods alone – ensuring the perfect grain and texture of the interior, which was finished in wood by the piano makers at Yamaha – took a full two years.

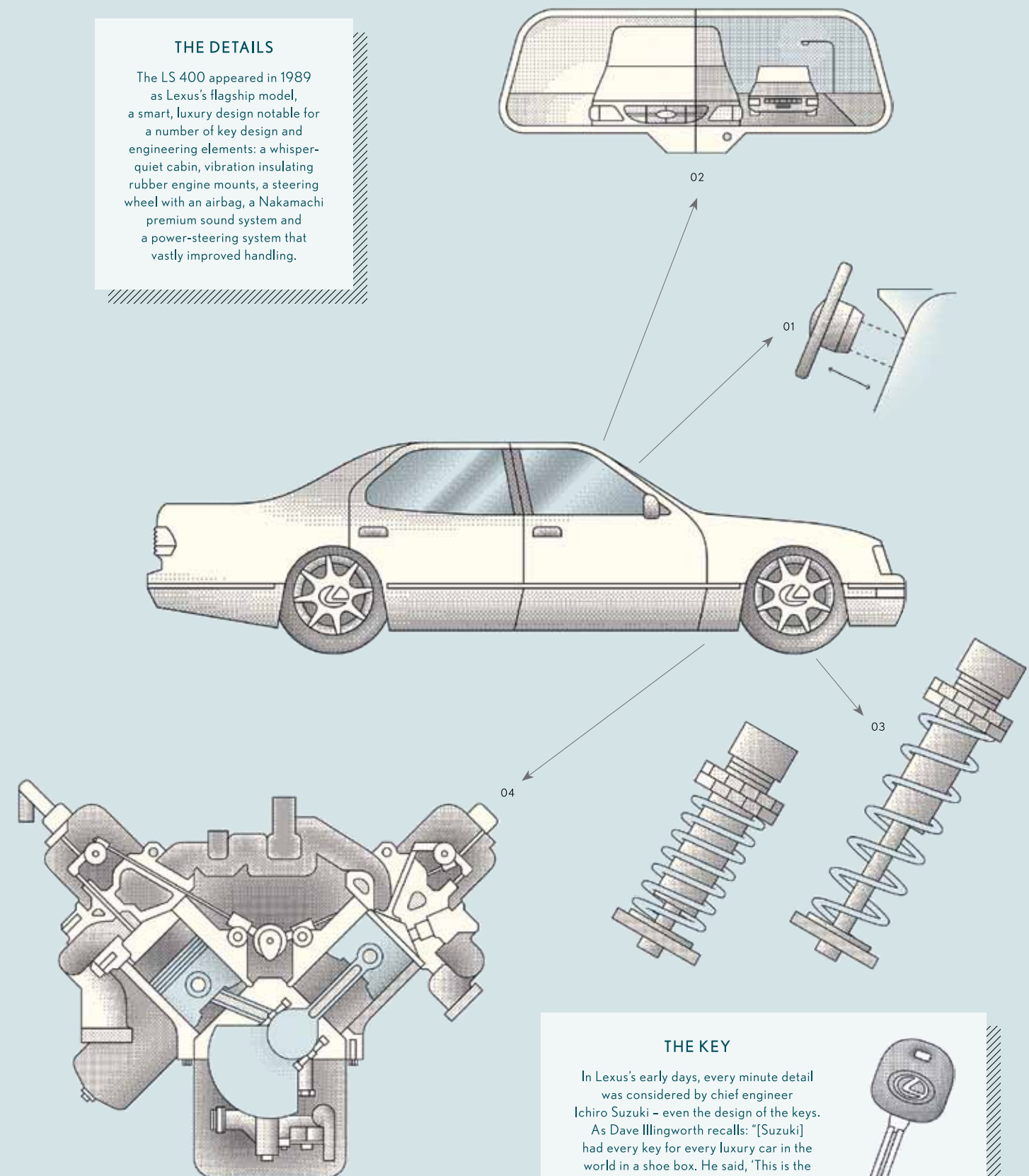
Finally, in May 1987 the company's executives signed off on the body shape. And it was at the 1989 Detroit auto show that, to almost universal media acclaim, the LS 400 made its impressive debut.

Representing nothing short of a revolution for the Japanese automobile industry, the LS 400 showcased supreme engine-building skills, progressive technology and fantastic fuel efficiency alongside sleek design. This shiny new model helped the LS 400 earn its place in automobile history. » CP

01 The LS 400 was one of the first luxury sedans to feature both an SRS air bag and an automatic tilt-and-telescoping steering wheel 02 The vehicle also offered an electrochromic rearview mirror 03 And its chassis used an independent, double-wishbone suspension setup (with an optional air suspension system) 04 Finally, the LS 400 had an impressive 4.0-liter V-8 engine, capable of 250 horsepower

THE DETAILS

The LS 400 appeared in 1989 as Lexus's flagship model, a smart, luxury design notable for a number of key design and engineering elements: a whisper-quiet cabin, vibration insulating rubber engine mounts, a steering wheel with an airbag, a Nakamachi premium sound system and a power-steering system that vastly improved handling.



THE KEY

In Lexus's early days, every minute detail was considered by chief engineer Ichiro Suzuki – even the design of the keys. As Dave Illingworth recalls: “[Suzuki] had every key for every luxury car in the world in a shoe box. He said, ‘This is the finest key of any car in the world.’”



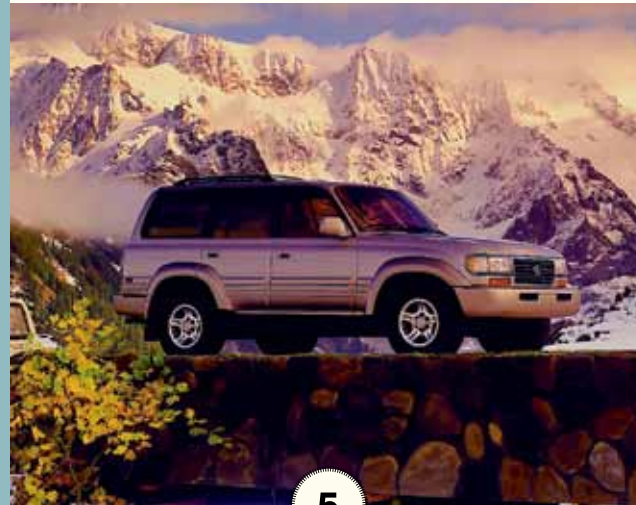
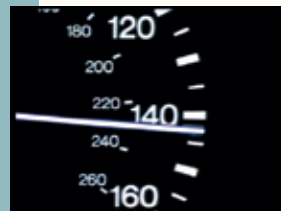


4

THAT AD

HOW TO ENTER THE MARKET WITH A BANG: THE FIRST LEXUS TV SPOT HIT THE MARK WITH AN UNFORGETTABLE DEMONSTRATION

A man wearing a black suit and crisp white gloves stacks 15 champagne glasses in a pyramid structure atop an LS 400. Its rear wheels are mounted on a treadmill and its engine is revving to 150 miles per hour. As the camera pans out, the wheels, viewers realize, are now running at the vehicle's top speed. But do the champagne glasses fall? They do not. Do they even waver? Not slightly. Titled "Balance," this was Lexus's first television ad, one of the most memorable spots of all time and a piece that confirmed to viewers the brand's "relentless pursuit of perfection." » AM



5

THE LEXUS SUV

TAKING THE OFF-ROADER TO NEW LEVELS OF LUXURY, THE LX 450 BROKE NEW GROUND IN A NEW MARKET

By the mid-1990s, sport-utility vehicles were fast becoming some of the most popular cars on the market. While the SUV managed to shake its association as the favored vehicle of the agricultural community, demand was quickly growing among regular customers, the kind who wanted to present an outward appearance of ruggedness but preferred not to give up the trimmings associated with luxury sedans. Never a brand to miss out on market potential, Lexus soon developed the LX 450, one of the world's first luxury SUVs. As a newly appointed general manager said at the time: "In response to our customers, we have taken the best SUV platform available and tailored it to their wants and needs." Positive response was unanimous: "It is big, hulking and smooth as a baby's bottom," a reporter wrote in an article for *USA Today*. » AM

THE CALTY ARTS PROJECT

ABANDONING CONVENTIONAL DESIGN TECHNIQUES, THE TEAM BEHIND THE SC 400 USED EXPERIMENTAL METHODS TO CREATE A TRULY PIONEERING BODY

When Katsushi Noshio was initially tasked to come up with a concept for the Lexus SC 400, Lexus's first luxury coupe, his response was far from conventional. The inspirational executive vice president of the Calt Design Research studio, a Lexus design center in California, Noshio regularly challenged his designers to push the boundaries of automobile design – but his approach to this project was particularly unorthodox. "I don't want you to do any sketches or foam-scale models like we always do," Noshio announced. "Instead, I want you to use an artistic, hands-on method."

Noshio was speaking to the designers Dennis Campbell and Erwin Liu, whom he dispatched to Manhattan in the hope that they would find inspiration in the Big Apple. The pair looked at how people's relationships to cars in that city were different from those in Los Angeles, and they returned home with the desire to create a car that would be distinct from anything that had been produced before.

Noshio's instruction, and the approach adopted

by Campbell and Liu, became known as the Calt Arts Project, an unofficial program that included an offshoot studio where a small handful of Calt designers and modelers were taught about fine art and sculpture. The project was initially met with skepticism – no other car designers were taking a similar approach – but the initiative inspired various legendary experiments, one of which laid the foundations of the SC 400.

This important experiment consisted of plaster-filled balloons that were randomly molded into shape, photographed and projected onto a screen. The projector distorted the balloon shapes and one of the unusual forms that caught the eye of the designers was an elongated profile – a form that became the signature shape of the SC 400. The mission of the Calt Arts Project was to embrace art and technology through an intellectual approach to car design, to challenge existing convention and to nurture truly creative thought. It remains a fundamental pillar of the Lexus philosophy today. » AK



6



CARS FROM CALTY

The Calt Design Research studio is responsible for a number of important Lexus developments, from exterior styling ideas to the initial creation of the LF-LC. The center is divided across two sites: Newport Beach, California (above), and Ann Arbor, Michigan.

