Nissan’s luxury brand uses a different way to enter European market

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**MARSEILLE, France** • Nissan luxury brand Infiniti has chosen a different path to enter Europe than Japanese rival Lexus.

Infiniti is charging into Europe with a range of models that includes the lower-premium G sedan and coupe as well as two premium SUVs, the EX37 and FX50.

The cars went on sale in France, Spain, Belgium, Italy, Bulgaria and Poland in October. The brand launches in Germany and UK in the first half of 2009.

When it launched in Europe in 1999, Lexus’ only model was the LS400, a high-priced sedan.

The brand’s second model, the GS300, arrived three years later. And it took until 1999 for Lexus to launch its first model design specifically for European tastes, the LS430.

Lexus continues to struggle in western Europe, where sales were down 28.1 percent to 22,655 through the first 10 months.

Infiniti aims to sell 25,000 cars by 2011, a year in Europe, including Russia, where sales were up 60 percent in the first 10 months of the year.

Infiniti says its G37 lower-premium sedan (above) and coupe will compete with Audi and BMW rather than “safe-choice” cars from Mercedes-Benz and Lexus.

**Key facts on Infiniti’s lineup for Europe**

- **Platform**
  - **Segments**: Nissan FM, EX37, FX37, FX50, premium SUV
- **Main rivals**: BMW 3 series, X1, X3, Audi A4, A5, C5
- **Starting price**: £37,441, 429, £37,474, 950
- **CO2 emissions**: 210/211

**Inside look**

**Infrastructure Cluster**

- **Components**: Nissan FM
- **V-6 diesel for 2010**
- **Engine**: 3.0-litre V-6 diesel engine
- **Bore**: 8.7 cm
- **Stroke**: 8.8 cm
- **Power**: 230 hp
- **Torque**: 510 Nm

**Ford may be giving up control of Mazda, but it won’t give up access to the Japanese automaker’s engineering and product development know-how. Executives from both companies said Mazda and Ford will continue joint ventures and the sharing of vehicle platforms and powertrains. Ford raised $540 million by cutting its stake in Mazda from 33.4 percent to just over 13 percent. The sale reflects Ford’s increasing financial troubles, not a dissatisfaction with its relationship with Mazda. Ford executives determined they could sell a large part of Mazda without sacrificing advantages gained from the collaboration.**

**Engineering benefits**

Mazda will continue to be a model for Ford’s product development system. Ford copied the Japanese automaker’s template for engineering and building vehicles.

Mazda has delivered significant platform engineering benefits to Ford, including the Ford Fiesta which is based on a platform engineered at Mazda. In the US market the Ford Fusion is an update of the original Mazda6.