

Multiple personalities

(all good) - by Joe Sage

Fancier cousin of the Toyota Land Cruiser (with us since 1951 and itself increasingly fancy), the Lexus LX has been with us since model year 1996.

A durable concept, the LX entered just its fourth generation in 2021. Available in five trims, three of which have base prices in six digits, ours is the top Ultra-Luxury model. Our sample's Nori Green Pearl paint sets the stage for the look and feel of this glorious beast, a sort of army green metallic that's equal parts extreme duty and country club.

That paint, the bold grille, its 22-inch forged alloy wheels (the largest Lexus offers) and its roof rail cross bars add up to a powerful stance in any

setting. Prominent metallic finishes for the grille, wheels and roof bars contrast particularly well with our sample's darker paint. The grille generated comments online, some thinking it's overdone, others thinking it suits the model perfectly. Next year's Lexus RX takes an evolutionary approach here, replacing the upper region of the longstanding "spindle" with sheet metal (bearing a subtly stamped grille-mimicking pattern). We're curious whether this will be a new direction for all models, though the new LX grille's boldness is offset by frameless "floating" bars, while its pattern is engineered to provide high-level cooling for its 409-hp twin-turbo V6. No matter how you slice it, the more you engage with the LX, the more you appreciate the unified strength and presence of its styling.

While completely new, gen-four is immediately recognizable as an LX. It retains its body-on-frame

traditional SUV build, atop a 20 percent more rigid GA-F platform, while weight is reduced by 441 pounds from gen-three. Advanced suspension underpins both off-road and on-road supremacy. Its smaller yet more powerful engine's high torque is on tap in lower ranges, helpful for both off-roading and acceleration in town. A 10-speed close ratio direct-shift torque converter transmission delivers unusually smooth power throughout, along with higher fuel economy on the open road.

Adjustable ride height quickly changes among normal and two high-profile modes—adaptable by modes, a multi-terrain feature, and readings of vehicle speed, posture and handling—with a low setting for easy access when parked.

Dual displays, 12.3-inch upper and 7-inch lower, are a Lexus first. This finally means goodbye to a finicky touchpad that had replaced an extremely

finicky joystick. Ultra Luxury trim (a two-row, four-person setup, while other trims offer two/five or three/seven layouts) goes all out for second row occupants, with exclusive headrests, reading lights, rear displays and overhead AC vents.

You can feel the vehicle's almost-three-ton heft during aggressive freeway ramp acceleration, yet the LX 600's power is immediately apparent, as is the smoothness of its shifts. Drive modes range from eco to sport-plus (and custom). We were especially hooked on sport mode's response.

On a drive out Highway 74 to Lake Pleasant and up Castle Hot Springs Road a bit, we debated whether to photograph it in the dirt, to show just how good it is at this? Or back at an executive club or resort, to show just how good it is at that? You can make a watertight case for either in this vehicle, but we ended up bringing it back to town, figuring classiness is its defining visual starting point, off-roading its special ingredient.

Also now available as an F SPORT for the first



time, the LX 600 is a fine rig, standing tall and proud in any environment. Pricy it is, but its well-developed dual personalities give you a full-blown luxury machine and a highly capable off-roader all in just one garage bay. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ROWS/SEATS	Ultra-Lux 2/4 / (others 2/5, 3/7)
BUILD	body-on-frame
ASSEMBLY	Toyota, Aichi, Japan
ENGINE	3.5L V6 turbo intercooled
24v DOHC chain drive, LEV818 SULEV30 S&S	
HP/TORQUE	409 hp / 479 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.3:1
TRANSMISSION	direct shift 10-spd auto, manual-trans-like direct acceleration
DRIVETRAIN	4WD transfer case, Multi-Terrain Select modes (4LO and 4HI)
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED	6.9 sec / 130 mph
SUSPENSION	F: high-mount dbl wishbone, optimized coils, long rebound; R: four-link axle-type, rear lateral control arms, shocks outside lower control arms
STEERING	elec pwr steering
BRAKES	F: 13.94 x 1.26 vented disc; R: 13.19 x 0.79 vented disc
WHEELS	22 x 8J forged alloy wheels
TIRES	Dunlop Grandtrek PT5A 265/50R22 112V summer tires (OEM)
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	200.59 / 112.2 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	8.27 in
APPR / DEPARTURE	25.9-27.4 / 24.9-26.3°
TURNING CIRCLE	39.4 ft
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	37.8 / 38.78 / 35.24 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	41.14 / 33.86 / 31.1 in
CARGO CAPACITY	41 / 71 cu.ft
CURB WEIGHT	5665-5945 lb
GVWR	7230 lb
TOW CAPACITY	8000 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.95+ oct prem unl / 21.14 gal
MPG	17/22/19 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	\$126,000
ROOF RAIL CROSS BARS	450
CARPETED CARGO MAT	140
WHEEL LOCKS	95
DESTINATION CHARGE	1345

TOTAL \$128,030

(Note: prices have increased; see below.)

2022 LEXUS LX 600 LINEUP

Base	\$88,245
Premium	96,345
F Sport	102,345
Luxury	104,345
Ultra-Luxury	▼ 127,345

