



And So This Is Christmas...

11 December 2000

And What Have We Done?

Easier to answer what we haven't. The year 2000 has seen Toyota and Lexus launch a squadron of new cars.

January kicked off with the new-look Corolla with low maintenance, high efficiency VVT-i engines followed - quickly - by the grin inducing MR2 Roadster. May brought an all new, but still space age and spacious Previa MPV then the funky RAV4 and the re-invigorated Avensis followed in July and August. All now have VVT-i engines. Then we got busy.

Prius, the world's first mass production hybrid car, arrived in October - just in time for the fuel crisis - and to wind down for winter we brought out the Celica 190 and the MR2 with sequential manual transmission.

Lexus launched three new models, practically all at once. Motor Show heralded the already US-chart topping RX300 SUV followed, silently but swiftly, by the V8-engined GS430. Just in time for Christmas came the toy packed Lexus flagship, the LS430, surely the first luxury car to vibrate its passengers deliberately thanks to the massaging rear seats.

That's 10 new or substantially revised cars, evidence that the company's industry leading investment in R&D leads to tangible results for the customer, irrespective of the price category.

Hope it's a good one? It will be. By Easter the new factory at Valenciennes in France will start producing Yaris for Europe with engines made at TMUK in Deeside and our Formula One car will run for the first time, testing to race in 2002. Closer to home, all the staff at Toyota (GB) PLC will be enjoying our new HQ building near Epsom.

There will be new road cars too. First up will be the 1.5-litre Yaris T Sport in the spring followed by D-4D direct injection, common rail diesel engines for both RAV4 and Previa. Then there will be at least three, all new Toyota models - sorry, can't say which and when - as well as the already sold-out Lexus SC430 coupe and the IS300.

As "Dave Bowman" says at the end of Kubrick's 2001, "My God! It's full of stars!".

And So Happy Christmas, We Hope You Have Fun

ENDS

Note to Editors

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