7

THE IS

TAKING ITS TRADEMARK LUXURY TO A YOUNGER GENERATION WAS A CHALLENGE LEXUS MET WITH PANACHE IN THE IS 200 – A CAR THAT STILL INSPIRES THE COMPANY'S DESIGNERS TODAY

In the late '90s, a group of Lexus engineers began to think about how the brand might appeal to a younger, style-conscious demographic. The answer, they believed, lay in the introduction of an entry-level sports sedan that would give Lexus a new, youthful edge. They were right.

Released as a direct challenger to luxury sedans already on the market, the IS 200 launched in 1998. The snappy, supple and athletic vehicle was a runaway success, and was quickly followed up in 2001 with the launch of its elder sibling, the IS 300, a rear-drive, four-door sedan with a more powerful six-cylinder engine. With its muscular fender and sparkling grille, it also boasted additional conveniences – automatic climate control, for example – as well as

instrumentation that took its design cues from the high-precision dials of the luxury watch industry.

Fast-forward to 2014, and with the launch of the V-6-powered IS 250 and the IS 350 (as well as the intelligently refined, low-emissions and fuel-efficient IS 300h), Lexus has recaptured the sporty soul of the original first-generation sports sedan. All models come with dynamic enhancements, including sumptuously luxurious interiors that evoke the LFA supercar. The next generation of the popular vehicle boasts bolder designs, powerful performance, more-progressive technology and improved handling. Through these cars Lexus is paving the way for the future of luxury sports vehicles by updating and editing the best of its past. » AK



8

THE RX

FROM A SEED OF AN IDEA IN THE EARLY '90S CAME ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR SPORT LUXURY VEHICLES IN THE UNITED STATES – STILL ONE OF LEXUS'S TOP-SELLING AUTOMOBILES

The idea for a vehicle that combined the on-road performance of a luxury sedan with the height, presence and off-road capability of an SUV was first mooted in a meeting of board executives back in the spring of 1993. That discussion eventually led to the RX, the industry's first luxury crossover vehicle and a model that would come not only to embody the precision and authority of the Lexus brand but to define the entirely new car-based SUV market.

The RX signaled a landmark in the Lexus story. Launched in March 1998, it appeared as the antithesis of existing SUVs. It was big, sure, but it was far less bulky than its competitors. The RX was noticeably nimble, fast and aerodynamic. It handled like a car – in fact, it was built on a car platform, not a truck platform. It looked good, and it was smart, dependable and economic. Here was an SUV without the

awkwardness of other SUVs – no rough rides, none of that incessant noisiness.

Responding to the rapidly evolving SUV market, “many carmakers would simply have built a smaller version of the LX,” says chief engineer Tsuneo Uchimoto, referring to Lexus's first SUV. “[But] we were able to throw away the usual constraints and think of this new product not in traditional terms of truck or SUV or van or luxury sedan. Instead, we would incorporate the most desirable attributes of all those vehicles.”

Uchimoto and his team got it right. The RX was a roaring success on both sides of the Pacific – and was on its way to becoming the biggest-selling luxury vehicle in the US. It now accounts for almost 40 percent of total Lexus sales. And it is unique among the brand's lineup: manufactured in Cambridge, Canada, it is the only Lexus model with a production line outside Japan. » CP

9

THE LEXUS LED

INNOVATIVE IN EVERY RESPECT, EVEN THE COMPANY'S LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY MADE FAR-REACHING WAVES

No sooner had Lexus released the first-generation IS than the new entry-level luxury car had changed the game forever. It wasn't just the design of the model that turned heads. The shining glory of a vehicle couched as a direct competitor to the luxury sports sedans of leading European luxury marques of the time was its use of LED lamps. The inclusion of the filament-free bulb was soon adopted by competitors and would henceforth change car design in the process, causing some controversy among auto aficionados who quibbled over the

aesthetics of the new glare.

Before long, these lights began to appear on other cars, and despite fluctuations in fashion, the LED was an irrefutably pioneering technology that harnessed efficiency and eco-sensitivity. As Steffen Pietzonka, vice president of car lighting manufacturer Hella, told *Electronics Weekly*: "Car makers will accept this solution for the next few years, and the majority in [the] compact segment over the next few years will [use this solution] because it is much more cost-effective." » CP

10

LEXUS IN MOTORSPORT

FROM ROAD TO RACE, THIS IS A COMPANY WITH GRAND AMBITIONS AND ENGINEERING TO MATCH

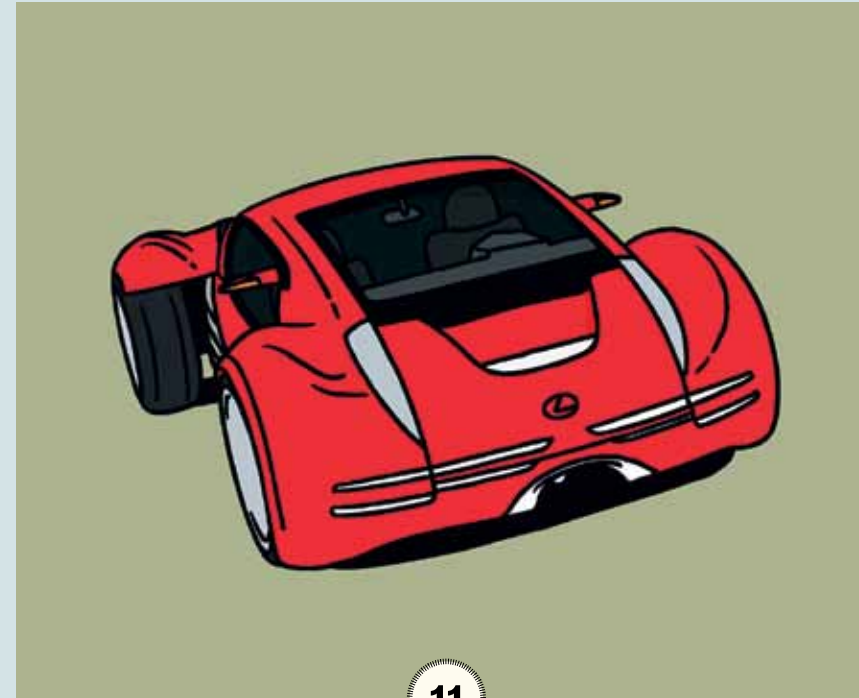
In 1999 Lexus debuted two muscular GS 400s at the Motorola Cup in North America, a move that signaled a seminal moment in Lexus history and was suggestive of a new and exciting direction for the firm. Although it was Lexus's inaugural racing year, the luxury four-door sedan made waves on the track by securing four podium finishes in nine races. The following year, Team Lexus struck gold once more, securing two podiums and three top-five finishes.

Since those successes, Lexus's involvement in and commitment to motorsport has grown steadily and with purpose. In 2001 three IS 300s were entered into the renowned Grand-Am sports car race. In 2005 the brand sanctioned the entry of four SC 430 coupes into the Super GT

THE RACING LINE



Lexus has entered cars into countless motorsports events, including the Motorola Cup, the Nürburgring 24-hour race and the All Japan Grand Touring Car Championship.



11

LEXUS IN POP CULTURE

EXPLODING INTO THE POPULAR CONSCIOUSNESS WITHIN JUST A FEW YEARS OF LAUNCH, THE MARQUE HAS BECOME PART OF FILM, TELEVISION AND MUSIC HISTORY

By the mid-1990s it wasn't just car connoisseurs who had fallen for Lexus's charm. A brand that had once been seen as an unfathomable outsider was now part of the fabric of affluent America. Embodying power and performance, Lexus became a visible brand across television and film, as it still is today. Building momentum from the late '90s to the early years of the 21st century, Lexus swept across prime-time shows, not least *Six Feet Under* and *The Sopranos*.

In Hollywood, too, the message was clear. When the producers of *Minority Report* cast their vision for the car of the future, what other automobile brand could capture the enigmatic beauty and engineering excellence they craved? The allure, years later, has deepened, with the breadth of the Lexus appeal mapped out in cameos across series ranging from *Modern Family* to *Breaking Bad*. In music,

too – including a new wave of commercial hip-hop and R & B that thrived from the mid-1990s onward – Lexus came to symbolize agility and strength. Exclusive and pioneering, bold and unapologetic, it was little wonder that this was the brand about which Jay Z boasted in his 2013 hit "Somewhere in America" with these lyrics: "A million sold before the album dropped / White Lexus before I had a deal."

And it wasn't just stateside that Lexus was making, and has continued to make, waves on the silver screen. Iconic British television shows ranging from *Silent Witness* to the recent *Last Tango in Halifax* have embraced a brand that was once regarded with suspicion. John Brooks, senior administrator of Lexus's UK press team, noted: "Lexus is one of the most seen luxury brands on prime-time terrestrial television." » CP

LEXUS GOES PRIME-TIME



1 THE SOPRANOS

Mafioso Christopher Moltisanti (played by the American actor Michael Imperioli) drives a Lexus LS 400 throughout the first series of *The Sopranos*, the acclaimed crime drama. Moltisanti's vehicle choice is aspirational, perfect for a character striving for Mafia boss status.



2 MINORITY REPORT

Director Steven Spielberg, a Lexus fan, requested that the brand create a new concept car for inclusion in this film adaptation of a Philip K. Dick story. In response the brand designed the Lexus 2054, a crash-proof model that could drive itself.



3 LEXUS IN HIP-HOP

Ever since Lexus was founded, the hip-hop world has celebrated the brand. Rapper Ice Cube name-checks a Lexus coupe in *Trespass* (1992). R. Kelly mentions the SC in his 2003 song "Ignition." And no less an artist than Jay Z mentions the brand in the 2013 hit "Somewhere in America."

12

THE HYBRIDS

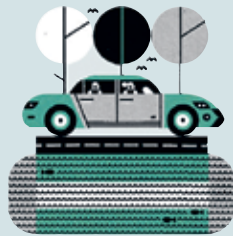
WITH ITS FIRST HYBRID SUV, LEXUS PROVED THAT LUXURY AND THE ENVIRONMENT ARE NO LONGER MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE CONCERNS

With a fierce commitment to environmentally sound business practices, Lexus leads the way in hybrid technology. “Hybrid is not new or novel at Lexus,” a spokesperson for the brand says. “It’s a core technology.” Since the firm launched the RX 400h, the world’s first luxury hybrid SUV, in 2004, the model’s sleek design and powerful performance have changed the way consumers think about environmentally friendly cars. These are luxury models with low fuel consumption, unbeatable power and minimal emissions. Coupling conventional gasoline-engine strength with electric power, cars such as the GS 450h boast engines that accelerate just like a traditional V-8. Lexus is constantly continuing its quest to produce the ultimate zero-emissions cars for the future. » AK



LOW FUEL CONSUMPTION

Unlike some gasoline-only engines, a Lexus hybrid doesn’t idle when standing still, so it uses no fuel.



