

2015 Lexus LS Shows Why This Luxury Flagship Became A Luxury Legend

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History seems to be repeating itself. The Lexus LS upended the luxury segment a quarter-century ago, and one reason was that it made a powerful V8 engine standard when it was a very expensive extra-cost option in some European models and not even available in others. Just change the year to 2015, and the situation seems to be replaying.

A supremely smooth, standard 386-horsepower 4.6-liter V8 teamed with an eight-speed automatic transmission is only one facet of the 2015 Lexus LS 460, though undeniably, it's the one whose benefit you feel quite strongly during a road test. Nearly silent acceleration remains a hallmark aspect of driving a Lexus LS, which also offers the option of a more engaging driving experience with the F SPORT Package.

A wide range of model choices also make the Lexus LS a standout. The LS 460 comes in regular and long-wheelbase versions, each with the further choice of rear-wheel drive or all-weather drive (360 hp with AWD). The ultimate Lexus flagship sedan remains the LS 600h L hybrid with 438 total system horsepower from a 5-liter V8 paired with an electric motor and all-weather drive.

New for 2015, the LS gains a new multimedia system. The multimedia system, accessed through the navigation screen, provides a multitude of capabilities. The navigation system can help you reach your destination sooner with up to date and predictive traffic information, including detour preview, ETA calculation and low-fuel coordination with available fuel stations. Navigation also includes the subscription-free Lexus Enform App Suite and features bird's eye map views with 3D building views.

Lexus continues to increase your smartphone's intelligence, and the 2015 LS shows how with the new Lexus Enform Remote (includes one year complimentary subscription). Use it to control certain vehicle features via mobile app. Key elements include remote door lock/unlock; remote stop/start for the engine and climate control; vehicle finder, guest driver monitor and more.

In addition, the Lexus Enform App Suite has been upgraded to include iHeartRadio™ 4 and Slacker for even more music-listening choices.

Great Looks That Really Work for It

With its Lexus-signature spindle grille and sleek, coupe-inspired design, the LS cuts through the clutter of luxury sedan sameness and at the same time slices through the air with a very low 0.26 coefficient of drag. That figure translates into meaningful benefits that include hushed wind noise and admirable V8 fuel efficiency.

Beneath the sleek lines, standard frequency-dependent suspension dampers contribute to flat, agile handling and the uncanny ride smoothness that has long been a Lexus LS hallmark. Using Lexus Drive Select, you can tailor the car's performance to your driving style or mood by selecting one of three settings – “Normal,” “Eco” or “Sport S.” The system automatically adjusts several performance parameters, including transmission shift points and throttle response. “Eco” prioritizes fuel efficiency, while “Sport” quickens responses for a livelier feeling. Models equipped with the air suspension – including F SPORT — offer two additional drive settings, “Comfort” and “Sport S+.”

F SPORT: Sharp Through Curves, Smooth Over Bumps

Sharpening the agility of a premium luxury sedan requires a deft touch to the suspension tuning and tire selection; the wrong choices bring harshness into the picture. Not so with the Lexus LS 460 F SPORT.

Sport-tuned air suspension and 19-inch forged alloy wheels lower the car by 0.4 inches, a change that noticeably tightens cornering response. The F SPORT also equips the LS with such high-performance hardware as a Torsen[®] limited slip rear differential (RWD model) and Brembo[®] six-piston caliper front brakes. You can combine F SPORT with all-weather drive for maximum grip in all conditions.

Outside, the F SPORT treatment adds a unique front fascia with an exclusive mesh spindle grille featuring a black surround, larger air intake openings and round fog lamps. Inside, the F SPORT conveys the proper driver's car feeling with an Alcantara headliner, aluminum trim and leather-wrapped steering wheel with paddle shifters.

Luxury That Redefined The Term

A history of defining true luxury in both the obvious and smallest details continues to define the Lexus LS. Standard comforts include heated and ventilated front seats, with 16-way power adjustment for the driver and 12-way for the passenger.

