

# Rugged & refined

BY JOE SAGE

The new Lexus GX inhabits an evolving matrix, one in which Lexus and Toyota lineups can be looked at separately or by comparison with each other. This year brings a combination of the two. On the Toyota side, Land Cruiser has been ruggedly transformed enough to move it closer to 4Runner, while vacating the large SUV spot or letting Grand Highlander slide into it. On the Lexus side, the new GX brings a new level of ruggedness to this brand, while drawing a clearer distinction between itself and the bigger LX, as the new TX (also in this issue) slides in between. (How it all fits together globally could fill a book.) All this probably makes the decision between GX and LX (and now also TX) the most distinct it has ever been.

As for Lexus GX versus Toyota Land Cruiser, beyond brand aura or luxe level, the GX has a slightly more powerful engine, a 349-hp 3.4-liter V6 versus Land Cruiser's 326-hp 2.4-liter turbo-four, with torque equally close. More significantly for many, while Land Cruiser tows 6,000 pounds, Lexus GX tows over 9,000 pounds in Standard or Overtrail trims, or from 7,601 to 8,020 pounds in Luxury.

Three GX trims also each have a "plus" version, for a total of six. The lineup starts at \$64,250 and runs to just over \$80 grand, a welcome starting point and price range overall for a luxury brand.

Base GX Premium trim (a three-row), the more specialized mid-level Overtrail (a two-row) and the three-row Luxury combine to create a lineup with

very wide appeal. (See more distinctions at right.)

The GX Luxury trim driven here is refined in both appearance and purpose by its 22-inch wheels, along with its own style and finish points. Luxury is already quite loaded, although the even-more-top Luxury+ runs just \$4 grand more (see lineup in sidebar). Our sample demonstrates another solid equalizer—while its ten options and upgrades might be expected to cost a whole lot more on a typical luxury vehicle, these prices are all unusually modest (see our build's specs in sidebar).

The new GX is powerful, with strong acceleration, precise handling and tightly controlled maneuverability at any speed. Brakes are ample, with more of a refined feel than any performance-grade harshness (if you're used to the latter, their force is more than they may feel at first). The turning circle is mainstream by spec, but proves tight enough

Dedicated off-roaders will be most interested in the Overtrail trim (right), or even the base Premium. All trims have the same ground clearance (Luxury in fact has 0.2" more), the same wading depth, and are very close on approach-departure-breakover. While Standard has wide-purpose 20-inch wheels, Overtrail has 18-inchers and 33-inch A/T tires, a locking rear diff, adaptable variable dynamic suspension, downhill assist and multi-terrain modes.

for boulevard U-turns and clever parking lot navigation. Having the luxe trim with big wheels, we did not take ours off-pavement at all, but to some degree you could—say an unpaved road to a picnic, not for sidewall-challenging off-roading.

The entire effort earns a solid "A," underscoring that while many engineering and manufacturing efforts have been almost completely diverted to EVs, often leaving other models somewhat stagnant, Toyota and Lexus have continued to evolve existing lineups—in fact to amp them up more than ever. It's a welcome chance to see the best of where automotive design, engineering and styling



can progress right now, undisturbed by the EV detour—new excitement with familiar powertrains.

The rugged styling of the new GX bears an element of boxiness (itself a bit of a trend in off-road-ers), yet Lexus is a known master of aerodynamics in any body form. The more time you spend with it, the more its curves, flares and stance will catch your eye. Admiring glances follow it everywhere. The gotta-have-it factor looms large in this one. ■

## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Tahara, Aichi, Japan
SEATING	bench 7 / captain's chairs 6
ENGINE	3.4L V6 twin turbo, 24v DOHC, chain drive, dual VVT-i
HP/TORQUE	349 hp / 479 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.3:1
TRANSMISSION	10-spd Direct Shift auto
DRIVETRAIN	AWD, Torsen limited-slip locking center differential, 50:50
0-100 / TOP SPEED	6.5 sec / 109 mph
SUSPENSION	F: dbl wishbone; R: four link w coil spring
STEERING	rack & pinion elec pwr
BRAKES	F: 13.94 x 1.26 vented, 4-cyl fixed; R: 13.19 x 0.79 vented, 1-cyl fixed caliper
WHEELS	22-in alloy
TIRES	265/50R22 XL 112v, Dunlop Grandtrek PT5A
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	197.05 / 112.2 in
OVERHANG (F/R)	37.8 / 47.05 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	8.66 in
APPR / DEPART / BRKOVER	.26 / .21 / 23°
WADING DEPTH	27.46 in
TURNING CIRCLE	39.4 ft
HEADROOM (F/2/3)	39.39 / 43.15 / 35.45 in
LEGROOM (F/2/3)	41.18 / 36.73 / 31.89 in
CARGO CAPACITY	10.3 / 40.1 / 76.9 cu.ft
WEIGHT	5565-5710 lb
TOW CAPACITY	7844-8020 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	premium / 21.14 gal
MPG	15/21/17 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	\$79,900
HEATED 2ND ROW CAPTAIN'S CHAIRS	440
HEADS-UP DISPLAY	900
TRAFFIC JAM ASSIST: 4G network dependent, requires Drive Connect subscription, 3-yr trial incl	620
DIGITAL KEY & SMART ACCESS KEY: 4G network dependent, requires Remote Connect subscription, 3-yr trial incl	375
ROOF RAIL CROSS BARS	440
CARPET CARGO MAT	150
TONNEAU COVER	110
BALL MOUNT	80
KEY GLOVE	25
WHEEL LOCKS	95
DESTINATION CHARGE	1350

**TOTAL** ..... **\$84,485**  
*Prices have increased; see below.*

## 2024 LEXUS GX LINEUP

GX 500 Premium	\$64,250
GX 500 Premium+	69,250
GX 500 Overtrail	69,250
GX 500 Overtrail+	77,250
GX 500 Luxury	77,250
GX 500 Luxury+	81,250

