

The Bolder Hybrid: Lexus ES 300h Gets New Look and Luxury for 2016

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Lexus did not become the luxury hybrid leader overnight, but rather as a result of a focused strategy begun more than a decade ago. Today, the 2016 ES 300h is one of a family of six Lexus hybrid models, which recently grew with the new NX 200h hybrid crossover.

Compellingly efficient, the Lexus ES 300h becomes more alluring for 2016 thanks to a design makeover that touches much of the exterior and interior. New safety, multimedia and connectivity technology uphold the brand's penchant for catering to its customers' lifestyles.

The current-generation ES 300h was already wearing the Lexus spindle grille, the brand's signature design feature, and for 2016 it gets an even bolder, one-piece version framed by elegant satin chrome trim. New standard LED headlights give the ES 300h a more distinctive face, day or night. A fully redesigned front fascia puts the fog lights at the corners to accentuate the wide stance.

At the rear, the ES 300h now shows a closer kinship to the flagship LS sedan with distinctive L-themed taillights. The freshened design extends to new and exclusive 17-inch alloy wheels and four new exterior colors. (It's worth noting that all of the ES 300h's available paint colors use self-healing clear coat technology.) As before, the ES 300h conveys its hybrid identity through subtle cues, including a trunk lip spoiler, hidden exhaust pipe and blue hybrid badges.

See How It Runs

The beauty of the Lexus Hybrid Drive system comes through in its transparent operation. The system combines a 2.5-liter four-cylinder Atkinson cycle engine with an electric motor to generate 200 total system horsepower. It will run on electric motor or gas engine alone, or a combination of both, based on the driving situation. The Hybrid System Indicator shows use of energy and encourages efficient driving habits.

The electronic continuously variable transmission is a further contributor to the car's smooth demeanor. There's driving spirit here, too, and the driver can tailor that by choosing from among four modes: Normal, Sport, Eco and EV.

Normal mode could be called "everyday mode." Select it when you want an ideal blend of performance and efficiency for, well, everyday driving situations.

Switching into Sport mode puts an edge on performance response that you not only feel, but also see: selecting Sport mode changes the gauge cluster lighting to a fiery red and replaces the Hybrid System Indicator with a tachometer.

Eco mode favors fuel economy, and in EV mode, the ES 300h can be driven short distances at reduced speed on battery power alone.

The ES 300h also has excellent EPA fuel economy ratings of 40 mpg city / 39 mpg highway / 40 mpg combined, along with, of course, the ability to refuel at any gasoline station.

New Lexus Safety System+

Starting with 10 standard airbags, the 2016 Lexus ES 300h offers exemplary safety through its robust structure and a wide array of driver-assist technologies. For 2016, the new optional Lexus Safety System+ Package combines the Pre-Collision System (PCS), Lane Departure Alert (LDA) with Steering Assist, Intelligent High Beam (IHB) and High-Speed Dynamic Radar Cruise Control.

High-Speed Dynamic Radar Cruise Control works at speeds over 25 mph. It tracks the speed of the vehicle traveling ahead and can adjust the speed setting accordingly to help maintain a preset distance. PCS can detect

vehicles — and in some circumstances, pedestrians – by using a combination of millimeter-wave radar and a front-facing camera. The system can warn the driver of a possible collision and can initiate automatic braking with Brake Assist if necessary.

Using a camera to monitor visible lane markings, Lane Departure Alert is designed to warn the driver if the vehicle is drifting so the driver can steer back into the lane. Lane Departure Alert, with Steering Assist enabled, can help the vehicle stay in the center of its lane by smoothly increasing steering torque a small amount to assist in maintaining course.

IHB combines technology, safety and driving courtesy: it can sense headlights from oncoming traffic, and also the taillights of the vehicle traveling in front, and automatically adjusts high- and low-beam illumination.

The optional Blind Spot Monitor (BSM) with Rear Cross Traffic Alert (RCTA) helps detect vehicles in side blind spots and alert the driver to rear cross traffic when backing out of a parking space.

Entry Luxury Defined – and Defied

New interior colors and color coordination, soft-touch materials and silver-trimmed piano black door switch plates are among the details that give the 2016 ES 300h interior a richer appearance and feel. New trims are for 2016 are Linear Dark Mocha, Illustrious Piano Black (replaces Piano Black) and Bamboo with a matte finish (replaces gloss finish).

The new steering wheel has a sportier look and feel, and allows the driver to easily view the large multi-information display that links to multimedia functions. A new shift knob with a leather boot echoes the shifter design in the Lexus IS.

The 2016 Lexus ES 300h defies the “entry” part of entry luxury, thanks to standard 10-way adjustable power front seats; automatic climate control; NuLuxe perforated upholstery; a power tilt-and-slide moonroof; power-adjustable outside mirrors with turn signals and defoggers; remote-linked power window and moonroof opening and Lexus Personalized Settings to customize select electronic functions.

Premium, Luxury and Ultra Luxury Packages present a sensible tiered approach to adding optional amenities. For 2016, the latter two packages add wood trim on the center console and an improved “emboss” pattern on the seats.

Great Connections

Smartphones and tablets have made getting information and entertainment from the same source a given. The standard Display Audio system in the 2016 ES 300h follows suit, reinforced by the brand’s expanded Lexus Enform family of information and connectivity services for 2016.

Display Audio features a seven-inch screen and includes HD Radio™, Bluetooth® audio, automatic phone book transfer, a vehicle information display and complimentary traffic and weather data provided via HD Radio. You never need miss an old favorite on the radio with the cache feature – just pause it for up to 15-minutes, say, when you need to when you need to discuss your next destination with your rear passengers.

