

disarmingly simple

BY JOE SAGE

Acura's ILX sedan sits in the oxymoronic category of entry luxury or entry sport. As its first cousin, it's hard not to look at the ILX as it relates to the Honda Civic. Styling is cleaner outside and bears an advanced industrial design spirit inside. At a 32.5 percent higher base price, ILX also has a 2.4L engine, 60 percent larger than Civic's 1.5L, though with just 27 percent more horses. The top Civic model hits \$27,400, putting our top ILX example here just 15 percent higher. There's also a Civic SI at \$24,300, with 205 hp and a six-speed manual. Beyond all this, apples and oranges get extensive. What's pertinent here is how the new Acura ILX compares with its predecessor, as model year 2019 represents a refresh on many levels.

The new model is immediately recognizable by



its grille—gone is the brushed-metal cowcatcher, one of many style directions forecast in Acura's Precision concept at the 2016 Detroit auto show.

Standard technology is increased, notably with a faster-responding two-screen center interface, as well as AcuraWatch active safety and driver assistance and Android/Apple integration.

All that, and the price this year was actually reduced by \$2200—almost 10 percent.

Options are kept simple, arranged by packages, and our has all three. To have the A-Spec package—which we'd find irresistible for its interior—you also have to buy either the Premium or Tech Package (ours has both). You could save a few bucks here, but probably lose something you wanted (we didn't find the upgraded audio system too impressive, but haven't heard the base unit).

We sometimes found the engine short on power (even shifted to S, which mostly provided acoustics confirming how hard it's trying). Surely they can eke some more horses out of a 2.4L. But it does achieve very decent fuel mileage for its degree of style, content and pep.

In our experience, Acura owners have an extreme level of loyalty. Whatever the

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	.....2.4L alum alloy 4-cyl drive-by-wire throttle
DRIVETRAIN	.....FWD
HP/TORQUE	.....201 hp / 180 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	...8-spd DCT (dual clutch) w torque conv
SUSPENSION	.....F: MacPherson strut; R: multi-link
STEERING	.....elec power assist rack & pinion
BRAKES	.....F: 12.3 vented / R: 11.1 solid discs
WHEELS / TIRES	.....18x7.5 / 225/40 R18 hi-perf AS
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....182.2 / 105.1 in
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....38.0 / 35.9 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....42.3 / 34.0 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....12.4 cu.ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....5.3 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....36.8 ft
WEIGHT	.....3095 lb / with Prem, Tech, A-Spec 3148 lb
FUEL CAPACITY	.....13.2 gal
MPG	.....24/34/28 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE\$25,900

PREMIUM PKG: leather seats w piping & stitching, seat-mirror memory, power lumbar, Android/Apple, addtl premium tech & mobile connectivity, addtl driver assist.....1750

TECH PKG: upgraded 3D nav w real time traffic & turn-by-turn, 10-sprk audio, dynamic guideliness for multi-view rear camera, AcuraLink connectivity.....1900

A-SPEC PKG: 18" shark grey wheels, LED fogs, gloss black accents, side underbody spoilers, piano black rear diffuser & decklid spoiler, Ultrasuede-trimmed red or ebony interior, A-Spec leather wheel, A-Spec sills, sport pedals, dash graphite/chrome trim & red illumination.....2000

DESTINATION CHARGE995

TOTAL\$32,545

magic mix that attracts them to the premium brand over cousin brand Honda, and over the competing derivative premium brands, it proves potent. ■

