

2021 LEXUS LC 500 INSPIRATION SERIES: PERFORMANCE LUXURY TAKES FLIGHT

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PLANO, Texas (January 12, 2021) – The Lexus LC 500 needs no formal introduction. It greets all encounters with a growl from its powerful 471-horsepower naturally aspirated V8 engine. Its artfully chiseled lines and refined curvature marry luxury and performance in a way that only Lexus can. The new 2021 LC 500 Inspiration Series takes the grand-touring coupe to the next level with an aviation-inspired design that will land in dealerships later this winter.

Inspiration Takes Flight

The new LC 500 Inspiration Series, the fifth on the LC platform, takes cue from a partnership between air race pilot Yoshihide Muroya and Lexus engineers. The Lexus team worked on ways to create efficiencies for Muroya's aircraft for everything from the grip design of the control column to maximizing aerodynamics efficiencies using testing data learned on Lexus automobiles. The partnership ultimately assisted Muroya on his path to winning the 2017 Red Bull Air Race World Championships.

With some of the same engineers who built the Lexus LFA supercar on board, Lexus took a unique approach to the aerodynamic efficiencies of Muroya's airplane by turning a preconceived concept on its head – literally.

They found that taking an airplane wing and flipping it upside down created vortices that improved maneuverability and efficiency at the wingtips. After the team was able to prove their theory on Muroya's aircraft through testing and competition success, the Lexus team then aimed to employ that knowledge onto the LC by creating an automotive wing prototype built from aluminum. The team knew the final version, which would span nearly six feet in width, would need to be light, durable and warp resistant. Carbon-fiber, the same material employed on Muroya's aircraft, seemed like the appropriate material. Yet creating a carbon-fiber wing that large, much of which would be done by hand, would be a great challenge – but it's one the engineers took head-on.

In the end, the engineering team created an exquisite carbon-fiber reinforced plastic (CFRP) spoiler that meets the demanding production quality expected of Lexus vehicles. The wing serves as the defining attribute of the new LC Inspiration Series, following the trailing edge arc of the trunk and uniquely defined with two downturned winglets on either end. The winglets, of course, are fully functional and create a vertical vortex that helps smooth out the turbulence generated from airflow along the car's flanks.

Limited Engagement

The 2021 LC 500 Inspiration Series certainly has an interesting backstory, but its aerial inspiration is only part of the narrative. With only 100 units available, the latest Inspiration Series is a limited edition of the highest order.

Standing apart from the standard LC 500, a magnificent vehicle in its own right, the 2021 Inspiration Series is accented with a combination of features not found on any other LC package. The limited-edition vehicle is offered in one exterior color, the superbly dark Obsidian, which is paired with bold and beautiful 21-inch black forged-alloy wheels that fill out the wheel wells. An eye-catching carbon-fiber reinforced plastic (CFRP) roof is standard, and it proves to be the perfect complement to the carbon-fiber rear air wing spoiler.

The LC 500 Inspiration Series also gains some additional enhancements in driving performance thanks to the Torsen limited slip differential. The high-capacity torque-sensing limited-slip rear differential efficiently distributes engine power to the rear axle, helping to optimize traction, handling and control in a variety of conditions. The standard Yamaha rear performance rod with damper, an available option on other LC models, provides added rigidity to the suspension package.

Stepping inside, the serialized badge on the center console immediately identifies the limited nature of the vehicle and its sequence of the 100 produced. The cabin is adorned with black Alcantara-trimmed sport seats that feature elegant Saddle Tan accents and seat belts. The steering wheel and shift lever are also accented in black Alcantara trim. A carbon-fiber scuff plate accents the door, and once inside driver and passengers can bask in the sound of the standard Mark Levinson 13-speaker 915-watt Reference Surround Sound Audio system.