The trademark quietness of the Lexus LS is rooted in body construction techniques that minimize noise, right down to the noise-reducing wheel design. As the car drives, resonant noise is channeled from the main air chamber to adjacent hollow areas within the wheels via resonator hole, cutting a significant source of road noise.

The supremely quiet cabin gives passengers the comfort to admire the craftsmanship that has set Lexus apart for decades. For example, Lexus craftsmen take 38 days to create the available Shimamoku ("striped wood") Espresso wood steering wheel and matching trim. It's an exhaustive 67-step process of layering dark- and light-shaded veneers to create this one-of-a-kind wood finish. The finished product is like a work of art.

Even the climate control caters to individuals. The available Lexus Climate Concierge is a four-zone system that lets occupants set temperature preferences for the main climate control system, the climate control seats and, for the driver, the heated steering wheel. Multiple sensors throughout the cabin ensure that the system reaches heating/cooling preferences quickly.

Tech That Works Easily

Long a pioneer in easy-to-use tech and high-end audio, the Lexus LS ups its own game for 2015 with a new multimedia system. Accessed through a high-resolution 12.3-inch screen, the new system provides a multitude of capabilities and myriad Navigation enhancements.

The new standard Display Audio includes HD Radio[™], Bluetooth[®] audio, automatic phone book transfer, a vehicle information display and complimentary traffic and weather data provided via HD Radio. You can't pause time, but when a favorite song comes on HD Radio and takes you back, pressing the cache radio button will save up to 15 minutes of music to replay later – such as to enjoy it while parked in your driveway.

The enhanced Navigation system can help guide you to your destination more efficiently with up to date and predictive traffic information, including detour preview, ETA calculation and low-fuel coordination with available fuel stations. The system's 3D and bird's eye map views, plus 3D building views, make it that much easier to find a location.

Siri[®] Eyes Free Mode, which the LS gained for 2014, is compatible with the iPhone[®] 4S and iPhone 5 models forward and puts select Apple's Siri technology at your service. Siri lets you call contacts, select and play music from iTunes[®], get turn-by-turn navigation through Siri and Apple maps, and much more.

Steering wheel buttons provide quick, easy access to frequently used functions in the climate and audio systems. Operating navigation, climate control, a paired cell phone, audio system and numerous other vehicle functions is easy and intuitive with the console-mounted Lexus next-generation Remote Touch. With it, you can quickly toggle through screen menus to operate a variety of vehicle systems. One-push confirmation makes menu and item selection easy and intuitive.

Your smartphone gets a whole lot more capable when you step into the Lexus LS. The available Lexus Enform Destination Services (Destination Assist, eDestination) and subscription-free App Suite come with the Navigation System. Voice-enabled apps let you search the Internet through Bing™, make restaurant reservations using 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 Safety Connect, Lexus Enform Remote, and Lexus Enform Destination Services come with one-year trial subscriptions. The Lexus Enform response centers operate 24 hours a day, every day.

A Heritage of Beautiful Music

It may be hard to believe, but when Lexus introduced the first LS, audio quality seemed like a low priority in some luxury models. Lexus changed that with true premium sound as standard, and that tradition continues in the Lexus LS' 10-speaker Premium Sound System with its Digital Sound Processor, Automatic Sound Levelizer and an in-dash, single-feed DVD/CD player.

For those who relish concert-grade sound in a car, the Lexus LS offers the optional Mark Levinson Reference Surround System. Benefitting from this brand's decades of experience with ultra high-end home equipment, the LS system delivers the depth and power of a live performance.

The 19-speaker Lexus LS Mark Levinson system provides a 5.1 home theater surround experience using 7.1 architecture and discrete circuitry. The 450-watt, 15-channel ML3-16 Processor Power Amplifier covers the 20Hz-20kHz frequency range with less than 0.1% Total Harmonic Distortion (THD) – a stunning achievement in mobile audio.