MINIMAL EMISSIONS

Lexus emissions are low, and we’re always looking for new ways to achieve our goal of zero emissions.



ELECTRIC POWER

When the electric motor operates, it provides a quiet environment both inside and outside.



ACCELERATION

Lexus technologies blend engine and electric power to create a smooth and seamless acceleration.



13

L-FINESSE

LEXUS’S UNIQUE APPROACH TO DESIGN IS EMBEDDED IN ITS LANGUAGE, CREATING AN INHERENT EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

The term *L-finesse* has been used to describe Lexus’s unique and dynamic design language since 2003, when the phrase was first coined. Defining the core character and philosophy of all Lexus products, the expression is derived from the letter L, for “leading edge,” and the word *finesse*, and was developed partly to establish an emotional connection with the brand’s customers. The term addresses the essential elements of the Lexus philosophy, including the unique Japanese ability to respond to and anticipate people’s needs or desires, and to provide a premium and elegant driving experience despite the wealth of complex technology in the brand’s cars. The result? Personal experiences for all customers, evident in a number of the brand’s cars, from the sleek and refined lines of the IS to the condensed purity of the popular CT. » AK

14

LAUNCH JAPAN

BRINGING THE LEXUS TO ITS HOME MARKET WAS A MOVE THAT WAS A LONG TIME COMING – AND WHEN IT FINALLY ARRIVED, THE RESULTS WERE SPECTACULAR

When Lexus launched in the United States in 1989, the brand decided not to follow suit in Japan, where most of its vehicles were manufactured – but in 2005 things changed. A couple of years earlier, Lexus executives had recognized a developing thirst among Japanese drivers for locally manufactured, high-quality vehicles – the kind of which Lexus could offer plenty. So came the decision to launch on home turf. Its new market? “An untapped pool of Japanese who want luxury cars but do not feel comfortable

buying foreign vehicles,” wrote the *New York Times* journalist Martin Fackler.

When Lexus Japan launched in September 2005, it did so with aplomb and immediate reward. The brand had successfully developed a network of 143 new dealerships (all as plush as their US equivalents, which did a lot to attract new customers) and trained 2,000 high-performing employees, from salespeople on the shop floor to engineers tasked with redesigning three Lexus models specifically for its new audience. » AM



15

THE LFA

THE CREATION OF LEXUS'S FIRST SUPERCAR WAS A HARD-WON BATTLE. THE RESULT WAS A TRIUMPH OF TECHNOLOGY AND STYLE

Without the support of Akio Toyoda, the legendary Lexus LFA may never have been built.

Approached for insider support in 2002 by the vehicle's creators, chief engineer Haruhiko Tanahashi and the late master driver Hiromu Naruse, Toyoda quickly became the LFA's primary champion – a man on a mission to ensure that what he considered to be an enthralling concept actually made it to production.

By June 2003 Toyoda, Tanahashi and Naruse were test-driving an LFA prototype. The car was impressive, solid and well built. But the details needed refinement, and Toyoda was aware that company bureaucracy might prevent the supercar from receiving necessary funding. "At a meeting of top management, everyone argued against LFA," Toyoda recalls. "Even people in charge of R & D."

Toyoda persisted. In 2009 the team took a developed prototype to Nürburgring, where the car –

featuring Toyoda as a driver – took part in the German track's legendary 24-hour endurance race "to get more feedback on the production," Toyoda says. The LFA, which finished an impressive 18th in the race, turned heads immediately and prompted universal acclaim. So much so that the model was officially launched later that year.

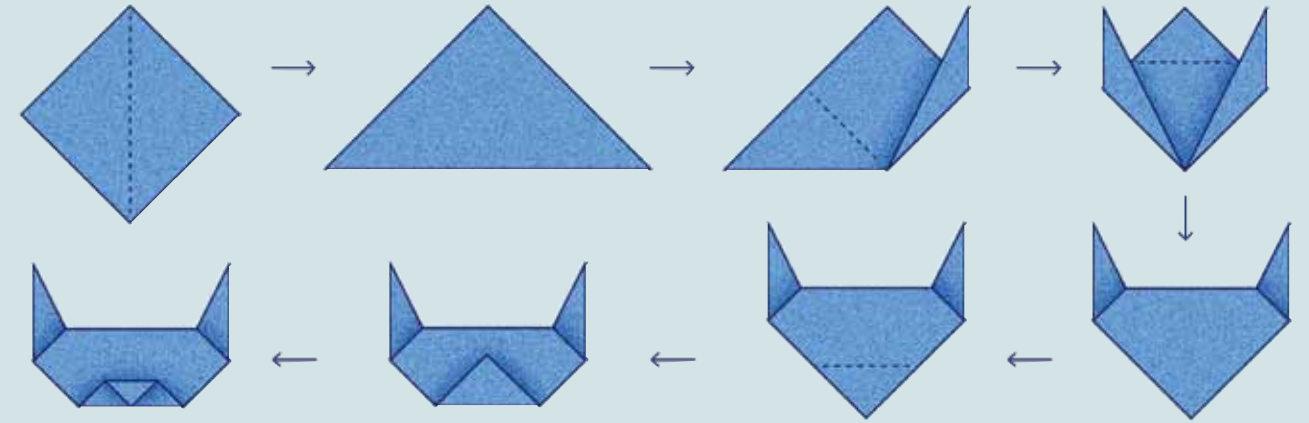
Toyoda's perseverance had paid off, and today the LFA is considered one of Lexus's finest achievements. But his actions were not without potential risk. "By supporting the LFA, I became isolated in my own company," reflects Toyoda. "Today they give me credit, but back then they said, 'Are you crazy?' But I thought [the] LFA may be able to represent Lexus. Perhaps the LFA could be the 'secret sauce,' the taste that adds spice to the meal. Not every car can be an LFA – but the 'secret sauce' from the LFA can flavor every car." » MS



16

CRAFT AT HEART

WHY THE UTMOST ATTENTION TO DETAIL IS KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS AUTOMOBILE MARQUE



To qualify as a Lexus *takumi*, one of the brand's master craftspeople, determined team members aspiring to the position must take part in a series of rigorous qualifying exams. Not least among them is the origami test, which requires craftspeople to create an origami cat from one piece of paper with their nondominant hand, in less than 90 seconds. Completing the exam requires considerable dexterity – try it at home using the instructions above – and results in well-earned respect. But it is just one step in a series of tests of equal difficulty.

These scrutinizing exercises might sound ludicrously tough, but they're key to the success of Lexus as a luxury manufacturer. Craft is at the heart of the Lexus brand, and it is evident throughout its vehicles: in the seamless stitching that runs through the LS, in the carbon-fiber package that adorns the RC F, even in parts of vehicles that aren't visible to customers but are finished with incredible precision nevertheless. "That's not attention to detail," Kurt Ernst of *Motor Authority* once said of the level of craft at Lexus. "That's obsession with detail." » AM

17

THE SIMULATOR

IN THE PURSUIT OF TOTAL SAFETY, NO EXPENSE HAS BEEN SPARED ON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUES AT LEXUS

To obtain a thorough understanding of the universal behavior of drivers behind the wheel, Lexus developed one of the world's most advanced simulators from its Higashi-Fuji campus in Japan. The finished machine is a domed pod that houses a full-sized Lexus car with a 360-degree wraparound view simulating real driving environments. And the idea is to take

into account driver responses and reactions to imminent accidents, with real-life distractions, including poor visibility and technology such as navigation systems and mobile phones. Based on its findings, Lexus is integrating safety and warning systems into its cars, hoping that the simulator will help us move toward a future in which there are no accidents. » AK



18

THE HATCHBACK

NOTING THE EVOLUTION OF A YOUNG, ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS CUSTOMER IN SEARCH OF LUXURY, LEXUS'S COMPACT HYBRID CAR PIONEERED LUXURY ECO-TECHNOLOGIES



In 2010, when Lexus launched the CT 200h hybrid hatchback, it was a roaring success. With the Japanese brand now revered among motoring experts, manufacturers and owners of luxury cars across the globe, it was time to attract a new clientele.

“It is a very important model,” then-chief engineer Osamu Sadakata, who was in charge of developing the CT 200h, told the *Business Times* in an interview in 2011. As the first premium compact hybrid segment of its kind – or indeed of any kind – the CT 200h was part of a bold move on the company’s part to attract a new and younger group of buyers to the brand: “Those who are environmentally conscious but don’t want to lower their high standards,” Sadakata explained.

The car was conceived three years earlier, in 2007, in response to public demand, when target users told

Lexus they wanted a sporty, compact hatchback. Mainly aimed at the European market, followed by Asian countries such as Japan, Singapore and Taiwan, as well as the United States, the model also targeted so-called empty nesters.

In a first for both Lexus and the auto industry as a whole, the speaker diaphragms were made from a complex compound that combined bamboo charcoal, bamboo fiber and resin, offering a clearer and more natural sound reproduction. Meanwhile, by eliminating transmission noise and striking a balance between fun and comfort, Lexus once again hit the mark. Sadakata told *Automotive Design and Production* magazine: “Enjoyment of driving is what I want owners to experience, true driving enjoyment – to cater to all the senses and personalities.” » CP

19

LEXUS AND THE TSUNAMI

AGAINST DIFFICULT ODDS, THE JAPANESE COMPANY HAS PLAYED ITS PART IN HELPING GET THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY AND THE MORALE OF ITS PEOPLE BACK ON TRACK AFTER THE TRAGIC EVENTS OF MARCH 2011

On March 11, 2011, a devastating earthquake and tsunami struck the north-eastern coast of Japan. Wreaking havoc, the natural disaster caused more than 19,000 deaths and triggered one of the world’s worst nuclear crises seen so far in this century.

