

Portland Observer Auto Review

News and reviews on new motor vehicles

2010 Lexus RX 450h 5-dr SUV

BY KATHLEEN CARR

The new 2010 Lexus RX 450h seems uncommonly easy to operate. And they are brimming with new technology. If the RX were a computer, and in more ways than ever, it is, it would have a plug-and-play operating system and an inviting, engaging user interface.

RX 450h is one of the more technically advanced cars available with a new cabin technology package with a hard-drive-based navigation system, iPod integration, Bluetooth stereo streaming, and voice command that lets you dial contacts by name. The hybrid power train moves the RX 450h along under electric power only at slow speeds, mixing in drive from the 3.5-liter V-6 for acceleration or speeds above 30 mph.

The Lexus RX 450h bumps up the gas engine from 3.3-liters to a 3.5-liter V-6. And, like the original model, that engine is complemented by a full hybrid system, with electric motors that can power the car. With newer battery technology, Lexus was able to make the RX 450h's nickel-metal hydride battery



Vehicle Specifications: 3.5 Liter 24 DOHC with WT Front & Rear Electric Drive Motors with Lexus Hybrid Drive; Electronically - Controlled Continuously variable transmission (ECVT); 30 City MPG, 28 Highway MPG, Base price \$43250; MSRP of this Vehicle \$59,533.

pack, which sits under the rear seat, a little smaller.

The RX mechanical improvements include an inde-

pendent rear suspension, a 10-airbag safety system, a six-speed sequential transmission, and an improved all-wheel-

drive system. Upgraded accommodations include better seats, integrated satellite radio, acoustic glass, automatic high beam control, and a heads-up display among other things. Many of these improvements are come because of better computer logic for integrated control of driving systems such as the transmission, all-wheel-drive, navigation, steering and brakes.

The all-wheel-drive system is completely new, lighter and more efficient. It works electronically without the locking center differential in previous models. The RX 450h is offered with front-

wheel drive or all-wheel drive. Its suspension delivers a smooth ride over all. Driving at freeway speeds, the gas engine generally stays on, ready to provide passing acceleration when needed, so if you do more city driving the fuel economy is where you get the better rating.

Lexus definitely has another hit on its hands as the world demands more technology and environmental friendly options to choose from. It delivers loads of comfort, bold styling and luxurious elegance. The one thing that could be improved upon is the maps in the navigational system are not up to date.

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