



Lexus IS Range

Less IS More

The Lexus IS Range was always a contender but the latest model presents a very serious challenge to the best of the rest.

Words

Motors Correspondent

The passage of time does strange things to our perception of cars. On occasion, I'll jump behind the wheel of a model I'd raved over a couple of years back, drive it for a week and then wonder what on earth I'd been so enthusiastic about. The flipside of this is a car that at first seems merely adequate but with subsequent reacquaintance appears better than ever. Such a car was Lexus' first generation IS series. Now, with an all new model rolling from the production lines, the onus is on the little Lexus to go one step further and impress right from the word go.

The significance of this model cannot be overstressed. The IS was the car that transformed

the Lexus franchise from a low volume luxury operation to the kind of dealership you'd put on your shortlist alongside Saab, Jaguar, Volvo and the premium German marques of BMW, Mercedes and Audi. If only the model Range had been a little wider, Lexus could have been competing on genuinely level terms. After all, it was difficult to pitch it as a credible rival to the BMW 3 Series when there was, for the first two years of its life, only one engine - a rather humble 2.0-litre petrol - and one body style. A more powerful 3.0-litre unit was subsequently introduced as well as a SportCross lifestyle estate version, but without a diesel variant or a flagship sports model, the IS series of cars was rather hobbled. They remain