Naturally, Lexus suspended production from March 14 to 16 so that

employees could also contribute to the relief effort. For three weeks after the event, Lexus production plants experienced rolling blackouts and limited production, a massive thorn in the side of what would otherwise have been one of Lexus’s most successful years to date.

But the company was determined to fight back, and by as early as March 27,

the first models rolled defiantly down the assembly line, with the CT 200h leading the charge. By August of that year, production had returned to normal, and two years later Lexus was back in the fast lane once again. Postdisaster, Japan needed to stand strong, recover its morale and regain its strength – Lexus has been a key part of that story. » AK

20

THE SPINDLE GRILLE

NOW INSTANTLY RECOGNIZABLE AS A LEXUS DESIGN SIGNATURE, THE GRILLE IS MORE THAN COSMETIC, FEATURING CLEVER PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS, TOO



A cosmetic hallmark of Lexus design innovation, the spindle grille is a daring visual statement that is now a brand-defining element on the Lexus car. The feature was first introduced in the GS sedan in 2012 and established a new, stylish and provocative identity for Lexus. Although the revolutionary styling is a long-term brand cue, it is important to remember the grille’s clever functional aspects, too. The exaggerated lips of the lower half of the hourglass shape were structured to allow air to flow through the engine to prevent it from overheating. The spindle grille defines the Lexus design language of the future. » AK



SHIMAMOKU WOOD

EVEN THE HUMBLEST LEXUS INTERIOR
ELEMENT IS FINISHED TO EXQUISITE
LEVELS OF JAPANESE PRECISION

When Lexus introduced the Shimamoku wood steering wheel, it transformed a standard utilitarian car feature into an object of great beauty. Each wheel requires a staggering 38 days to produce, and its manufacturing process involves no fewer than 67 specialized stages of production, including an intensely complex layering technique refined by Lexus.

The Shimamoku steering wheel is made with sheets of Agathis wood. First the wood is layered in alternating bands of contrasting color, pressed, cured and sliced into wafer-thin sheets – a moment that brings out the magic of Shimamoku. It is then shaped to the rim of the steering wheel, sanded, polished and varnished by hand under the exacting eye of a master craftsman, before pieces of exquisite leather are hand-stitched to the wheel. Although the polishing process gives the wood a unique sheen similar to that of polished steel, the surface is also treated to avoid any potential reflection that could be distracting to drivers on the road. » AK



22

THE F MARQUE

LEXUS STRIVES TO REACH ALMOST
IMPOSSIBLE LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE
– AND IT SUCCEEDS



You might have seen it, the F marque on certain Lexus models. But what does it mean? More power, more responsiveness, more thrills – a guarantee that this car epitomizes the pinnacle of Lexus's devotion to high performance and agenda-setting engineering.

Beginning with the IS F, launched in 2007, and rising to the LFA, the Lexus supercar, the F and F Sport models take the Lexus collection to the next level. Here is a group of vehicles engineered from the outset to ensure top-grade performance. They're equipped with finely tuned handling, aggressive bodywork, and exceptional sporting interiors. F models even have specially developed engines – the RC F, for instance, includes a 5.0-liter V8 engine that produces 468 horsepower.

Journalists have taken note. A writer for the *Wall Street Journal* has noted of the IS F: "The forward rush is crisp, the ride vivid and ungenerous, the steering pin-sharp and heavy." *Car and Driver* has called the IS 350 F Sport "utterly imperturbable. Bumps that send other cars skittering off-line or scampering to maintain their course are absorbed and dispatched, but not kept completely hidden from the driver."

In addition to the IS, the Lexus F Sport group includes high-performance packages available in the GS, LS, CT, RC, RX and NX, all of which feature brake upgrades and better chassis rigidity, transmission and wheels and tires. Traits like body control are also maximized. And F Sport models include specially tuned adaptive variable suspension (AVS). "Slumbering Lexus wakes up, woos us and wins us over," *Car and Driver* once wrote, referring to the new F and F Sport lineups – a tidy conclusion to this Lexus makeover. » CP

23

THE RC F GT3

THE LATEST RACING CAR FROM LEXUS IS EXCEPTIONAL. WITH ITS
SNARLING GRILLE, PRISMATIC COLORS AND RUTHLESSLY POWERFUL
PERFORMANCE, THE 2015 SEASON CAN'T COME SOON ENOUGH



At the 2014 Geneva Motor Show, Lexus moved away from the roads and onto the racetrack with the launch of the boldly iridescent, rainbow-adorned RC F GT3 concept. The vehicle is a leaner and meaner racing standard version of the original RC F performance coupe, one of the most powerful performance cars that has ever been built by the manufacturer.

Weighing in at 1,250 kilograms, with a low suspension to improve aerodynamics, the RC F GT3 has a modified V-8 engine that makes 540 horsepower – 90 horsepower more than the original version.

Expect to see the RC F GT3 – certified by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile – in key events on the upcoming 2015 global racing calendars, including the Nürburgring 24-hour race in Germany and the Super Taikyu Endurance and Super GT series in Japan.

Racing teams are eagerly awaiting the official launch of the RC F GT3 in 2015 as a full-fledged racing car for use on the track. Mere mortals, however, will have to qualify to join the pit if they want a chance to get behind its perforated leather wheel. » AK



24

INTERSECT BY LEXUS

THIS EXCEPTIONAL COMPANY IS MORE THAN A CAR BRAND: IT'S A LIFESTYLE, AND A CONCEPT STORE IN TOKYO IS SPREADING THE MESSAGE

Located in Tokyo's fashionable Aoyama district, INTERSECT BY LEXUS looks beyond the traditional car showroom to give visitors a chance to experience the lifestyle around the Lexus brand without having to sit at the wheel. Cutting-edge architect Masamichi Katayama, founder of Wonderwall, the design firm behind high-profile projects that include stores for Thom Browne and A.P.C., created the brand space-meets-gallery-meets-café, which opened in 2013.

With Katayama's imaginative touch, interior details such as the bamboo lattice facade, which evokes the Lexus spindle grille, playfully reference elements of the

Lexus car. Visitors can pop in for a light lunch, courtesy of food director Daichi Tajima, or enjoy a cup of fresh coffee brewed by the expert baristas who hail from cult Norwegian coffee shop Fuglen. They can peruse the wares of Japanese artisans commissioned by Lexus to create one-off pieces for the CRAFTED FOR LEXUS space that hosts a series of thought-provoking talks, workshops and events.

INTERSECT BY LEXUS is an inspiring social hub in the heart of Tokyo; it will soon spread its inspiration to Dubai, followed by a store in New York. » AK

25

WHAT'S NEXT?

AFTER TWENTY FIVE SUCCESSFUL YEARS,
WHAT WILL LEXUS DO NOW?

What does the future hold for Lexus? No one can be sure, but one thing can be said for certain: the company will continue to develop innovative, dynamic, industry-leading vehicles – the sort it has been making for the past 25 years – while maintaining its focus on outstanding customer service.

“We created a customer experience unparalleled in this industry,” says Mark Templin, executive vice president of Lexus International, of the firm's early focus on driver satisfaction. “In the future, we're going to do more for the consumer. Everything is focused on them.”

Lexus is aiming to do more with its cars, too. The brand will continue to develop new technologies – to

make sure all Lexus automobiles of the future retain their emphasis on high performance and dynamic design.

But it also plans to rethink what the automobile of the future should look like as well as how it should drive.

“We want to keep doing things differently than the rest,” Templin says. Tokuo Fukuichi, president of Lexus, agrees. “We all use other products as consumers, the mobile phone and other devices, which change and evolve in a much shorter time span,” he says. “I think it's a little strange that we don't do that with our cars.”

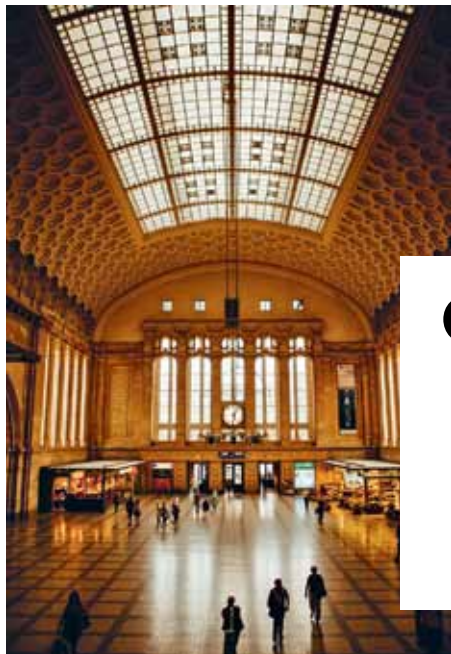
Expect innovative progress, then, and lots of it. » AM



10

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

» » » » » »

HOW A NEW CLASS OF CREATIVE ENTREPRENEUR IS
TRANSFORMING LEIPZIG INTO A CULTURAL HOTSPOTTEXT BY JESSICA BRIDGER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAMON HAINDL

At first sight, Leipzig is a mysterious and romantic place. Art Nouveau buildings, swathes of parkland, crumbling façades and graffiti combine in a city that reveals itself slowly. Famous for a friendly openness to outsiders, Leipzig has a history of trade and a tradition of freethinking that dates back to the time of the Holy Roman Empire. Since the German reunification, the city has grown into a place for artists, designers and intellectuals, all of whom profit from its openness and an abundance of room in which to experiment. As abandoned mills and apartments blocks are transformed into surprisingly affordable living and working spaces, this old city blooms. While Berlin grows into being the capital city of Europe's largest economy, Leipzig, a town of half a million people an hour's drive south, has managed to maintain its bohemian edge – at least for now.

Leipzig has benefited from low-key revitalization allowing for flexibility, making it an open ground for experimentation. For locals, there is always something new, from music – a tradition that includes Bach and extends to visits from übercool acts like Nicolas Jaar and Wolf + Lamb – to craftsmanship and experimental design. As a center for creative output, Leipzig is supported by institutions like the Academy of Visual Arts and the Museum for Contemporary Art, as well as more informal places like the Spinnerei complex – an immense former cotton mill – or the Kaufhaus Held, a department store taken over by artists and designers. The Leipzig Book Fair, second in size only to its equivalent in Frankfurt, upholds Leipzig's long history of trading the printed word, and DOK Leipzig, a documentary film festival, is



internationally important. Leipzig is a *Messestadt* – a trade-fair town – and events like the Designers' Open, a citywide German design festival, are gaining importance in the European creative scene. Many businesses in Leipzig seem to be the pragmatic creation of artists or designers seeking cross-financing for other projects. This has unusual results, like authentic Szechuan food – and a pace that encourages lingering and exploring. The lines between art, design and business are not always clear in Leipzig, a refreshing change from both cynical cosmopolitanism and naive idealism.

