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LS 600h L Hybrid Sedan: The Ultimate Lexus

PASADENA, California – When the 2008 LS 600h L hybrid luxury sedan launches this summer it will provide the highest level of performance and technology, and the truest expression of luxury of any Lexus ever created. The hybrid model elevates the LS to a new level, expanding Lexus and its presence among the ever more discriminating customer.

“The LS 600h L will stand as the flagship for the Lexus brand by providing the highest level of technical advancements, ride comfort, safety and luxury of any vehicle in our lineup,” said Jim Farley, Lexus group vice president and general manager. “Its development process mixed the old and the new. The old, through a Lexus-established build process that achieves an extraordinary fit and finish only attainable by our master craftsmen, and the new with cutting-edge engineering innovations. Through this combination the LS 600h L raises our own quality expectations and may rank among the most technologically advanced automobiles in the industry.”

Lexus Hybrid Drive

The all-new LS 600h L will be powered by the ultra-quiet Lexus Hybrid Drive system, the automotive industry’s most advanced gas-electric hybrid system developed to date that features the world’s first full V8, all-wheel-drive (AWD) hybrid drivetrain. The system combines a new 5.0-liter V8 gasoline engine with two powerful electric motors and a newly designed large-capacity battery pack that is lighter and extremely quiet. Together, this advanced combination provides the LS 600h L with an unmatched balance of environmental efficiency and performance.

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2008 Lexus LS 600h L 2-2-2-2-2

The LS 600h L's Lexus Hybrid Drive system provides power and performance on par with competitors normally aspirated 12-cylinder powerplants. The hybrid powertrain generates a peak combined output rating of 438 horsepower and can effortlessly accelerate the LS 600h L from zero-to-60 mph in just 5.5 seconds. Mid-range acceleration is even more impressive. The system's electric motor is capable of delivering maximum torque, on demand, and is most beneficial during passing maneuvers. Finally, exhilarating torque is in abundance at higher speeds as the LS 600h L rapidly accelerates from 50-70 mph in a rapid 3.5 seconds.

The innovative V8 features an electric-motor driven Variable Valve Timing with intelligence and Electrically controlled intake cam (VVT-iE). This combination of VVT-i with electric-motor driven intake and a hydraulically controlled two-way exhaust system achieves superior engine-startup operation and high-output performance. A newly developed Hydrocarbon Adsorber and Catalyst (HCAC) system is linked to the two-way exhaust to help prevent hydrocarbons contained in the exhaust from being released into the atmosphere during cold start up when the catalysts are not up to temperature.

The LS 600h L's high-output performance is matched with a preliminary MY08 EPA-estimated miles-per-gallon fuel efficiency rating of 20 in the city, and 22 on the highway. Its combined fuel economy rating of 21 mpg is equal to or better than the combined fuel-economy ratings of many V6 all-wheel-drive mid-sized luxury sedans.

The LS hybrid is expected to carry a Super Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (SULEV) rating. A SULEV rating means the LS 600h L has nearly 70 percent cleaner smog forming emissions than vehicles with a conventional internal combustion engine and cleaner than the ambient air in some major cities.

An added benefit to Lexus Hybrid Drive is the significant reduction in noise, vibration and harshness (NVH) it delivers to the LS 600h L. The new V8 is tuned to reduce vibration and sound by adding additional sound insulating materials around the cylinder head covers. Additional NVH reduction is achieved by reducing damper pulley tensions and perfecting engine mount sizes and locations through repeated testing by Lexus engineers. The NVH levels in the LS 600h L are approximately half those found in other luxury cars, making it one of the quietest automobiles ever built.

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“Full Hybrid” Powertrain

The LS 600h L is defined as a “full hybrid,” capable of operating in electric-only mode or with a combination of the gas engine and electric motor. In contrast, other hybrid technologies require constant gas operation and are not capable of running only on electric power alone. Lexus hybrid technology allows electric-mode-only operation at low speeds or stop-and-go driving conditions, reducing fuel consumption and noise.

The hybrid system in the LS 600h L uses a 288-volt DC Nickel Metal Hydride (Ni-MH) compact battery pack installed behind the rear seat. The trunk also contains a 12-volt auxiliary battery that powers the audio, navigation, and other systems. The battery’s power is directed through a “boost converter” that efficiently raises voltage to a maximum 650V DC. An inverter changes this to AC, providing it elevated power to a 165-kW electric motor that turns at a rate of as much as 10,240 rpm. Lexus engineers devised a higher output inverter that both increases output by 10 percent and makes it compact in size and weight for easy mounting in the engine compartment.

The LS 600h L’s powertrain uses two motor generators: MG1 and MG2. Each performs specific functions and can operate as either a motor or a generator, although MG1 is used as a starter motor and provides no motive force. The engine-driven generator, MG1, can charge the battery pack or provide additional power to the drive motor, MG2, as needed.

Full-Time All-Wheel Drive

The vast power of the LS 600h L is distributed by a newly developed full-time AWD system that delivers superior handling and traction control. This state-of-the-art system adapts to almost any road surface to help provide excellent vehicle stability during acceleration, high-speed driving and cornering while also delivering the natural handling feel of a rear-wheel-drive vehicle.