With Lexus Enform Remote (one-year trial subscription included), the customer can remotely view and control certain aspects of the vehicle using a mobile app for iOS and Android devices. Once registered, the app can operate remote door lock/unlock; remote stop/start for the engine and climate control; vehicle finder, guest driver monitor and more.

With Lexus Enform Service Connect, new for 2016, the ES 300h can tell you what it needs, and when. Use the MyLexusandBeyond mobile app (for iOS devices) or LexusDrivers.com website to set push-reminders and alerts for maintenance and service issues – including, for example, required maintenance warning light will alert you

and your dealer of a specific factory recommended maintenance for a specific maintenance interval.

Lexus Enform Safety Connect is standard on all 2016 Lexus vehicles, with access to Lexus Enform response centers 24/7/365.

With the navigation option comes the Lexus Enform App Suite, a veritable in-car personal concierge service. Use voice-enabled apps to search the Internet through Destination Services, make restaurant reservations through OpenTable[®], get movie tickets via MovieTickets.com[™], listen to Internet radio, (including Pandora[®], iHeartRadio and Slacker), search business reviews on Yelp[®], and check in on Facebook Places[™]. Lexus Enform Destination Services, eDestination and Destination Assist, comes with the optional navigation system (one-year trial subscription included).

Three's not a crowd on the eight-inch Display Audio screen that comes with the Navigation option: it can be divided into up to three sections to show different functions simultaneously. You can view navigation/map while also having a window for audio or another system. The Lexus Navigation system acts as a co-pilot, providing 3D map with bird's eye views, predictive traffic information, detour preview, ETA calculation and fuel station locations. Putting numerous vehicle system controls at your fingertips, the available second-generation Remote Touch Interface (RTI) is the easiest way to access multimedia in the ES 300h. The computer mouse-like controller on the center console can operate the climate control, audio system, phone, optional navigation system and more. Menus show in the Display Audio screen.

For 2016, the RTI controller gets new, easier to use "enter" buttons on both sides. iPhone[®] users have yet another control option — Siri[®] Eyes Free Mode. Make calls, select songs from iTunes[®], get turn-by-turn navigation through Apple Maps, and much more, all by asking Siri.

Premium Sound, a Lexus Tradition

Whether you've gone all digital with an iPod[®] or smartphone for music, or still tote around your CD collection, the standard eight-speaker Lexus Premium Sound System plays along. It gives you the choice of using an in-dash CD player, USB/iPod connectivity, Bluetooth[®] audio streaming, HD Radio[™] with iTunes[®] tagging, and an integrated SiriusXM[®] Satellite Radio receiver (with all-access 90-day trial subscription).

Pinnacle audio performance in the Lexus ES 300h comes from the optional Mark Levinson[®] Premium Sound system. New for 2016, it's available with any option package. Powering 15 speakers with 835-watts, the system turns the car into a private rolling listening room. Borrowing from high-end home audio, Clari-Fi technology can enhance the sound of compressed digital audio (satellite radio, mobile streaming, mp3, etc.).

What's New for 2016

- Restyled with bolder, chrome-trimmed spindle grille, LED headlights, new front fascia and L-themed taillights.
- Numerous exterior detail upgrades, including a new 17-inch wheel design and exterior colors (Autumn Shimmer, Nightfall Mica, Caviar and Eminent White Pearl).
- Lexus Safety System+ combining Pre-Collision System, Lane Departure Alert with Steering Assist, Intelligent High Beam and High-Speed Dynamic Radar Cruise Control.
- New connectivity with Lexus Enform Remote; Lexus Enform Service Connect through mobile app or website for vehicle information and alerts.
- New interior luxury features and finishes, including Flaxen interior; Linear Dark Mocha wood, Illustrious Piano Black wood (replaces Piano Black) and Bamboo with a matte finish (replaces gloss finish).
- Mark Levinson Premium Sound available with all option packages.

Lexus Hybrid Drive

- The low friction 2.5-liter Atkinson cycle gasoline engine uses a sophisticated power management system and high compression ratio (12.5:1) to increase overall efficiency.
- Equipped with an electric water pump, electric power steering and an integrated hybrid electric motor/generator, this engine does not require any accessory belts. The beltless design helps improve fuel economy and overall reliability.

Chassis/Body/Suspension/Tires/Brakes

- Front suspension employs opposite-wound coil springs to help enhance straight-line stability.
- High body rigidity achieved through lightweight, high tensile strength steel, added bracing and more spot welds than previous generation model.
- Airflow is smoothed beneath the vehicle, enhancing driver control and fuel economy.
- Standard 215/55R17 low-rolling resistance tires on 17-inch alloy wheels; 18-inch alloy wheels available.

Safety/Security Features

- 10 airbags as standard equipment, including driver and front passenger knee airbags, driver and front passenger front and seat-mounted side airbags, rear outboard seat-mounted side airbags and front and rear side curtain airbags.
- Available Blind Spot Monitor (BSM) with Rear Cross Traffic Alert (RCTA).
- Whiplash Injury Lessening (WIL) front seats are designed to limit excessive head movement in certain rear-end collisions, helping to decrease the severity of whiplash-type injuries.

Warranty

- 48-month/50,000 mile basic limited warranty with roadside assistance for 48 months/unlimited miles.
- 72 months/70,000 miles powertrain and restraint system coverage.
- 72 months corrosion perforation protection coverage, regardless of mileage.