



LEXUS LS400

(but not quite) and all the surfaces are so close to the same texture (but not quite) that questions keep arising: are they supposed to match or not?

The mood changes as soon as the sun goes down. Everything you touch feels rich in the dark. And the architecture of the dash, a cove with widely spread instruments, creates the mood of an airliner flight deck. Even the murky little orange electro numbers (for odometers and such) at the bottom of the analog cluster become clearly visible. We can't recall another car so completely transformed by lighting.

We particularly like the steering and pedal efforts of this car. They seem exactly right. And the transmission always seems to choose the right gear. Strangely, our test car was equipped with sporting Michelin XGT V tires, which are supposed to be included only with the Super HICAS rear-wheel-steering option (which our car did not have). They have inspired behavior in the twisties, which probably gave this car an unfair advantage there, and they probably added harshness to the ride. How much harshness? Not enough to raise a single complaint, which suggests that the Q45 will be an easy rider with the standard tires. Out on the tearing-around roads, we did notice that the Infiniti was more apt to be unsettled by large bumps than the others. Nothing alarming, though.

One staffer noted in the logbook, "I'm tired of writing superlatives about this car." Ever heard a better exit line?

Lexus LS400 First Place

Who would have guessed?
Toyota, in its first time at bat in the ma-