The outstanding performance of the AWD system is accomplished through a new transfer case that is ultra quiet, compact and equipped with a unique Torsen® limited-slip differential (LSD) that is 30 percent lighter in size and weight than previous Torsen® systems. To maximize the AWD system's performance, the LSD features a rear biased torque distribution of 40:60 under normal straight-line driving. The LSD automatically and continually adjusts power distribution between the front and rear wheels according to changing speed and road conditions.

The micron-polished finish of the gears in the transfer case renders remarkably low noise levels. Placement of the LSD inside the transfer case further reduces noise and helps eliminate the raised-floor tunnel, providing enhanced interior comfort.

Extraordinary Hybrid Transmission

The LS 600h L features a dual-stage electronically controlled continuously variable transmission. The combination of a V8 5.0-liter AWD system and hybrid transmission results in impressive power and seamless acceleration.

The dual-stage electronically controlled continuously variable transmission includes eight-speed sequential braking. The sequential braking mode is activated when the shift lever is in the "S" mode, allowing eight different stages of response. When upshifting, engine speed is controlled by the selected range, offering an exhilarating boost in acceleration during each of the eight shift stages. When downshifting, brake-force increases allowing for an equally exciting deceleration.

Power is controlled by a three-mode hybrid switch to allow the driver the most effective use of torque output. The driver can select "hybrid" (normal), "power," or "snow" options. The "hybrid" mode provides the smoothest operation and is ideal for city or suburban driving; "power" sharpens accelerator pedal response and "snow" mode softens accelerator pedal response, making it easier to accelerate on slippery road surfaces.

For the ultimate in quiet driving and low emissions the LS 600h L features an EV drive mode. By pushing an EV switch, power reverts to full electric mode for short-distance, slow driving situations such as residential areas or parking garages.

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Optimum Fuel Saving Technology

The LS 600h L is equipped with a power-steering system and air-conditioning compressor that are electrically powered to reduce parasitic losses to the engine, thereby helping improve fuel consumption. This is necessary because, as a fuel-saving benefit of the hybrid system, the gas engine often shuts down, particularly when the vehicle is stopped or driven slowly in traffic. Additionally, demand on the air conditioner is reduced through the use of ultraviolet and infrared ray-reducing tinted glass on all windows.

A regenerative braking system further boosts efficiency. When the vehicle is coasting or the brakes are applied, the electric motors function as generators, capturing kinetic energy that would normally be lost as heat through the brakes and transforming it into useable electricity to recharge the batteries.

Responsive Handling

The powerful acceleration of the LS 600h L is matched by responsive handling that includes a class-leading turning radius while maintaining the ultra-comfortable ride that has become synonymous with all Lexus vehicles. Lexus engineers developed multi-link front- and rear-suspension systems to achieve outstanding adaptability to unevenness in road surfaces, including a new multi-link front suspension exclusive to the LS 600h L. This new suspension helps overcome under-steering and drifting situations common when driving an AWD vehicle at high speeds. A newly developed front suspension and an optional active stabilizer help maintain exceptional vehicle control and ride comfort during high-speed lane changes or driving on winding roads.

External cylinder-restriction air springs smoothly absorb shock, achieving ride comfort without roll sensation or vibration due to road conditions. A standard air suspension control system helps maintain superb vehicle posture and stable driving performance with minimal pitching and rolling.

The LS 600h L is equipped with large front- and rear-ventilated disc brakes and standard 19-inch, seven-spoke aluminum alloy wheels with all-season tires. These special wheels receive extensive buffing, and their shape is meticulously analyzed to create a form with shade depths that shift when the vehicle is in motion.

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2008 LS 600h L 6-6-6-6-6

The LS 600h L is controlled by Electronic Power Steering (EPS), which delivers a smooth steering feel that supports the multilink suspension and large-diameter tires. The EPS motor creates a steering impression that responds to the driver's touch and provides a responsive feel when cornering.

Variable Gear Ratio Steering (VGRS) is integrated into the steering-gear housing to optimize the steering gear ratio according to vehicle speed, enhancing responsiveness and driver control. VGRS also partners with the Vehicle Dynamics Integrated Management (VDIM) system, making minor adjustments to the front-wheel angle to help provide improved stability in challenging road conditions.

Elegant Styling and Appointments

Over the last three years, Lexus has developed its L-finesse styling philosophy. This new design language rests upon the inherent contrast between simplicity and elegance, and the beauty of achieving a balance between the two. Like the LS 460, GS, IS and ES, the all-new LS 600h L flagship adopts this philosophy, revealing a family resemblance in the new Lexus sedans – one that conveys elegance, refinement and a strong emotional appeal.

With the new LS 600h L, designers have achieved a new level of meticulous detail, polished excellence and engaging comfort that is unique to Lexus. Styled at the Global Design Center in Tokyo, the LS 600h L uses complex lines and surfaces throughout the body. Exterior design cues embody a dignified strength, yet a sense of emotion and aggressiveness is exemplified in the continuous flow of the hood and bumper. The LS 600h L adopts the forceful profile, portraying a sense of power combined with an image of increasing speed. Minimal body gaps, a low front grille and deep-drawn fenders all contribute to this look.