In the old city center, pedestrian zones brimming with tables and chairs generate a central German/Mediterranean buzz in summer and induce a Christmas market coziness in winter. Leipzig's independent spirit is evident throughout the city. Numerous banners hang from buildings, expressing all manner of individual views that include everything from interest in reinvigorating the city's history, to resistance to gentrification, to opinions on global events. Blockish East German-built *Plattenbauten* – prefabricated concrete buildings – have been taken over and transformed into shops, galleries and art and design studios. Further out, ex-industrial areas like Plagwitz and Lindenau are reborn as centers for creativity and cultural expression, renewing abandoned and derelict spaces. While the city has no grand waterway, it is surrounded by green space with small canals and rivers. People gather at Sachsenbrücke or in one of the semi-informal bars that spring up around the city, free to take the time to enjoy life as they want. Visitors can join in. As local gallerist Gerd Harry Lybke quips: "On the first day, you're welcome. On the second, you're a Leipziger."



01
SPINNEREI LEIPZIG

A century ago this cotton mill was the largest in continental Europe. Today it is home to more than 100 artist studios, dance studios, galleries, workshops and more. As production declined and the looms clacked to a halt in the 1980s and '90s, the buildings of the complex increasingly lay fallow, but starting in 1993, pioneers like the Leipzig-born painter Neo Rauch populated the spaces. Old clocks dot the complex of birch and cobble, their hands frozen in time but their faces bearing witness to the arrival of craftsmen, gallerists, restaurateurs and tourists. Evening movies, pop-up restaurants and an Edenic garden café make this an all-day excursion, and a stay at the Meisterzimmer pension (see next) could make it a week-long affair. The inspired can purchase a print or painting – or even stop by the cavernous art supply store Boesner for the raw materials needed to begin their own projects.

SPINNEREI.DE

02
MEISTERZIMMER PENSION

Four vast spaces in the Spinnerei complex have been transformed into guest rooms furnished with quirky old furniture. Waking up here, with light flooding through the 13-foot-tall windows, is rejuvenating. A discreet booking and check-in process make it easy to pretend you’ve taken possession of a friend’s artistic hideaway. Free of flat-screen TVs and pillow menus, use your room to read through the exhibition catalogs and artist books that abound throughout the complex, free for the taking, or tune into one of Mitteldeutschland’s superlative public radio stations and relax.

MEISTERZIMMER.DE



03
EIGEN + ART

Eigen + Art began in the Leipzig loft of Gerd Harry Lybke in 1983, and since 2005 the gallery has occupied a section of the Spinnerei complex, with sister spaces located in Berlin. For the past 30 years, Lybke’s gallery has been at the forefront of Germany’s international art scene. The gallery was an incubator for now-established artists like Neo Rauch, Birgit Brenner and Olaf Nicolai, and it continues to discover and promote new artists like Kristina Schuldt and Jörg Herold, who recently exhibited in the space. The gallery is large enough to feature multiple artists simultaneously, and houses a team of friendly gallerists and an excellent selection of contemporary art monographs.

EIGEN-ART.COM



Q&A:
GERD HARRY LYBKE

Gerd Harry Lybke is the proprietor of Eigen + Art, a group of galleries in Germany. A key figure of Germany’s cultural scene, he has been instrumental in promoting and exporting German art and its artists to the world.

WHY IS LEIPZIG SO VITAL?

As a trade town that dates back to the 12th century, Leipzig has historically been an important hub. The city is part of a transit route and people from all over the world have been coming here for hundreds of years. It is this diversity that has helped to shape the city and give it a unique vitality.

WHY IS THERE A CONCENTRATION OF ARTISTS IN LEIPZIG?

Leipzig was always a town of the common people, whereas Dresden was historically a town of kings and royalty. Leipzig people had to survive by being creative, and the city and its artists work in symbiosis. One of Leipzig’s most famous artistic citizens was the baroque composer Johann Sebastian Bach, who lived here for 27 years.

WHAT DRIVES THE CITY? WHAT MAKES THE FEELING OF A VIBRANT URBAN AREA?

Leipzig is a beautiful city where money isn’t that important. Everyone is always outside and many restaurants are open 24 hours a day. Going out in Leipzig is a part of everyday life. It is also a very welcoming city, on the second day you arrive in the city, you are already referred to as a Leipziger.

04
CHINABRENNER

Hot, hotter, hottest: Szechuan cuisine, one of the most renowned types of Chinese food, is known for its fire, and the kitchen of Chinabrenner, in an old brick industrial building in Plagwitz, turns out some superb examples of this peppery *leckeres Essen* – “delicious food”. Deep red and spicy, the broth of ma-po tofu soaks into perfectly cooked rice. Beef sliced thin – called “In The Way of the Papermaker” (*shui zhu niu rou*) – features both Szechuan pepper and chili, which lend the dish and palate a pleasant burn. Those who can’t stand the heat but want to stay in the Chinabrenner kitchen can try the cold tea-smoked duck on a bed of Chinese herbs, which has a subtle, fragrant, wood-smoked flavor. The brainchild of German artist and restaurateur Thomas Wrobel, Chinabrenner is a cultish yet welcoming space, with a large open dining room and pebbled patio. Wrobel founded the restaurant as a personal project, dissatisfied with the standard of Leipzig’s Asian culinary offerings following a stint living in the region of Sichuan. Chinese food this good is hard to find outside Chengdu.

CHINABRENNER.DE

05

ENZO FORCINITI

Design and craft come together in the wooden eyewear frames of Enzo Forciniti. Trained as a graphic designer in Leipzig, Forciniti made the leap to eyewear having become weary of his desk job. Inspired by skateboard design, he uses many layers of wood in each frame, alternating the grain and then fusing and molding the layers into shape. Whereas other manufacturers use a single fragile board, Forciniti makes robust frames that hold up to serious wear and tear. His shop is both showroom and workroom, a place where customers can choose materials and designs to suit their tastes. Subtle details evidence the unique craftsmanship – Forciniti’s personal frames, for example, show off the layers in a stripe that is alternately light and dark.

ENZOFORCINITI.COM



06

TSCHAU TSCHÜSSI

German design, art and craft are on show in this small shop. Owner Miriam Paulsen selects objects from around Germany – and throws a few global offerings into the mix. Many items are handcrafted, from jewelry and personal accessories to home goods and children’s toys. Tschau Tschüssi has transformed over the years from the side project of a few friends into Paulsen’s all-inclusive creation, with creaking wooden floors in a suite of small rooms where numerous treasures are to be found. Located in quiet Härtelstrasse since 2012, the shop is a short distance from the city center.

TSCHAU-TSCHUESSI.DE



07

MZIN

Leipzig’s history as a center for print production goes back hundreds of years, and the city still hosts the internationally important Leipzig Book Fair. No surprise, then, that here printed matter is held in high regard. Mzin upholds this bookish tradition: a large and airy space framed by large plate-glass windows, it is filled with artful displays of cutting-edge magazines – titles like *Fantastic Man*, *032c* and *Frieze* – and limited-run publications. Frequent events take the silence of print into something more like performance. The shop lies on Kolonnadenstrasse, where a stretch of galleries, shops and cafés occupies the ground floors of pre-World War II buildings and later, blockier GDR-era housing projects.

MZIN.DE



08

GALERIE FÜR ZEITGENÖSSISCHE KUNST (GfZK)

The Museum for Contemporary Art Leipzig occupies two buildings: a Wilhelminian villa restored by architect Peter Kulka in the mid-1990s, and a newer gallery space and café. The GfZK has a rotating program of exhibitions, and features work by stalwarts of the post-1945 contemporary art scene as well as graphic design and book art. The museum uses a creative approach to display its permanent collection, elements of which have been hung in alternative locations in the city or taken down from the walls and used for research. Nearby, the renowned Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst (Academy of Visual Arts) provides both audience and subjects for exhibitions at the GfZK. The café, which is spruced up every few years by a different designer (its current form is the creation of the London-based architect Céline Condorelli), works as an important city-center meeting place, with strawberry milkshakes and proper cappuccinos.

GfZK.DE



09

FLEISCHEREI

Look up: the painted glass ceiling of this former butcher shop features bovines that preside over its current incarnation as a café. Open from early until late, Fleischerei is a favorite among the creative set. A small menu of lunch and dinner options proves delicious. While you can’t go wrong with *Kaffeezeit*, an afternoon coffee complete with homemade cake, why not stretch out your visit until cocktail hour. Decorated tile walls, the stunning ruminant ceiling and wooden furniture mix elegant and quirky for a cozy result.

JAHNALLEE 23, +49 341 96 25 78 48



10

LEIPZIG UNIVERSITY

Leipzig University’s new central building, by Dutch architect Erick van Egeraat, is one of the more divisive architectural features of Leipzig. Built on the site of the former university church, which survived World War II only to be brought down by the East German government, the façade has the effect of making the reconstructed church front appear to float over the multifaceted glass structure. Next to the reconstructed opera house, the prominent building is an eclectic oddity. The main hall, called the Aula, recreates the vestry of the former church and is a lighthearted but serious setting for religious services and scientific conferences alike.

UNI-LEIPZIG.DE



THE BREAKS

THE ROAD



» » » » » » » »

MORGAN COLLETT, THE CO-FOUNDER OF MANHATTAN'S CULT MENSWEAR SHOP, SATURDAYS SURF NYC, TAKES A LEXUS NX 200T TO THE ROCKAWAYS AND MONTAUK, TWO LONG ISLAND SURF SPOTS BOUND TOGETHER BY A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY AMONG LOCALS, VISITORS AND SURFERS ALIKE

TEXT BY MATTHEW LOWE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMIE HAWKESWORTH



Saturdays Surf NYC, located at 31 Crosby Street, the first of two shops in the city



Clockwise, from top left: The Manhattan Bridge, one of three bridges connecting the island to Brooklyn; daybreak at Ditch Plains Beach, Montauk; Collett photographed beside the Saturdays store

It is daybreak. Only the gentle rumble of delivery trucks trundling through this quiet pocket of Manhattan breaks the silence as Morgan Collett unlocks the security grates of Saturdays Surf NYC, his cult menswear store, which stands on Crosby Street. Cutting a neat and stylish figure as he loads one of the seven surfboards he stores at the shop into the back of the gleaming Lexus NX 200t, parked outside, Collett is a far cry from the stereotypical beach bum. Yet behind his sleek, urbane appearance, at perfect ease on the streets of New York City, Collett's is a soul that yearns for the ocean.

