

**INTRODUCTION**

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The launch of the Acura Automobile Division on March 27, 1986, was a uniquely historic event, not just for Acura and its customers, but for the world automotive industry. It was the beginning of a bold and spectacularly successful venture: the creation of an entirely new automobile division from the ground up.

This prestigious marque was created to bring elegant styling, state-of-the-art technology and engineering, stimulating performance and an unprecedented level of customer service to the luxury import market.

Now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year, that venture is showing extraordinary results. Acura continues as one of the top-selling luxury import makes in the U.S., offering premium performance vehicles, through a network of approximately 260 dealers.

Among many of Acura's firsts:

- the first all-aluminum production automobile (NSX)
- the first in-dash satellite-linked navigation system (3.5RL)
- the first luxury import brand to design, engineer and assemble a model in America (the CL and the TL)

For the 2000 model year, Acura has added an advanced technology Vehicle Stability Assist (VSA) system and an improved optional navigation system to the 3.5RL; significant enhancements have been built into the sales-record-breaking 3.2TL. Other Acura models include new standard features and technologies, further adding to the value of the brand.

**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

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While selling a relatively high number of automobiles for the luxury import category, Acura has consistently performed extremely well in one of the most important measures of success: making the ownership experience as satisfying as possible.

Acura has ranked number one in the annual J.D. Power and Associates<sup>®</sup> Customer Satisfaction Study<sup>SM</sup> (CSI) survey four times and continues to score in the top ten year after year. The marque has also ranked best in the J.D. Power and Associates Vehicle Performance Study<sup>SM</sup> (VPI), which ranks customer satisfaction with the operational and functional performance of their automobiles after three years of ownership.

**RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

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The success of Acura can be attributed largely to the research and development that goes into every vehicle. Acura automobiles are designed and built using leading-edge technology. At the same time, they are well-known for extremely high levels of ergonomic design, quality and durability.

To give the designers and engineers the kind of creative freedom and positive working environment they needed to function at their best, an autonomous research and development company was formed in 1960 as a separate entity from its parent, Honda Motor Co., Ltd. This separation allows the engineers to go their own way, investigating new ideas and innovations without the budgetary and bureaucratic constraints encountered by engineers at many other automobile manufacturers.

After an automobile is designed and developed, it is exhaustively tested at facilities in Japan and the United States, and it undergoes environmental testing in harsh climates and conditions all over the world. The main R&D testing facility in Japan is the Tochigi Proving Grounds, with its broad range of demanding driving situations. Acura automobiles are also tested at two major test facilities in the United States. The Transportation Research Center (TRC), in East Liberty, Ohio, has many of the same capabilities as the Tochigi Proving Grounds. And further illustrating our commitment to the U.S. market, an expansive testing facility in the desert north of Los Angeles, the Honda Proving Center of California (HPCC), allows thorough development and product testing close to Acura Division headquarters in Torrance, Calif. HPCC features a 7.5-mile high-speed oval track, plus a five-mile winding road course that offers a full range of challenging road surfaces.

## RACING

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Acura's deep-seated commitment to racing started at the very beginning — well before Acura Division was founded. Soichiro Honda, who founded Honda Motor Co., Inc., in 1948, was a racing enthusiast at heart. He maintained an active interest in his company's racing exploits and in the world-leading technology that made them possible.

Formula One racing is the world's most demanding arena of motorsport competition. The participation of Honda in Formula One served as an indispensable training ground for engineers, and a unique source of inspiration for the designers of Acura production automobiles.

Racing also provides a priceless body of knowledge, at the leading edge of technology that would be impossible to acquire in any other way.

Honda-powered cars won six consecutive Formula One Constructors' World Championships (1986-1991) and five consecutive Formula One Drivers' World Championships (1987-91). The ultimate payoff, of course, is built into each Acura in the satisfying way it functions and feels.

The Acura commitment to racing has also been evident on the racetracks of the United States. Race-prepared Acura Integra automobiles won two consecutive International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) International Sedan Manufacturers' Championships and three consecutive IMSA International Sedan Drivers' Championships (1988-90).

The Comptech Racing Acura-Spice GTP-Lights race car, powered by a modified Acura NSX V-6 engine, carried driver Parker Johnstone to three consecutive Manufacturers' Championships and three consecutive Drivers' Championships in the prestigious IMSA Camel GTP Lights series (1991-93).

In 1994, Acura made its Indy Car racing debut. The Acura-sponsored Comptech Racing team had its first outing at the Portland Indy Car event with Johnstone at the wheel. The very next season, Johnstone was the fastest qualifier at the Indy Car event in Michigan, and Honda scored its first Indy Car victory weeks later when Andre Ribeiro took the checkered flag at the New England race in August of 1995.

The 1996 PPG CART World Series season was thoroughly dominated by Honda drivers and teams with 11 wins on the 16-race schedule as the company charged to its first Indy Car Manufacturers' Championship while Jimmy Vasser of the Target/Chip Ganassi Racing team won the Drivers' Championship. Honda-powered drivers had even more success during the 1997 season with '96 Rookie of the Year sensation, Alex Zanardi, capturing the 1997 Driver's Championship and fellow Honda drivers Gil de Ferran and Jimmy Vasser 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the standings. Zanardi again held the driver's championship for the 1998 season.

Also in 1998, Bob Endicott and Peter Schwarzott drove their Acura Integra Type R to a Touring Class Drivers' Championship in the Professional Sports Car Racing Speedvision Cup. That winning performance was made all the sweeter when Acura was awarded the Speedvision Cup Manufacturers' Championship Title.

Meanwhile, Michael Galati, took the 1998 SCCA World Challenge T2 Class Drivers' Championship in his Acura Integra Type R. With cars placed in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the drivers' standings, Acura also captured the T2 Class Manufacturers' Championship.

## **ACURA MODEL CHRONOLOGY**

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Two initial model lines went on sale in March 1986. The Integra sports sedans, in both 3-door and 5-door versions, were introduced, along with the Legend 4-door performance luxury touring sedan. The Legend Coupe was introduced one year later, in 1987.

Acura introduced the second-generation Integra in 1990. The following model year, the mid-engine NSX exotic sports car joined the Acura lineup. Also in 1991, Acura released the second-generation Legend Sedan and Legend Coupe. The 1994 Integra Sports Coupe and Sports Sedan represented the third generation of the Integra nameplate. The removable-top NSX-T bowed as a 1995 model.

In early 1995, the all-new touring luxury Acura TL Series was unveiled as a 1996 model and signaled the beginning of Acura's conversion to alphanumeric model designations. That was followed in the fall by the introduction of the 1996 Acura SLX, America's first sport utility vehicle offered by a luxury import nameplate. The Acura 3.5RL assumed the role of Acura's flagship luxury sedan in February of 1996. Acura completed the revitalization of its model lineup with the introduction of the 1997 Acura CL Series of luxury sports coupes, the first model ever designed, developed and assembled in America by a luxury import nameplate and elevating the Acura lineup from three volume models to six performance/luxury vehicles in all.

In 1999, the highly successful, redesigned 3.2TL had its first full year on sale, and reasserted Acura's powerful presence in the near luxury segment. For 2000, Acura has incorporated significant technical advances in both the 3.2TL and 3.5RL.