Lexus RZ500e – Road Test

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After its British launch in 1990, Lexus raised the bar for other

executive marques and today it is the oldest surviving premium brand from Japan, and still the benchmark for British buyers. Robin Roberts gives his views on the car after a week's motoring with it…

From an initial two models in the early 90s, the Lexus line up has dramatically grown to offer something in each of the main sectors and delivers a range of powertrains to suit the needs of every customer.

Luxury SUVs have always been popular in the UK and the latest Lexus RZ series is a clear evolution of the first since its introduction in 2023.

Announced in autumn 2025, the latest Lexus RZ comes with a host of improvements to its powertrain to deliver more power, range, refinement and technology.

The Lexus RZ electric family comprises the 350e front wheel drive version, the all-wheel-drive 500e and 550e F Sport featuring interactive virtual manual drive with a 'gear-shift'. The 18-models rise from £48,365 to £71,095 and our test car sat in the middle of the series with the larger 20-inch wheels and BiTone trim, but its specification eased it over the £50,000 threshold for higher VED applied to electric models. Prices have also been reduced for the new series.

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The models now have quicker charging than before as Lexus owners don't want to spend time sitting around when they could be driving and the

recharged range is also slightly longer.

The top models also get a simulated manual transmission that is actually fully automated and they get, but not in our test car, steer-by-wire which uses electrical contacts rather than mechanical links between the steering wheel and front wheels.

Entry-level models have front wheel drive but our test car with the Direct4 badge on the tailgate indicated this has an all-wheel-drive layout which is probably better for the UK’s twisting country roads, particularly in adverse weather.

The newly developed motor has smooth and strong delivery to the regular 70 mph limit and pulled quickly from rest almost without hesitation, but it’s not class leading in terms of acceleration.


COOLANT INFORMATION

While being quick charging when the preheater is selected and it reaches 80% in 30 mins, the new RZ comes with water-cooling of the battery to aid longer cell-life and lift output, ideal after high speed or towing.

Lexus engineers have worked on the suspension to raise comfort without compromising on handling from the more powerful motor and twin driven axles.

They have done a good job for the greater part but our potholed roads really challenged the RZ and it was bumpy over some surfaces.

Responses to steering were very good and it did not suffer kick-back, while the handling was surefooted and generally vice-free even if lifting off mid-corner and it gently tucked in.

Secondary controls needed familiarisation as a lot was packed onto the wheelspokes and column switches and those with chunky fingers might accidentally set off the wrong function.

Instrumentation was simple, clear and very well lit directly ahead of the driver, with changeable content to prioritise what you wanted to see from the available menu.

The central infotainment panel was also clear and quick changing, and had some commonly used buttons set below for convenience. It is not a particularly large screen, however, compared to some BEV rivals.

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Heating and ventilation was excellent throughout the cabin with heated front seats, a wide temperature range and near silent operation of the system along with four powered windows.

Oddments room was good, not exceptional for a family car, for those infront or behind, and the luggage space was generous despite losing a bit of height due to the steeply sloping rear window. An offset split seat-back arrangement gradually increased the total loadspace.



Access was very good to the boot and cabin with its wide-opening doors but you have to beware of hitting a head on the sharply angled A-pillar.

Once inside the head and legroom was good, the seats surprisingly comfortable despite their modest thickness and the front pair had fair adjustment range.

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Visibility was generally good to front and sides, a little restricted over the shoulder where the cameras came into their own, but demisting and headlights were good at night and the lamps gave a wide, long beam down the road – but seemed slow reacting to oncoming vehicles, to the annoyance of their drivers.

Apart from the occasional suspension and road rumbles, the Lexus RZ500e was a quiet and highly refined car driving experience with virtually no sounds from the motor or wind around the door mirrors or flowing over the body.

In fact it was sometimes hard to believe the motorway speed when cruising, so smooth and quiet was the experience, which reinforced the air of refinement.

In town or when parking I would have preferred a tighter turning circle for manoeuvring. I also thought that, despite the Eco mode being used, that the battery range was not particularly long-legged for a car which might expect to cover long business trips. Looking at a previous RZ we tested in 2024 the

overall range improvement was barely 30 miles.

VERDICT

As the BEV market expands we will undoubtedly see more advanced powertrains introduced but the genuine long warranty from Lexus combined with the sophistication of the RZ will keep it ahead of most, as it has done for over a quarter of a century so far.

For: Highly refined, excellent seats, quiet, roomy, good handling.

Against: Average range & performance, firm ride, big turning circle.



FAST FACTS

Model: Lexus RZ500e Premium Plus BiTone

Price: £58,345

Mechanical: 402 bhp 280 kW motor 77 kWh battery, AWD

Max Speed: 112 mph

0 – 62 mph: 4.5secs

Range: 230 miles

Insurance Group: 44E

C02 emissions: Zero

Bik rating: 4%. £10FY, £640SRx5

Warranty: 3 years/ 60K; but can be up to 10 years/ 100K
Note: Lexus says: All new vehicles are sold with a manufacturer's warranty for three years or up to 60,000 miles and an additional battery warranty for eight years or up to 100,000 miles. Once the new vehicle warranty has expired, owners can receive an additional 12 months/10,000-mile warranty every time their vehicle is serviced at an authorised Lexus workshop, until the car is 10 years old or has covered 100,000 miles. Full terms and conditions can be found at www.lexus.co.uk/owners/warranty.

Size: L 4.81 m (15.78 ft), W 1.90 m (6.23 ft), H 1.64 m (5.38 ft)

Bootspace: 522 to 1,451 litres (18.43 to 51.24 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 2,180 kg (4,806 lb)

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