As is often the case, Collett has risen at dawn to catch the precious morning surf and, along with three of his friends, is heading out on one of his favorite drives, which will take them through two Long Island surfing spots that are particularly close to his heart. As the rest of the city comes to life, Collett and his crew pile into the vehicle and head out across the Manhattan Bridge. Deftly navigating the



Left: A local surfer heads to the water in the Rockaways
Right: The Rockaway Beach boardwalk at 86th Street

Opposite page: Collett parks close to Rockaway Beach, allowing him to inspect the surf

early morning roads still shrouded in mist, as he leaves the dense concrete metropolis of Manhattan behind, Morgan is characteristically upbeat and sings along to a sound track influenced by the sounds of Southern California, where he grew up.

“I’m originally from Newport Beach in California and started surfing from the age of eight,” he says. “My whole family surfed. In high school, instead of playing soccer, surfing was our team sport, and we even had a free period where we were meant to surf for an hour.”

Today, Collett has translated his love of both surfing and fashion into his work life. After a stint at the Swedish clothing brands Acne and J. Lindeberg, Collett teamed up with his two business partners, Josh Rosen and Colin Tunstall. Driven by a mutual love of fashion, art and surfing, the trio decided to open a fashion store that mirrored the sense of community offered by traditional surf shops – and challenged the inauthentic surf styles of commercial, high-street fashion brands at the time. “We were raised by the surf shop,” recalls Collett. “You would hang out there, skateboard out the front and go surfing with everyone. There was such a huge sense of community.”

When their first store opened in 2009, on Crosby Street, the minimal aesthetic in everything from the logo to the cut of the clothing that launched a year later was a breath of fresh air. “I always wanted to build a fashion brand; we never planned to be referred to as a surf brand,” says Collett.

Today, Saturdays has outlets in New York City, Tokyo, Kobe and most recently Nagoya. Both locals and starry customers that include surfing legend Kelly Slater and actor Willem Dafoe were quick to become clients. Popping in to purchase a coffee from its front espresso bar – a key feature of each Saturdays shop – customers linger in the backyard of the original Crosby Street store.

Similarly, it is this strong sense of community that attracts Collett to the Rockaways, the first stop on his journey – and a place to which he often drives to surf before starting his workday. A series of Atlantic-facing beaches that is part of the borough of Queens, the Rockaways was one of New York’s favorite summer retreats as early as the 1800s. After World War II, however, many of the mansions were razed and the city’s welfare cases moved into a swath of housing projects that were newly erected, turning it into an area aching with federal neglect.

Less than an hour after Collett leaves Crosby Street, he turns off a six-lane highway and pulls up to Rockaway Beach, one of the areas hardest hit by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. He parks in front of its 5.5-mile boardwalk, a pivotal and vibrant artery of the community that was torn apart by 30-foot waves – and that is currently undergoing a \$140 million restoration. Sandy, he explains, while surveying a scene that still carries the marks of its ravaged history, presented a unique rallying point for the Rockaways community. Formal relief efforts were combined with grassroots initiatives led by everyone from local residents and galleries to hipsters with Manhattan zip codes and local and visiting surfers, including Collett, all of whom chimed in to help clear beaches and restore businesses and homes.

Although still rough around the edges, the Rockaways has become a newly fashionable summer hangout at the end of the city’s A train line, attracting artistic young creatives who are drawn to its diverse community and gritty, anti-Hamptons appeal. “Rockaways is an emerging place that resonates more with New Yorkers and a younger demographic,” reflects Collett. “Its proximity is much closer, and it is much more affordable. A lot of people are putting in a huge effort to build a community here, and I think it’s only going to get bigger.” Now an optimistic and vibrant hub of guerilla entrepreneurship, the Rockaways is bouncing back. This morning, Collett heads to Zac’s, one of a multitude of recently opened businesses, for breakfast. To satisfy the discerning tastes of the new wave of creative city slickers, items such as beetroot and kale juice are on the menu.



Before he takes a stroll down the boardwalk, Collett chats amiably with a number of locals as he goes. Among them is a tanned surfer in his early 20s. The pair talk animatedly about Hurricane Marie, which had traveled up the Baja peninsula the week before, sending swells of up to 20 feet crashing into the California coast, causing quite a stir. Professional and amateur surfers flew in from around the world just to surf on swells so big Collett reckons he hadn’t seen the likes of them since he was 13 years old. Back then, his mother had forbidden him to go out – he didn’t listen. When he emerged from the water, broken

This page: Parked up, Collett heads to the water Opposite page: Collett gears up for his early morning surf in Montauk

surfboard in hand, she was waiting to ground him. After a quick survey of the calm and glassy water from the beach, Collett decides the water conditions today are too tranquil for surfing. Unperturbed, he heads back to the car to make his way eastward to Montauk. As Collett sets off on the open road once again, this time through the Hamptons to Montauk, the views give way



From his Crosby Street store, Collett headed across the East River to Brooklyn, the Rockaways and, finally, Montauk, Long Island

NX 200t	
LENGTH	4,630mm*1
HEIGHT*2	1,645mm*3
WIDTH	1,845mm
WHEELBASE	2,660mm
SEATING CAPACITY	5
ENGINE TYPE	8AR-FTS
CYLINDERS	4 cylinders, In-line type
ENGINE OUTPUT	175kW / 4,800-5,600rpm
MAX TORQUE	350Nm / 1,650-4,000rpm
TRANSMISSION	6AT

*1 Without license plate bracket *2 Unladen vehicles
*3 With shark fin antenna

Product and specifications may vary by country





to pristine farmland that is punctuated by the odd roadside food shack and colorful fruit stall. “I like the small-town feel of when you reach the Hamptons,” says Collett. “It’s a refreshing feeling of something else besides the day-to-day hustle.” Unlike those in the Rockaways, the houses in the Hamptons are immaculate, and the manicured streets of the hamlets he passes through are a cluster of picture-perfect fine-dining restaurants, interior stores and local outposts of New York’s designer shops.

A former fishing village and once a low-key alternative to the Hamptons, Montauk’s resort community and bohemian atmosphere have recently attracted Manhattan’s moneyed elite as a holiday location outside the city. Many of Collett’s friends have second homes here, and he stays with them on his frequent weekend trips. As he pulls into Montauk, it is pitch black and, after unloading the car, Collett and his crew decide to head out for dinner at the Crow’s Nest, a trendy restaurant, bar and hotel where *GQ* magazine happened to be hosting a party. Collett spots someone he knows and peels off to say hello.

Despite the late night, Collett is up bright and early the next morning to catch some waves. For this purpose he heads to Ditch Plains, one of Montauk’s prime surfing locations and his personal favorite. “The surf is fantastic, and there is a great sense of community in the water all year round,” explains Collett. “The thing about surfing is



Clockwise, from top left: A typical seaside street sign in the hamlet of Montauk; the tree-lined Montauk Highway as it heads through Montauk Point State Park towards the tip of Long Island; a typical Montauk beach home



Left: Decals on a vehicle parked at Ditch Plains Beach
Right: Collett stands on the 86th Street boardwalk at Rockaway Beach



**TO ME,
SURFING IS A
VERY SPECIAL
EXPERIENCE.
IT'S HUMBLING
TO FEEL THE
STRENGTH
OF MOTHER
NATURE AND
BATTLE THE
ELEMENTS**

that whether you are on the beach or in the water, there are always familiar faces. You say hello and have a conversation.” Ringed by picturesque dunes, Ditch Plains is enveloped in plump golden sands, reminiscent of beaches in much warmer climates and a reminder to Collett of his Southern California roots. People stroll along the beach with their dogs, and a string of surfers, Collett included, creep up to the edge of the beach in their cars to stare intently at the waves and survey the conditions of the surf. Some pull away and return home; others get out, put their gear on and paddle out into the water on their boards.

Collett surveys the waves and the wind before donning a black, sleeveless wetsuit and paddling out to sea on his black-and-gold, nine-foot-eight surfboard, which was handmade for him by the San Diego-based board designer Chris Christenson. Collett’s hair, which has until now sat parted and slicked against his head, relaxes in the thick morning mist into loose curls that pile handsomely atop his head. He is nimble, swift and a natural athlete in the water.

