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New Lexus poetry in motion

BILL BUYS gets a taste of its new grace, power and sophistication

YOU wouldn't think it came from the same maker: the Lexus GS 350, expected in Australia by mid-2012, is a totally different car from the current model.

The luxury performer has been totally re-engineered, restyled, comes with much more power and space, and sports the new spindle grille that will grace all future Lexi.

Under the banner of "the future in motion" the elegant car made its world premiere at the world-famous Pebble Beach concours d'elegance.

The five-seater is slightly wider and longer than the GS 300, and interior space and cargo volume have been considerably improved.

The boot is now 25 per cent bigger and can easily take four golf bags, while rear seat passengers benefit from extra leg, shoulder and head room.

The driver gets an 18-way power-adjustable seat and both front seats are lower, have adjustable squabs and are thickly bolstered for improved body support.

The leather-and-wood dash is dominated by the clear white-on-black Optitron instruments and a multi-function display: and eight inch model or an optional mother of a display in a 12.3-inch split-screen model with the world's highest resolution.

Both have a full suite of connectivity. The speedo reads in mph and km/h, the neat clock is digital and analog and there's a new energy-saving auto climate control system that uses seat sensors so airflow only goes to occupied seats.

Also, a next-generation "remote touch" system with one-push confirmation is standard on all models.

It lets the user work the climate, audio, phone controls and navigation system without having to reach out. The 3.0 litre motor has been replaced with a class-leading 233kW 3.5 litre V6 mated to an advanced six-speed intelligent sequential-shift automatic transmission with paddle shift, which can squirt the sizeable saloon to

100km/h in 5.7 seconds.

The six-speeder can support up to four driving modes, selected by a rotary dial just aft of the gear selector.

There's economy, normal, sport and on some models, sport-plus, each with its own throttle map.

Some modes even give the twin exhausts a louder burble to keep the driver happy.

Fuel economy figures have not yet been released, likewise prices.

Under the car, the mainly aluminium suspension has a new-design double wishbone system in front and multi-

links at the back, which, with the wider track 50mm in front, 40mm at the tail end give the car extra stability and comfort.

The car is built on a 14 per cent stiffer platform and the body rigidity has been enhanced with extensive use of ultra-hi-tensile steel, six times stronger than mild steel.

Stopping power is by four big ventilated discs and other safety bits include the full gamut of acronyms, 10 airbags, a reversing camera, a strong passenger cell and an energy-absorbing body.

There's also the option of a radar system that warns of objects in the car's path and an infra-red beam that monitor's the driver's eyes to make sure he or she hasn't fallen asleep.

That's most unlikely in the GS 350. It has all the credentials to cause the dominant German trio in its sector a tough time when it hits the salesrooms, matching the luxury of one, the dynamics of the others and throwing in some appealing bits of its own.

'GS 350 has all the credentials to cause the dominant Germans a tough time in the salesrooms'



RIGHT: The boot is now 25 per cent bigger and can easily take four golf bags.



ABOVE: The leather-and-wood dash is dominated by the clear white-on-black Optitron instruments and a multi-function display.

