

2014 Lexus ES 350 Continues Its Segment-Shaping Ways

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The Lexus ES sedan line has a history of reshaping the entry-luxury segment, and the sixth-generation ES models introduced for 2013 raised the benchmark again, with increased interior room, a new hybrid, higher fuel efficiency in the V6 model and even more flagship-type amenities.

While the ES 300h hybrid has understandably taken the efficiency spotlight with its 40-mpg combined EPA fuel economy estimates, the ES 350, with a 268-horsepower V6, remains the sales leader in the line and is itself highly efficient, with a 31-mpg EPA highway fuel economy rating.

New for 2014, the ES 350 gains LED fog lamps and adds the availability of bamboo interior trim, which was already offered in the ES 300h. In addition, customers who do not prefer leather can now get heated/ventilated seats in perforated NuLuxe trim. Genuine leather-trim is available, as is semi-aniline leather for a more refined look and feel.

Long a leader in user technology that's easy to use, Lexus has integrated Siriⁱ® Eyes Free Mode, with technology licensed from Apple[®], in the 2014 ES 350. Compatible with the iPhone[®] 4S and iPhone 5 models forward, Siri lets you call contacts, select and play music from iTunes[®], get turn-by-turn navigation through Siri and Apple maps, and much more. To help you keep your eyes on the road and hands on the wheel, Siri can read notifications, read calendar information and allow you to add reminders, calendar appointments and notes.

The Car That Reshaped Its Category

The original ES sedan upended the entry luxury category nearly 25 years ago by making a V6 standard in a segment populated by four-cylinder models, and by offering more interior room and more standard luxury amenities. Lexus continues to set the trend in the entry-luxury segment by virtue of a unique two-model sedan strategy: The front-wheel drive ES models emphasize roominess and comfort, and the sport-minded IS models, which are built on a different platform, offer a choice between rear-wheel drive and all-wheel drive. In contrast, other brands try to mold one model series to fit both roles.

The ES 350 offers an unmistakable look in the class, thanks in large part to the brand's distinctive spindle grille design flanked by L-themed LED daytime running lights. The roof sweeps back for a coupe-like stance, and the taillights repeat the L motif. The shape cheats the wind with a low 0.27 coefficient of drag (Cd), which helps fuel efficiency while minimizing wind noise.

This generation ES 350 design also fools the eye, offering more interior space in a sleeker package. The 1.8-inch stretch in wheelbase over the previous generation yielded a 4.1-inch gain in rear seat legroom, which now stretches to 40 inches (on par with larger sedans) and a 2.8-inch increase in knee room.

Even with the sleeker roofline, this generation ES 350 offers nearly an inch more rear seat headroom than the previous generation. Rear passengers also get more foot space below the front seats.

Lexus filled the larger space with comfort, features and design details that belie the "entry luxury" label. The ES 350 comes standard with 10-way adjustable power front seats, automatic climate control, NuLuxe interior available in parchment, light gray or black and elegant piano black trim for instrument panel, doors and upper console. Lexus offers espresso bird's eye maple for the trim or, new for 2014, bamboo. Also available, 12-way

heated/ventilated power front seats allow the seat cushions to extend by 1.4 inches for added leg support.

Several options take luxury to an even higher level, including the optional Blind Spot Monitor (BSM) with Rear Cross Traffic Alert (RCTA) that helps detect vehicles in side blind spots and alerts the driver to rear cross traffic when backing out of a parking spot. Also available are Premium and Luxury packages, and bringing flagship-style luxury to the ES 350, the Ultra Luxury Package.

Lexus has been on the forefront of optimal ergonomics, a brand strength that's helped to make multi-media system controls easy to operate. The ES 350 cockpit is divided into separate "display" and "operation" zones to help the driver remain focused on the road. Large, clear Optitron[®] gauges, a Lexus mainstay, are supplemented by a 3.5-inch color TFT multi-information display screen that puts vital information directly in the driver's line of sight.

Lexus designed the ES 350's controls to help reduce both driver body movement and eye movement. The ES 350's available second-generation Remote Touch Interface (RTI) is designed to provide access to many vehicle functions while helping to reduce driver movement. Using the system controller on the center console, the driver can intuitively operate the climate control, audio system, phone, optional navigation system and more, which helps the driver with paying attention to the road. Menu display in the 3.5-inch instrument panel screen or larger center-dashboard screens that come with audio and navigation options.

Premium Quiet, Premium Sound

The ultra-quiet cabins of Lexus vehicles have provided ideal settings for the high-quality premium audio the brand has always offered. The standard Lexus Premium Sound System in the 2014 ES exemplifies the brand's expertise in mobile audio performance. The eight-speaker system plays from a variety of sources, including the in-dash CD player, USB/iPod[®] connectivity, and an integrated SiriusXM[®] Satellite Radio receiver with a 90-day trial subscription. Automatic Sound Levelizer (ASL) adjusts system volume in response to ambient noise.