“You can admire it from afar, but I think you get addicted,” he says. “I surf all year round, even when there is snow on the ground. To me, surfing is a very special experience. It’s humbling to feel the strength of Mother Nature and battle the elements.” //

At daybreak in Montauk, surfers of all ages ride the morning swell





This page: A reflection of a mural on the side of the Rockaway Beach Surf Club
Opposite page: A sunset view of Manhattan's Financial District

THE TWENTY

20

KEY INGREDIENTS

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FROM MUST-HAVE GARMENTS TO ESSENTIAL CULINARY GADGETS,
THIS SEASON WE TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT HOW TO KEEP WARM,
STAY SNUG AND FEEL SATISFIED

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DEVIN BLAIR
FASHION STYLING BY JOHN COLVER
INTERIOR STYLING BY LINNEA APELOVIST

1. SCARF ISSEY MIYAKE



Left: **2. COAT** LOUIS VUITTON **3. SKIRT** M MISSONI Above: **4. CAST-ALUMINUM FRYING PAN** CRISTEL
5. TERRACOTTA JUG ANOTHER COUNTRY **6. CAST-IRON COCOTTE** STAUB **7. STAINLESS STEEL SOAP** PADERNO



Above: **8. KNIFE** GLOBAL **9. MARBLE CUTTING BOARD** THE CONRAN SHOP **10. TERRACOTTA SAUCEPAN** STEFANIA VASQUES FOR SAMBONET **11. MUSHROOM BRUSH** DAVID MELLOR DESIGN Right: **12. OVERCOAT** BALLY **13. VEST** STONE ISLAND
14. BOMBER JACKET LOUIS VUITTON **15. JEANS** A.P.C. KANYE





Left: **16. COAT** ISSEY MIYAKE Above: **17. CHEESE GRATER** DAVID MELLOR DESIGN **18. CHEESE BOARD** DAVE REGESTER
19. COPPER SAUCEPAN MAUVIEL **20. CHEESE KNIFE** ALESSI

Thanks to Aria, Borough Kitchen, The Conran Shop, David Mellor Design and Divertimenti

SHIP SHAPE

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WHEN PLUMMETING TEMPERATURES AND SEVERE SNOW MAKE DRIVING TREACHEROUS, A NORWEGIAN FERRY SERVICE OFFERS LOCALS A PRACTICAL TRAVEL ALTERNATIVE

TEXT BY CHARLOTTE PHILBY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARSTEN ANIKSDAL



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It is early morning and a gentle sun has settled over the Nordic town of Tromsø. As the town sleeps off the excesses of the night before – for some spent in the clapboard bars and restaurants that line the street just a few paces from the port – a small crowd has gathered in anticipation of the first passenger boat of the day. With the morning glare bouncing off concrete and steel, and absorbed by a huge mountain that looms over the harbor, they congregate at this spot known, tellingly, as “The Gateway to the Arctic”. Day trippers, commuters headed home for the weekend and schoolchildren on an excursion to a nearby farm are all waiting to be collected by boat from Tromsø on the ferry service that will deposit them at various points along the coast *en route* to Harstad, a picturesque 299km journey southwards. For more than 120 years, these floating pit stops have provided a crucial transport link for the people who live along this remote coastal line.

Tucked between a series of hefty mountains and a still, grey sea some 300km into the Arctic Circle, Tromsø is the capital of Northern Norway. With its independent theater, well-stocked boutiques, bistros and museums, it is easy to see why Tromsø is widely dubbed the “Paris of the North”. Take a few steps inside the picturesque town center and the amenities easily match those of some of the world’s most cosmopolitan cities. Yet, above the roofs of the buildings, the tips of the mountains serve as a dramatic reminder of the sprawling landscape that envelops the town on all sides.

In summer months, the curves of the land glisten green beneath endless blue. Come winter, though, as the sky turns

dark and the snow tumbles across the mountains that lurch up towards the sky, many of the roads that service the people living in hamlets and villages along the coastline grow too treacherous to manage. It is at this time that the car ferry services become an indispensable necessity, allowing passengers to bypass hazardous road-systems, and continue their journey on four wheels a little further along the coast, where the landscape is less grueling.

“You find a lot of people work in Tromsø in the week, at the school or hospital, then go home on weekends,” explains Odd Erik Blakstad, who has worked as a ticket inspector on the Tromsø-Harstad route since 1983. He explains how much things have changed in the past 31 years: “The boats are much smaller,” he says, referring to the previous Hurtigruten liners, which still offer daily ferries. But with globalization and improved local infrastructure, the area is now better-connected, with better food.



01 A Hurtigruten ferry sailing the Norwegian Sea 02 The ferry captain enjoys a sunset view 03 The panoramic scenery of Troms county from the boat

FOR MORE THAN 120 YEARS, THESE FLOATING PIT STOPS HAVE PROVIDED A CRUCIAL TRANSPORT LINK

The Tromsø-Harstad route was part of the original Hurtigruten ferry system, launched in 1893 and widely-considered “The World’s Most Beautiful Voyage”.

Passing by seemingly endless peaks concealing a national park, which is home to elk and bears, the route is only a small fragment of the 1,500-mile path across the Norwegian coast covered by Hurtigruten ships every day. The frequency, reliability and long-standing heritage of the service have established Hurtigruten as an important cog of the region.

Passengers on their regular commute enjoy the epic scenery from their seats. On either side, mountains thick with fir trees dominate the view; pockets of houses that punctuate the coast just outside Tromsø disappear as the boat moves south. As the landscape turns gnarly, devoid of human life, the biting wind that whips at the windows reminds passengers that this will all soon be white with snow. When the ferry reaches the fishing town of Finnsnes, the first stop on its route, the view of the barren green and grey archipelagos that jut into the sea give way to a gentler landscape with flashes of red and white from occasional clusters of houses, some on stilts.



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Home to just over 4,000 people, Finnsnes has grown from a small farming village during the last few decades into the region’s commercial center. Despite its modest proportions – it has only one main road lined with several independent shops and cafés – its convenient accessibility to Tromsø and Harstad, courtesy of the ferry service, has allowed the economy of this small fishing village to grow and small businesses to flourish.

From the port, the Gisund Bridge that links the mainland to the island of Senja is visible. This 1,255-yard cantilever road bridge is the main access point to the second biggest island in Norway. With around 8,000 inhabitants, the island of Senja enjoys 24 hours of daylight in summer. Facing the open sea on both the north and western coasts, the land here is dominated by steep, rugged mountains, which rise straight out of the sea. Nestled between these imposing hunks of earth, where the land occasionally drops to meet the water, sit a number of small fishing villages. Thanks to a government-funded initiative to enhance the visual experience of visitors and tourists arriving by car or ferry, these small fishing villages and the dramatic landscape around them are punctuated by specially commissioned large-scale architecture and art installations.

The final stop for the ferry is Harstad, the second most populated city in Troms county. Harstad is bordered by the municipality Kvæfjord to the west and Tjeldsund (in Nordland county) to the south. A series of brightly colored clapboard houses in blues and reds, green and yellows, creep up a steep hill away from the port and surrounding town centre. The docks provide a picturesque point from which to admire the midnight sun that settles during the summer months, or the northern lights during the wintery months. It is, crucially, the final pit stop on a journey that, for 120 years, has proved a vital part of the infrastructure connecting the communities that thrive along one of the most picturesque coasts in the world. //

04 Passengers who disembark at Finnsnes drive to Senja’s Tungeneset coast with views of the Okshornan peaks 05 Hurtigruten’s car ferry services allow locals to shuttle between towns during the treacherous winters



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06 The small fishing village of Mefjordvær on the island of Senja
07 A steel and wood viewing ramp in Senja 08 A rest area in Senja



08

THE LAB

TUNNEL VISION

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A GLOBAL LEADER IN THE FIELD OF AERODYNAMICS, LEXUS UNVEILS A NEW, WORLD-CLASS LABORATORY AND ITS BREATHTAKING WIND TUNNEL

TEXT BY SHOGO HAGIWARA AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY KOHEI TAKE

An engineer in front of the wind fan



01

01 The exterior shell of the fan motor
02 The machine below the testing room is a weighing scale for vehicles
03 Precisely angled metal slats guide the air through in a steady motion



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The first thing that strikes you about the Lexus aerodynamic laboratory is its size. Situated at the company's research and development headquarters in Japan's Aichi Prefecture, the lab's custom-built wind tunnel is a cavernous, 22-meter-high, 260-meter-long loop. If it were stretched out and tipped on its end, it would be as tall as many of Tokyo's highest skyscrapers.

The laboratory's opening in March 2013 was a significant moment in Lexus's history. It pitches the firm as a global automotive leader in the field of aerodynamics – the science of how airflow affects a car's noise levels, dynamic characteristics and environmental specifications.

"For the past three decades we have paid considerable attention to automotive aerodynamics. We've always considered it one of the most important parameters to investigate when developing new models," says Toshiyuki Murayama, group manager of thermal management and aerodynamics at Lexus.

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In the wind tunnel, Lexus engineers analyze the airflow around a vehicle's wheel, tail, bumper and undercarriage. "The most important function is to generate a very steady flow of air towards the car so we can understand precisely how air travels around it," says Murayama. To maintain this airflow, the tunnel's continuous loop is punctuated by metal slates slanted at a precise angle to guide the air through smoothly. "We had experts come in to fine-tune all the structural details such as the layout of walls, the selection of materials and the location of vents and nozzles, to make this lab one of the most reliable research facilities in the world," says Murayama.

All this effort and attention to detail shows just how important the field of aerodynamics has become. How the air flows around a vehicle is key to measuring the drag and down force – and the less drag there is, the more fuel-efficient and better-performing the car. "When a car is cruising at 60mph, air drags account for as much as 70 percent of the forces affecting driving performance. Even at lower speeds, when driving in the city, a better aerodynamic system can improve both fuel efficiency and road stability," says Murayama. To professional racing drivers, it can be the difference between victory or failure on the circuit.

04 Engineers manually push the car into the testing room 05 Each wheel is placed on a treadmill-like belt to simulate top speeds 06 A view of the RC F in the main testing room 07 A cluster of highly sensitive microphones is placed above the vehicle to measure its acoustic performance

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TODAY, THIS
LABORATORY
IS ONE OF THE
MOST RELIABLE
RESEARCH
FACILITIES IN
THE WORLD

08



09



Building the laboratory so close to the design headquarters was a strategic decision: it allows Lexus car designers to work closely with engineers and test models as they're being made. "We have had other aerodynamic facilities but this one sets itself apart. Design and aerodynamics have so much in common. Even a tiny exterior part of the car can change the flow of air around the body of a car – for better or for worse – so it is key that one of our most advanced laboratories is just a stone's throw away from the design division," says Murayama.

So what goes on inside the lab? First, the car is wheeled onto a turntable weighing scale in the central testing room. "Weight distribution to each of the four wheels changes depending on how the wind travels around the car, affecting its aerodynamics, so we closely monitor that too," explains

Murayama. The turntable also acts as a treadmill, with five belts (four for each wheel and one in the centre) allowing the car to reach top speeds without moving an inch. A thick, fast-moving stream of smoke is released to reveal how air travels around the car. Next the wind turbine is put into action, unleashing winds that can reach hurricane speeds of up to 250kmph. All the while, a team of engineers monitors every tiny aspect of the car's behavior, tweaking, reacting, adjusting and fine-tuning at the same time.

Consumers are increasingly concerned about wind noise – another area in which Lexus excels. The surfaces of the wind tunnel are covered with sound-absorbing material, so the only thing the engineers can hear is the turbulent noise caused by wind going over, under and around the car.

