

Trending.

by Joe Sage

We all seem to be told, all day every day, that this is a time of SUV dominance, with little interest in what's classically been thought of as the car. How, then, does this car's car, the Lexus LC—especially in head-turning Flare Yellow paint—clearly come off as a halo for the entire Lexus brand? Well, a halo vehicle is seldom-to-never the most common cookie-cutter in the kitchen.

There are two basic models of the LC: this naturally-aspired V8-powered 471-hp LC 500, and a 354-system-hp V6-hybrid LC 500h. The hybrid is rated at 35 mpg highway to the V8's 25. The V8 hits 60 mph in 4.4 seconds to the hybrid's 4.7. To avoid too much model-crisscross confusion (or arguably to ensure it?), the hybrid is available only as an F Sport, the V8 only as not-an-F-Sport. This pushes the hybrid's cost \$4500 higher than the LC 500, but as F Sport is typically a \$6000 add-on, the apples and oranges are yours to contemplate.

Both versions have the same stunning supercar-caliber sheet metal, while the LC 500 has the wonderful, rich and deep-throated sound effects that only a V8 can deliver. It's the closest most mere mortals can get to the (limited run and not currently available) super-supercar V10 LFA, at a quarter

of its price.

Starting with the same "L" as the Lexus LS large luxury sedan, the LC also starts with the same platform as the LS, though it weighs in at about a thousand pounds lighter, due to not only its svelte size and shape, but also extensive use of aluminum and carbon fiber build—in the case of our example even moreso, with a \$2960 carbon fiber roof package and a \$2395 carbon fiber grille and rear spoiler package both added.

The Lexus LC's low-slung, road-hugging drive experience ratifies its visual impression.

Our week with the LC 500 offered an event-packed weekend, including a car show and rat rod cruise in the Pinetop region and a VW bus camp-in and show in Jerome. Tough choice, so of course we thought about doing it all. Complex and lengthy as that can get, we instead decided to just head out and see where the spirits took us—which ended up being to Montezuma Castle National Monument, Cottonwood, Jerome, several miles up the switchbacks toward Prescott, and then back to Cottonwood for a well-deserved barbecue lunch.

This ultimately all-day route gave us the normal dose of Valley freeway time, plenty of Interstate time including the always competitive two-lanes-per-side (and may it always be that way) climb through Black Canyon, and the best of the high country's wide-open, curvy, climbing two-lanes.

Well-equipped as our sample was, it did not

have an optional Performance Package, which (at \$5960) includes elements of our \$2960 Sport Package, along with active rear steering, speed-activated rear wing and a couple of other details. We find the concept of active rear steering (which among other things cuts the turning circle by 4.8 inches) compelling in theory, but in practice, it never crossed our minds on our aggressive mountain switchbacks—the basic system is not lacking.

The LC 500 has an incredible set of brakes to back up all its power—a large 6-piston set in front and ditto 4-piston in the rear—which were put to the test when a full-size American luxury sedan abruptly changed into our lane on the I-17 nighttime downhill run as though we weren't even there—disaster averted in a split second. A shoutout, as well, to its Y-rated Bridgestone Potenza tires, one of three OE performance fitments (staggered, by the way—fatter in the rear).

A number of details are extra sweet, such as the pivoting operation of its keyless door handles. Less sweet, though incrementally improving over time, is the jumpy touchpad that controls the screen interface. We'd also like to see fewer vital functions requiring deep dive screen time, which proved challenging even for a savvy copilot.

We received a lot of thumbs-ups in the Lexus LC, and it turned a lot of heads. This is one very sexy entry in the greater Lexus lineup—and lights up the whole brand. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

BUILD unitized steel body, steel front/rear subframes
COEFFICIENT OF DRAG0.33
SEATING CAPACITYfour
ENGINE5.0L V8 (alum block/heads)
 DOHC 32v dual VVT-i, EFI, D-4S direct injection
COMPRESSION RATIO12.3:1
HP/TORQUE471 hp / 398 lb-ft
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED4.4 sec / 168 mph (lim)
DRIVETRAINRWD
TRANSMISSION10-spd sport direct shift / paddles
REAR DIFFERENTIALTorsen limited slip (opt)
SUSPENSIONF: double-joint multilink; R: multilink
STEERINGelec power coaxial rack & pinion, spd-

sense
BRAKES4-whl pwr-assist disc, ABS, EBD, brake assist

F: 15.7 vented, 6-piston opposed alum calipers, high-friction pads; R: 14.1 vented, 4-piston opposed alum calipers, high-friction pads
WHEELS(std) 21-in cast / (opt) 21-in forged alum
TIRES(21" opt) F: 245/40RF21 / R: 275/35RF21
LENGTH / WHEELBASE187.4 / 113.0 in
TURNING CIRCLE35.4 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE5.2 in
HEADROOM (F/R)(w carbon fiber roof) 36.8 / 32.2 in
LEGROOM (F/R)42.0 / 32.5 in
CARGO CAPACITY5.4 cu.ft
WEIGHT5260 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY91 octane / 21.7 gal
MPG16/25/19 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE\$92,950
21-IN FORGED ALLOY WHEELS2650
HEADS-UP DISPLAY900
LIMITED SLIP DIFFERENTIAL390
AUDIO: Mark Levinson 13-speaker premium surround sound audio system1220
INTUITIVE PARKING ASSIST500
PREMIUM PAINT: Flare Yellow595
SPORT PKG W CARBON ROOF: 8-way power front seats w Alcantara inserts, carbon fiber roof2960
CARBON FIBER PKG: grille insert & spoiler2395
DOOR EDGE FILM90
PAINT PROTECTION FILM395
[GRP]: Trunk mat, cargo net, wheel locks, key gloves275
DESTINATION CHARGE1025

TOTAL\$106,348

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

Welcome to a world where the roads are dry, the cars are slick and the destinations are limitless...



We drive customers to your business.

Focused content for a targeted, engaged audience
 Print, social and web promotional bundles
 Special sections and sponsored content available
 Custom publications, brochures and direct mail

sales@arizonadrivermagazine.com / main office: 480-948-0200
 www.arizonadrivermagazine.com / FB: @arizonadrivermagazine
 IG: @arizonadriver / TW: @arizonadriver / Pedal: @arizonadriver