



more than comfort, more than nifty gadgets—more, even, than the envy of your peers. It's satisfaction on wheels. We spent a lot of time on this test pondering the idea of a car as a prized possession. What is it about an automobile that gives lasting satisfaction, a sense of joy even in the wee hours when it's locked in the garage and all is dark?

How about "perfection"?

When the machine comes as close as you can imagine to flawless execution, there's no holding back the satisfaction. Miës van der Rohe opined that God is in the details. With that in mind, we started looking beneath the surface of these cars, at details that normally escape notice. The editorial gaze finally settled on trunk

hinges. Every car has two of them, plus wiring that must jump from the body to the lid for various electrical devices.

On the Cadillac and the Jaguar, the hinges are straightforward metal stampings, painted body color, with the wiring routed alongside the arm. Just the basics, in other words.

On the Audi and the Mercedes, the hinge arms are made of tubing and the wire is routed within one of them. Still basic, but very tidy.

On the BMW and the Infiniti, the hinge arms are clad with black molded plastic that hides the wire. Extra effort expended there.

On the Lexus, the arms are beautifully formed stampings arranged so that the

sheared edges of the metal are hidden, leaving only smooth radii for the eye to behold. Into the left-side arm is formed a deep groove running its full length. The wiring is routed inside the groove, and it is concealed by a black rubber welt. All you see are two elegant hinges, one showing an orderly, black seam. A sublime execution.

There are countless details in a luxury sedan. Lexus, particularly, seems to have lavished attention on every one of them.

With the newcomers already on top of the game—as verified by our ranking—this luxury class will be a fascinating arena to watch as competition goads all the players to do their best. The nineties will be a glorious decade for cars. ●

Editors' Ratings		engine	transmission	brakes	handling	ergonomics	comfort	ride	room	fun to drive	value	styling	OVERALL RATING
	AUDI V8 QUATTRO	24	26	28	29	27	26	20	23	29	23	23	26
	BMW 735i	25	26	30	28	24	27	23	26	24	22	27	24
	CADILLAC STS	27	28	18	18	11	18	17	14	16	17	13	13
	INFINITI Q45	34	33	31	30	30	30	32	29	30	33	27	28
	JAGUAR SOVEREIGN	22	23	27	17	13	20	29	16	17	18	16	15
	LEXUS LS400	35	32	30	27	33	34	34	30	28	35	28	32
	MERCEDES-BENZ 420SEL	21	20	28	16	22	26	24	35	12	14	17	15

Seven editors rated the cars in each of twelve categories on a 1-to-5 scale (5 being best). The numbers above are simple additions of their ratings. (For example, if all seven editors gave ratings of 5 to a car's brakes, it would earn a total of 35 points—the maximum possible.) The points in the Overall Rating column were assigned in the same fashion; they are not averages or summations of the other scores.