The first level upgrade is the Display Audio package, which adds a seven-inch screen, HD Radio[™] with iTunes[®] tagging, Bluetooth[®] audio, phone book transfer, a vehicle information display and a rear backup camera.

The pinnacle of audio performance in any new Lexus comes from the availability of industry-exclusive Mark Levinson[®] premium sound systems. Audiophiles recognize the brand for high-end home equipment. The 2014 ES 350's optional 15-speaker, 835-watt audio system is a sonic knockout. This system features an eight-inch display screen, HD Radio with iTunes tagging, DVD audio/video and a SiriusXM Satellite Radio receiver. Exclusive GreenEdge technology doubles amplifier output while reducing its energy consumption by 50 percent. The reduced electrical load on the car contributes to better fuel efficiency.

Lexus Enform[®] Helps Keep You Connected

Lexus has expanded connectivity in its vehicles while helping to reduce driver distraction. The foundation of this capability, Lexus Enform, can make a compatible Bluetooth smartphone even smarter. The available Enform service, with Destination Assist, eDestination, and App Suite, comes with the Navigation System/Mark Levinson Audio Package. Lexus Enform provides access to the subscription-free App Suite. These voice-enabled apps let you search the Internet through Bing[™], make restaurant reservations through OpenTable[®], get movie tickets via MovieTickets.com[™], listen to Internet radio, including , Pandora[®], and iHeartRadio[™], search business reviews on Yelp[®], and check in on Facebook Places[™].

The ES 350's telematics system, Lexus Enform with Safety Connect[®] is available by subscription.

Complimentary one-year trial subscriptions are available on all purchases of new Lexus vehicles equipped with these features. Safety Connect is standard on all vehicles while Lexus Enform with Safety Connect is on all vehicles equipped with the optional Navigation system. The Lexus Enform and the Safety Connect response

centers operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week—every day of the year.

Lexus Enform vehicles are factory ready for subscriptions to a variety of innovative SiriusXM services including NavTraffic, NavWeather, Sports, Stocks and Fuel Prices. SiriusXM services offer complimentary one-year trial data subscription.

High-Efficiency V6

The silken-smooth 3.5-liter V6 powering the ES 350 will take car from zero to 60 mph in just 7.1 seconds, and its 248 lb.-ft. of peak torque ensures quick, seamless response in everyday driving. Efficient use of fuel is another key talent of this highly responsive engine. It's interesting to note that this engine, a full liter larger in displacement than the original 1990 ES 250's V6 and with 71-percent more horsepower, also is rated much higher in fuel efficiency. The 31-mpg EPA highway fuel economy rating beats its forbear by a whopping 35-percent (figure for 1990 model adjusted to current EPA standards).

The ES 350's six-speed automatic transmission also gets much credit for the outstanding combination of performance, efficiency and quiet ride.

The ES 350 driver can tailor powertrain response and other settings to suit conditions or the mood. ECO mode adjusts engine response and climate-control settings to help maximize fuel economy. Sport mode sharpens throttle and transmission response for a more engaging driving experience, while Normal mode is designed to provide an ideal balance of performance and efficiency.

Strong on Safety

In addition to its five-star overall crash rating from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Lexus ES 350 offers the peace of mind of a cabin equipped with 10 airbags and an array of available driver aids including a Pre-Collision System (PCS) and Lane Departure Alert (LDA).

What's New for 2014

- LED fog lamps included with HID headlamps
- Available Bamboo interior trim selection
- Available heated/ventilated front seats in perforated NuLuxe trim
- Siri Eyes Free technology from Apple; compatible with iPhone 4S and iPhone 5 models

Chassis/Body/Suspension/Tires/Brakes

- Compared to previous-generation ES 350, suspension changes, a stiffer body and a quicker steering gear ratio help deliver more precise handling.
- Front suspension employs opposite-wound coil springs to help enhance straight-line control.
- Revised rear suspension geometry and improved shock absorber damping characteristics enhance ride comfort.
- Steering gear ratio has been reduced from 16.1:1 to 14.8:1 to help deliver a more responsive and direct steering feel.
- Increased body rigidity was achieved through lightweight, high tensile strength steel, added bracing and more spot welds than previous generation models.
- Airflow is smoothed beneath the vehicle, enhancing driver control and fuel economy.
- Equipped with standard 215/55R17 low rolling resistance tires on 17-inch alloy wheels or optional high-gloss 17-inch wheels.
- 18-inch high-gloss alloy wheels are offered.

Safety/Security Features

- Available Lane Departure Alert (LDA) is integrated with automatic high beam dimming technology.
- The available Pre-Collision System (PCS) uses sub-millimeter wave radar, designed to detect certain obstructions traveling ahead and prepare the vehicle for a potential collision.
- The ES features a class-leading 10 airbags as standard equipment, including driver and front passenger knee, driver and front passenger front and seat-mounted side air bags, as well as rear outboard seat-mounted side airbags and front and rear side curtain airbags.
- 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.

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