The level of detail that goes into noise-testing is astonishing. Whereas the human ear can only detect sounds of 20Hz and above, the walls reduce any noise and pulse pressure to 1Hz or less. "It can be so quiet, you wouldn't even notice if the wind tunnel is active if you couldn't see the car in place for testing," says Murayama with a laugh. "We have an array of microphones on the

ceiling and walls that helps us visualize noises on the computer screens."

One of the latest production models to get the full benefit of the laboratory is the Lexus RC F high performance coupe. Its chief engineer, Yukihiro Yaguchi, proudly describes the car as "honed to perfection in the wind tunnel". By simulating road conditions at the laboratory, Lexus can get immediate feedback in the development of its cars without having to leave the premises. And innovative prototype parts, such as small stabilizer fins made with on-site 3D printers, can be quickly and easily put to the test.

Before he gets back to work Yaguchi says, "Every part of the car is designed in the margin of a millimeter. We go through every possible layout of the ducts or the sizing of the aerodynamic parts. All the details and conditions must be taken into consideration so that each car can cope with any kind of road or any kind of weather condition. It's no easy job."

It might not be the easy route, but Lexus's meticulous approach is paying off. The new wind tunnel will help the firm design the world's most aerodynamically sophisticated cars that will, in turn, shape the future of the automotive industry. //

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08 A view from inside the Flow Installing System, looking out to the testing room 09 A disc-like turntable at the entrance to the test section 10 A stream of smoke is projected over the RC F to show how the air flows around it

HUMAN NATURE

FUTURE PROOF

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A NEW RESEARCH FACILITY IS PRESERVING AUSTRALIA'S
PLANT LIFE – ONE SEED AT A TIME

TEXT BY CAMILLA BELTON AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DEREK HENDERSON



Plant tissues are cryogenically stored at sub-zero temperatures as low as -196 degrees Celsius

Two rectangular mirrored structures jut futuristically out of the shrubbery, gleaming in the midday sun and reflecting the surrounding landscape. Joined off-center to form an asymmetrical cross, the building is bookended by a patch of endangered Cumberland Plain woodland to the north and a nursery garden to the south. And its position among the local flora is appropriate: this is PlantBank, tucked into a quiet corner of the Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan, an hour's drive west of Sydney – a building dedicated to the research and conservation of Australia's indigenous plants.

More than five percent of Australia's plant species are endangered. "Plants make up the fabric of our everyday lives yet, somehow, protecting them is not a priority," says John Siemon, a scientist and PlantBank's project manager. "They clean the water we drink, the air we breathe, clothe and feed us and help us build many of the structures we live or work in."

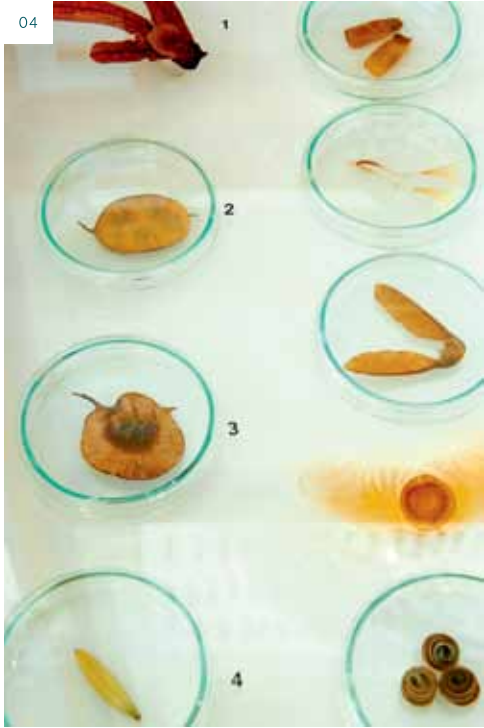
Until recently, Siemon and his team of 15 scientists and horticulturists were working in two agricultural farm sheds, he says, "doing things you'd do in a hospital but with plants." Government funding and private and corporate sponsorship enabled the AU\$20 million research center to open in October 2013. Its goal? To one day hold in a seed repository specimens of all of Australia's 25,000 seed-bearing native plants. "In most species we are yet to unlock the secrets of seeds that may hold potential for food, fiber or pharmaceutical products essential for our survival on the planet," Siemon says. "In the meantime, this is the ultimate insurance policy against destruction and loss."

Designed by Australian architects BVN, the building responds to the "strong natural context" of the 416 hectares (about 1,030 acres) of surrounding botanical garden, and uses low-maintenance and fire-resistant materials such as glass and steel to integrate the building with the landscape. Intermittent sections of the exterior walls

are overlaid with reflective stainless-steel panels that mimic the pattern of the woodland and create a balance between built and natural. Materials are used to support sustainable outcomes – mirrors, for example, bounce sunlight into dark recesses of the building, reducing the need for electricity; and a simple air gap, between the structure's outer wall and inner skin, traps and cools hot air, deflecting heat and helping save on air-conditioning. The use of concrete and high-density Australian blackbutt hardwood timber is a final protective measure against bushfires, while mesh panels allow scientists to open windows without fearing insect invasion.

Inside the public wing of the building, the space is open and democratic, geared as much toward the visitor's experience as scientific research. (The private wing comprises offices, a library and lecture theaters.) Scientists work at impressive Leica microscopes in glazed laboratories, sharing their processes with public onlookers in a gallery-like setup. It is here that, once gathered from the bush, seeds are cleaned, tested for viability (to make sure pods aren't empty or ravaged by caterpillars), and then put through a series of germination tests to ensure they are capable of sprouting before being stored away. For stubborn seeds that don't bud in usual ways (plants that require specific amounts of warmth, say, or moisture), intriguing techniques can help the process. The heat-sensitive Banksia, for example, responds to "bushfire in a bottle", Siemon says. "Much like vanilla essence, we can mimic a bushfire by burning sticks and leaves and bubbling them through water. The capsules react to the chemicals and open to produce seeds, without the need for actual heat or flame." By exploring and documenting the various triggers for germination, the team can build important references for growing individual plant species in the future.

The seed vault is the heart of the operation. Identifiable to visitors by its intense blue lighting – "a bit of drama for the public," Siemon says – it contains a series of airtight cold and dry storerooms, and is home to 100 million dried seeds (taken from 1.2 million specimens) hermetically sealed in small foil packets. Temperatures range here from -20 to 4 degrees Celsius, depending on whether or not the seed will shortly be developed in the nursery or stored. Seeds intolerant to this form of storage travel through the cryogenic system, which features temperatures as low as -196 degrees Celsius. "If we get the combination of drying and temperature right for each species," Siemon says, "we can extend the life of the



seed by several hundred years, sometimes by several thousand." The vault currently contains only 20 percent of Australia's native flora; Siemon and his team aim to have samples of every species within the next 25 years.

For some plants, including the Australian lilly pilly tree, extracting and storing seeds isn't easy. Many specimens are rainforest species, unsuited to the cold, dry conditions of the vault. Recalcitrant species are grown in sterile environments similar to intensive care units. And it's not just seeds – here sections of plants are stored and grown in jars that line walls under hot, bright lights. It is an operation that involves tissue being regrown into complete plants. "Down here, we don't necessarily need the whole seed," Siemon says. "We can take the leaf or a stem and regrow it. It's a bit like cutting off my left hand and growing another one of me – something medical science is still trying to do, but which we've been doing since the 1950s."

PlantBank is a learning center, and Siemon doesn't want his plants locked up. Students are invited to watch and learn from scientists, interact with different species and processes and use the site as an outdoor classroom. "People buy a bag of mint in the supermarket but have no idea where it came from," Siemon says. "There's a disconnect between the seed and the fully grown plant we all recognize. We want to engage students with that first level."

By inspiring future generations to see the potential in seeds, this scientist and his team are on "a mission to make plants cool again." They just might succeed. //

IN THE BANK



Wollemi pine

The Wollemi pine was considered extinct until a ranger discovered it in a national park on Sydney's doorstep back in 1994. It's one of the rarest trees in the world, with fewer than 100 existing in the wild, but using cuttings, PlantBank has established a living collection to ensure the longevity of the species.



Australian Terrestrial Orchid

An endangered species whose seeds are incapable of germinating by themselves, this species relies instead on a fungus that grows in soil to break down leaf litter and feed it to the seed, triggering germination. PlantBank has isolated that key fungal strand and packed it together with the orchid seed to create a new synthetic seed capable of growing itself.

THE BIKE



« « « « « «

THE LATEST CREATION FROM LEXUS IS THE IMPRESSIVE TWO-WHEEL, STATE-OF-THE-ART NXB CONCEPT BIKE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL BODIAM

Demonstrating the originality of the Lexus brand, the NXB concept bike picks up where the inaugural F SPORT ROAD BIKE left off. Channeling the design sentiment and the “Urban Sports Gear” concept of the Lexus NX, the bike embodies the technical expertise and cutting edge engineering that convey the unique Lexus philosophy. Thanks to its rigid and aerodynamic

carbon frame and a front suspension developed exclusively for this project, the NXB is both fully functional and arrestingly aesthetic. Designed for both smooth city streets and rough, off-road cycling, the NXB is crafted for riders looking for a stylish weekday commute downtown and to venture off the beaten track on the weekend. //

THE CARBON FRAME

A creation of the Lexus Design Division, the NXB's original carbon frame has been specially developed by Lexus. The aerodynamic and nimble frame supports a unique floating seat that emphasizes the lightweight, edgy and muscular appeal of the NXB.

THE HANDLE

The handle and its agile, aerodynamic design is a true Lexus original. Designed by Graphite Design, this sturdy, carbon-stem integrated handle is a feat of fine craftsmanship and engineering.

THE FRONT FORKS

The NXB's front forks feature inverted suspension developed by KYB, a company that also provided suspension for the Lexus LFA supercar. The rigid, inverted suspension of the NXB's front forks absorb any vibrations.



THE WHEEL

It's not only the frame that is made of high-end carbon. The NXB's wheels, created exclusively by XeNTiS, an Austrian firm that specializes in producing professional standard time-trial wheels, are also crafted from a lightweight but hard-wearing carbon monocoque.

THE TIRE

Recognize the pattern on the NXB's tires? Developed to be used on anything from smooth city roads to rough dirt tracks, these original tubeless rubber tires, developed by Japanese brand IRC Tire, feature a tread pattern in the shape of the Lexus spindle grille.



BEYOND BY LEXUS