The LC Inspiration Series also comes standard with a large color Head-Up Display (HUD) that projects a range of information onto the bottom of the windshield glass. Relevant information can be displayed to the driver without taking their focus from the road such as: road speed, gear, engine speed; turn-by-turn directions; Dynamic Radar Cruise Control status; Pre-Collision System; Lane Keep Assist/Lane Departure Alert; master warning indicator; information icons; clearance sonar.

Standard on the Inspiration Series is the SmartAccess Card Key, which operates all of the same SmartAccess systems as a key fob without the manual button operation. Users can simply place the Card Key on their person and use the SmartAccess system to unlock/lock the doors by grasping the outside door handle and start the vehicle once inside. Each SmartAccess Card Key also comes equipped with a backup mechanical key to unlock the doors in the event the battery is depleted.

Key Evolutions for 2021

The LC 500 Inspiration Series benefits from the same updates to the standard LC 500 for 2021. Lexus engineers were able to trim 22 pounds of unsprung weight from the vehicle, which is highlighted by the use of aluminum lower suspension arms, lighter suspension stabilizers with a hollow design and revised diameter, new high-strength coil spring material, and lighter 21-inch rear wheels.

With unsprung weight reduced, the LC's suspension was refined to provide a smoother, softer stroke for an enhanced connection to the road. This was accomplished with adjustments to the electronic absorber controls of the front suspension to increase the length of the stroke. Engineers then optimized the bound stopper rigidity to help create a smoother overall suspension stroke. Rear stabilizer rigidity was enhanced to aid front turn-in ability to provide more linear steering input.

Vehicle control at mid- to high-speed ranges are enhanced thanks to the 2021 LC's Vehicle Stability Control (VSC) system gaining Active Cornering Assist (ACA). This system helps with cornering by providing brake control to the inner wheels based on G-force and lateral acceleration demands during spirited driving.

High Performance

Upon startup, thundering through the variable Active Exhaust, the 5.0-liter naturally aspirated V8 issues a full-throated engine note as a call to driving enthusiasts. The LC 500 has an output of 471 hp and 398 lb.-ft. of peak torque. The LC is also capable of delivering a 0-to-60 mph time of 4.4 seconds and has an EPA estimated 25 mpg rating on the highway.

Other key enhancements for the 2021 model were made to the 10-speed automatic Direct-Shift transmission on the V8-powered LC 500, as the shift logic was updated to help provide improvement for daily driving in what engineers refer to as the "active zone," or the area where most drivers find themselves at in the 50-70% throttle range. The Direct-Shift transmission allows engine RPM to expand in this range to accentuate the feeling of acceleration before shifting into the next gear.

Lexus Enform for Safety and Convenience

Lexus Enform Safety Connect comes with a three-year trial with access to Lexus Enform response centers 24/7/365. With Lexus Enform Service Connect, complimentary for the first 10 years, the vehicle can send alerts for specific factory recommended maintenance, simultaneously alerting a preferred Lexus dealer. The Lexus App can be used to set push-reminders and alerts for maintenance and service issues. The Lexus Enform Remote (three-year trial subscription included) mobile app lets you lock and unlock doors, start the engine and climate controls, check the fuel level, and more all through your smartphone, smartwatch or Amazon Alexa-enabled devices at home.

Advanced Safety Features and Driver Support

Lexus Safety System+ comes standard on the 2021 LC 500. Lexus Safety System+ features Lane Departure

Alert with Lane Keep Assist. Pre-Collision System with Pedestrian Detection is standard and includes features such as Frontal Collision Warning (FCW), Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB) and Pedestrian Detection. All-Speed Dynamic Radar Cruise Control is also included, as is Intelligent High Beam that will default to high-beam mode when the road ahead is clear but will temporarily switch to low beams when headlamps or taillamps are detected.

Intuitive Parking Assist comes standard on the LC Inspiration Series. It uses sonar sensors in the front and rear bumpers to detect obstacles in the vehicle's path during low-speed maneuvering. The system gives an audible alert and the Multi-Information Display (MID) shows the position and distance to the obstacle. Blind Spot Monitor is standard equipment, as is a windshield de-icer.