

# Well suited

BY JOE SAGE

We inevitably find ourselves trying to translate Lexus models, particularly their crossovers and SUVs, to Toyota equivalents. This gets tricky because of their distinctly different styling and features, but also because Toyota has eight different utilities (even if you count hybrids and such separately, as they do), while Lexus has five (or nine, ditto). It's the smaller end of the category that's exploding industrywide, and here Toyota has the new bZ4X, C-HR, new Corolla Cross and RAV4, while Lexus has the RX and this new smaller UX.

Though the UX is most closely related to the

smaller Toyota C-HR, it reminded us of the RAV4, which is what initiated the comparison this time around. And that's a good thing. When we first got our hands on the new RAV4 at the end of 2019, it went straight to our cover, so impressed were we, and it has gone on to win a wide range of awards. Though smaller than the RAV4 (or platform-mate Lexus NX), the Lexus UX, a global model, makes up the difference with more premium touches and Lexus family styling, particularly that spindle grille up front, this one with particularly bold geometry in its details (see inset for changes afoot).

Though their smallest crossover, the UX feels generous inside. Instruments and controls provide a driver-centric experience, while materials and finishes are all upgraded in line with the brand.

Though engine horsepower is moderate, overall power and performance are augmented by one motor-generator to assist the default front drive wheels (and recoup energy) and another (just on the 250h) to power the rear wheels for enhanced cornering as well as traction on slick (or exhilarating) surfaces. A third motor-generator functions as starter and generator, while also recouping regenerative power.

Put that all together, and you have a system that performs beyond its raw numbers, from notable pep at the first touch of the pedal, to enough power to hold its own, most of the time, even among an increasingly electric fleet of fellow travelers. (No torque specification is given for the UX.) In addition to normal, sport and eco, the UX has an

Though it's the spindle grille that most immediately gives the UX its Lexus character, Lexus has now revealed new front styling for the 2023 RX, replacing the upper portion of the grille with a blunt sheet metal nose. Consider it an evolution, as they are terming it a "new, cohesive spindle body design," and the lower edge of the upper portion echoes small air intakes. It looks sharp while also arguably leaning styling a bit toward the blunt fronts of a growing wave of EVs.

EV mode, available in "certain conditions."

Lexus is gradually improving its finicky user interface, but spend some time with the controls to make sure they suit your needs.

Though this is a competitive region, most people, if honest with themselves, don't need anything bigger or fancier than this, inside or out. The Lexus UX is an upscale cousin of the Toyota CH-R or arguably RAV4, both excellent vehicles, still at a very reasonable price for a Lexus and wearing a proud and handsome Lexus suit. ■



## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	.....Miyawaka, Fukuoka, Japan
SEATING	.....five
BUILD	.....unitized body; alum doors, hood, front fenders; polymer-alum rear hatch
HYBRID DRIVE SYSTEM	.....series-parallel gasoline-electric hybrid w two drive motor-generators (plus a third MG)
ENGINE	.....2.0L inline-4, 16v DOHC EFI dir inj, VVT-iE VVT-i Atkinson cycle, alum block w steel liners, alum cylinder head
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....14.0:1
MOTOR-GENERATORS:	
MG1	.....generator, starter, engine speed
MG2	.....drives wheels, brake regen
MGR	.....drives rear wheels, stability control
TOTAL SYSTEM POWER	.....181 hp
TORQUE	.....not stated
TRANSMISSION	.....CVT
FINAL DRIVE RATIOS (F/R)	.....3.605 / 10.487
0-TO-60 / TOP SPEED	.....8.6 sec / 110 mph
BATTERY PACK	.....180-cell Ni-MH (nickel-metal hybrid), 216V, 24 kW
DRIVETRAIN	.....AWD
DRIVE MODES	.....sport-normal-eco / EV Drive
SUSPENSION	.....F: MacPherson strut indep; R: multi-link indep w trailing arms
STEERING	.....rack & pinion, column-mtd elec
BRAKES	.....F: 12.0 vented, R: 11.1 solid
WHEELS	.....18x7J 5-spoke alum alloy dark grey metallic w machine finish
TIRES	.....225/50RF18 all-season run-flats
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....176.97 / 103.94 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....not stated
TURNING CIRCLE	.....34.2 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....w/moonrf 35.75 / 36.38 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....42.05 / 33.13 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....(above deck)17.1 cu.ft (below deck) 21.73 cu.ft
WEIGHT / DISTRIBUTION	.....3605 lb / F/R 57/43%
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....regular / 10.6 gal
MPG	.....41/38/39 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	..... <b>\$40,240</b>
WIRELESS CHARGER	.....75
HEADS-UP DISPLAY	.....500
LAMPS:	triple beam LED headlamps w auto-leveling, washers, LED fogs and cornering lamps.....1660
INTUITIVE PARKING ASSIST	.....565
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1075
TOTAL	..... <b>\$44,115</b>

(Note: sticker price varies slightly from below.)

## 2022 LEXUS UX LINEUP

UX 200	.....base.....	\$33,150
	.....F Sport.....	35,490
	.....Luxury.....	38,190
UX 250h AWD	.....base.....	35,350
	.....F Sport.....	37,690
	.....Luxury.....	40,390

UX 200: 2.0L four-cylinder, 169 hp, 151 lb-ft, FWD, zero-to-60 8.9 sec, top speed 118 mph 29/37/32 mpg

UX 250h AWD: per full specifications above