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FIRST GLANCE

Lexus Hints at a Wild Streak



Jerry Mendoza/Associated Press

[Lexus LF-A concept.](#)By **NICK KURCZEWSKI**

Published: January 10, 2005

Introduced on Sunday: Lexus LF-A design study

What's the point? Add Toyota's Lexus division to the growing list of automakers hoping to lift their images with a little sex appeal – in the form of an 200 mile-an-hour sports car that could compete with the likes of Ferrari and Porsche.

Is it real? Lexus is being coy, but reports of LF-A's being tested on racing circuits suggest the car does not exist solely to be admired on a display stand at auto shows.

The company line: "This car makes you feel younger and richer just looking at it," said Jim Press, executive vice president of Toyota's American sales division.









The view from here: The company's news release is laughably vague, not even mentioning what type of

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engine is under the hood. But Toyota is eager to reap some benefit from its costly involvement in Formula One racing, and a project like the LF-A could help establish that link in the minds of customers.

What makes it tick? Presumably a V-10 or V-8 engine – Lexus would only say it would be smaller than 5 liters and produce more than 500 horsepower.

How much? How soon? In this class, a six-figure window sticker is expected. But if the fortunes of Toyota's Formula One team do not improve, there may be no justification for producing an image-leader like this – at any price.

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