Safety and Collision Avoidance

The 2015 Lexus LS offers a raft of driver-assist technologies, including the Advanced Pre-Collision System (A-PCS) with Collision Avoidance Assist. This system is designed to assist the driver in avoiding or mitigating frontal collisions with vehicles and pedestrians under a wide range of city and highway speeds. At speeds lower than 24 mph, this technology can help the driver to avoid accidents by automatically bringing the LS to a full stop.

What's New for 2015

- New multimedia system with enhanced Navigation features
- Lexus Enform App Suite adds Slacker and upgrades to iHeartRadio 4.0
- Lexus Enform Remote
- Dome lamps use LED bulbs
- Dynamic gridlines added to backup camera
- F SPORT badge added to rear of F SPORT.

Vehicle Details

Chassis/Body/Suspension/Brakes/Tires

- Numerous stabilizing fins help make the LS one of the most aerodynamically efficient cars in its segment with a 0.26 drag coefficient. Laser screw welding, body adhesives and other structural reinforcements

increase rigidity and enhance control, steering feel and handling.

- Drive Mode Select allows the driver to choose from three distinct drive settings (Eco, Normal and Sport S). Vehicles equipped with the available air suspension add Comfort and Sport S+ modes.
- The available Air Suspension with Variable Gear Ratio Steering automatically adjusts the damping force for optimal comfort and performance.
- The available AWD system features a Torsen limited slip center differential to further enhance grip, traction and cornering stability.
- Noise-reduction wheels.

Safety/Security

- An available Lane-Keep Assist system (LKA) helps the driver stay in the intended lane.
- The Blind Spot Monitor (BSM) uses rear millimeter-wave radar to monitor the vehicle rear side blind spots at 10 miles per hour or more. This feature includes Rear Cross Traffic Alert (RCTA), which automatically operates when the vehicle is in reverse, alerting drivers to the approach of other vehicles when backing out of a parking place.

Luxury/Comfort/Convenience

- Available Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC) constantly monitors the distance to vehicles ahead and is capable of operating at any speed. The system can bring the vehicle to a complete stop, and accelerate away once the road ahead is clear.
- The available Automatic High Beam system features a camera located in the inside rear-view mirror that detects light sources in front of the vehicle — including the headlamps of oncoming vehicles, the tail lamps of a vehicle ahead and street lighting – to automatically switch the high beams on and off accordingly.
- Quietest LS cabin ever.
- Front seats minimize pressure peaks and increase support. Both front seats feature a standard heating and cooling system with large heating and cooling areas for reduced heating and cooling times.
- AWD models, including the LS 600h L, feature a standard heated steering wheel and Positive Temperature Coefficient (PTC) heating elements, which warm the front cabin area quickly after vehicle start-up. Windshield de-icer and headlamp washers are standard on AWD models.
- The LS features a standard Lexus Premium Audio System with a nine-channel amplifier, 10 speakers, CD / DVD player changer, DVD audio and video compatibility, MP3 sound enhancement, HD Radio™ with iTunes tagging, and a three-month trial subscription to SiriusXM Satellite Radio. Standard entertainment and connectivity advancements include enhanced Bluetooth capability with automatic phonebook download and streaming audio.

Luxury Options

- Available power rear seats with Climate Concierge.
- An available Ottoman Seating Package with Shiatsu massage and a Rear Seat Entertainment System featuring a Blu-ray Disc™ DVD player, an SD card slot and a retractable, ceiling mounted, nine-inch full-color VGA screen.

Interior Design

- The dashboard is divided into two distinct zones: an upper Display Zone, with the large, 12.3-inch, LCD multi-display screen, and a lower Operation Zone that provides access to system controls such as the second generation Remote Touch Interface (RTI).

- The driver's instrument meter cluster incorporates high-visibility, large diameter Optitron dials; a 5.8-inch Thin Film Transistor (TFT) Multi-information screen; and an aluminum analog clock with a GPS-based time correction function.
- Optional wood trim includes Walnut, Shimamoku Espresso and Matte Brown Bird's Eye Maple. The LS 600h L also offers an eco-friendly Bamboo trim.

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.
- Eight years/100,000 miles hybrid-related components, including the HV battery, battery-control module, hybrid control module and inverter with converter.