

# CARGAZING

## Making miles melt away

### All-new 2013 Lexus GS focuses on perfection, comfort

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Judging by the sharply angled, aggressive nose on the 2013 Lexus GS, you might think this is a car that wants to bite your head off.

It would make sense for the GS to go wild, after all, since Lexus has started wooing buyers of German sports sedans with its small, zippy IS lineup and built the LFA supercar to compete for attention with Lamborghini and Ferrari.

This is a brand that obviously wants to generate some excitement with its latest cars.

Despite the sinister nose and sporty pretensions, though, the new GS remains in the same spirit as the old one: eerily quiet, amazingly comfortable and so focused on perfection that it's hard to find any weaknesses.

It's interesting that Lexus didn't choose to make the GS sportier like the popular IS — with its un-Lexus-like firm suspension and crisp driving feel — and instead made the GS feel more like a scaled-down version of the gigantic, expensive and sumptuously comfortable LS flagship.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LEXUS

Calling it “the new face of Lexus,” the 2013 GS has an all-new design that is highlighted by an aggressive, angular front nose.

In other words, it's soft like a baby LS, not hard like a beefed-up IS, which means it's not trying to compete with the Germans. For drivers who want silent, cushy, marshmallow-soft cruising, it's a fantastic option.

More than anything else, the new GS comes across as stunningly perfect. Toyota products are good at this, but the Lexus division takes it to a ridiculous level.

In this car, for example, the power windows don't roll up at a consistent speed. They slow down slightly just before closing, which means the windows are sealed shut without making a sound.

When you plop down your Coke can in the cupholder, it doesn't make a clunking sound. It has a soft surface at the bottom so you don't hear anything. Little details like that are what have made Lexus cars the benchmark for thoughtful luxury design.

And the seats — oh wow, the seats.

I've never driven a luxury car, even \$100,000-plus cars from Mercedes-Benz and Jaguar, that can match the newly designed seats in this Lexus. The new GS is available with 18-way articulating seats that can conform a million different ways to anyone's body.

You can adjust your knee support, how much side support you want, how much upper, middle and lower back support you want, and essentially set up a custom chair that's built specifically for your body. It's remarkable that so many details can be adjusted.

On the downside, with all those different settings waiting to be dialed in, it can take quite a bit of trial and error to find the right seat position. It's not like ordinary cars where you can just crank the seat into place and drive away.

The GS also comes with a giant digital screen on the dash — the largest display I can recall seeing in a luxury car before — that controls all kinds of functions with a joystick interface, iPhone app style. It's more like operating a computer than driving a typical car.

The digital display is a useful system for computer-savvy people, capable of doing everything from streaming music online to buying movie tickets, making restaurant reservations and

checking in on Facebook, all from within your car.

If you want to get really picky, the only downside to the new GS is its various interfaces. The joystick can be distracting while driving; the buttons to adjust the 18-way seats are hidden where you can't see them; and a few buttons are tucked behind the steering wheel where it's hard to operate them when driving.

As a whole, though, the all-new design of the GS is a clear winner. It may look more aggressive on the outside, but on the inside it retains everything Lexus stands for: extraordinary quality, the latest technology and a supple driving experience that makes highway miles melt away in comfort.

#### RATINGS

Style: 9  
Performance: 7  
Price: 7  
Handling: 7  
Ride: 10  
Comfort: 10  
Quality: 10  
Overall: 9

#### What was tested?

2012 Lexus GS 350 AWD (\$49,450). Options: Luxury package (\$11,405). Price as tested (including \$875 delivery fee): \$61,430.

#### Why buy it?

Like Mary Poppins, it's practically perfect in every way. It has an extremely quiet and smooth ride, along with enough technology to make engineers in Silicon Valley drool.

#### Why avoid it?

The digital joystick can be distracting, and some of the buttons are difficult to operate when driving.



A massive digital display takes up much of the dashboard real estate inside the new GS. It uses a small joystick to navigate a cursor on the screen.