Stylish projector-type headlamps with blue crystal rings, which also include the world's first night-time LED low beams, provide excellent visibility and contribute to the LS 600h L styling theme. Blue accents on the front headlamps, taillamps, badging, engine cover and the SmartAccess key fobs and Smart Card key are unique to the LS 600h L.

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2008 LS 600h L 7-7-7-7-7

Passenger space and luxury comfort were the primary focus of the interior cabin design. Genuine semi-aniline leather is featured throughout the cabin, its rich appearance softened and structured with additional stitching to create a relaxed atmosphere. The leather-trim extends beyond the seats and onto the instrument panel, upper front doors and door armrests. The center console adds to passenger comfort and convenience through perfect angle placement for ease of use from either the driver or front passenger seat and is placed at the same height as the door armrests for a comfortable balance. Additional luxury touches unique to the LS 600h L includes a wood-trimmed and chrome-plated shift knob and wood-trimmed assist grip.

Advanced Safety Technologies

Cutting-edge active and passive safety technologies combine in the LS 600h L to create one integrated system. Active safety features include the Vehicle Dynamics Integrated Management (VDIM) stability system, which assimilates and manages the Electronically Controlled Brake (ECB) system, EPS, Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Antilock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Brake-force Distribution (EBD) and engine torque via the electronically controlled throttle. Monitoring a variety of sensors, the system anticipates the onset of a vehicle skid or slide while cornering, and then helps correct the situation with a combination of braking, throttle and steering control in a way that is essentially transparent to the driver. The VDIM system gathers data from more sources, processed earlier and faster than in previous designs, which helps make the LS 600h L's system even more seamless and effective. VSC can also be turned off by the driver via the Trac Off button. In addition to the active safety features, the LS 600h L is standard-equipped with eight standard airbags, with a maximum of 11 airbags available through option packages.

Lexus engineers have also developed an Advanced Pre-Collision System (APCS). It is the world's first system designed to help detect pedestrians in the vehicle's path. APCS, with two small cameras mounted at the front of the car that work in conjunction with millimeter-wave radar, is sensitive enough to detect certain nonmetallic objects.

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2008 LS 600h L 8-8-8-8-8

As part of APCS the LS also offers the world's first Driver Monitor System. A third camera, mounted on the steering column, monitors the orientation of the driver's face. If the camera detects that it appears the driver is not looking directly ahead for a few seconds or more, and if an obstacle is detected ahead, then it alerts the driver first with a warning chime and a flashing light. As the car gets closer to the obstacle, APCS can begin to gently apply the brakes on its own. To assist the driver in maneuvering around the obstacle, the system reprograms the steering ratio, amplifying the intensity and quickness of the steering response.

While all of this is happening, the system automatically retracts the front seatbelts and prepares the brake system to respond with full force when activated by the driver in anticipation of a possible impact.

Refined Comfort and Convenience

The LS600h L delivers nearly five inches more legroom than the LS 460. It also provides the highest level of comfort and convenience features among all LS models. Standard features include a hard disk drive (HDD) Lexus Navigation system with a backup camera and Bluetooth® technology and voice activation, and XM factory-installed satellite radio with real-time traffic displays and dynamic route guidance. For genuine theater-level entertainment, the LS 600h L features a standard 19-speaker 450-watt Mark Levinson® Reference Surround Sound audio system, raising the bar for automotive sound systems. A portion of the HDD is dedicated to storing as many as 2,000 (128-bit) digital songs. An auxiliary jack located in the front center console allows for iPod or MP3 capable digital music players.

Additional standard features include an Adaptive Front lighting System (AFS), climate-controlled front seats, heated rear seats, a heated steering wheel, power rear sunshade, one-touch open/close power trunk, power door closers, headlamp washers, SmartAccess with push-button start and card key, electronic parking brake, Intuitive Park Assist, and laminated side glass.

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2008 LS 600h L 9-9-9-9-9

A list of optional conveniences includes an Advanced Parking Guidance System (APGS) to assist with parallel and back-in parking. Once the driver has correctly positioned the car and identified the desired parking spot via the navigation screen, APGS utilizes the rear back-up camera parking sonar sensors and electric power steering system to guide the car into the spot, while the driver controls speed via braking.

Special option packages offer unique features for the ultimate touch of luxury. The Premium Package includes climate comfort rear seats with a heat/cool knob, rear power seats with memory, rear power headrests, rear seat side airbags, Lexus Link and APGS. The left-side rear power seat has a built-in 28-degree angle and reclines up to 38 degrees and the rear seat moves front to back approximately three inches.

The Premium Package II includes all features in the Premium Package and a heater control panel, four-zone climate control, rear audio controls, additional wood trim, rear air purifier, rear cool box, rear headliner and side air ducts, power rear-door sunshades, and a rear seat entertainment system equipped with a power ceiling-mounted nine-inch screen for DVD viewing.

The Executive Class Seating Package II includes all features in the Premium Package II and features a power right rear seat that reclines up to 45 degrees with an upper-back recliner featuring a 17-degree angle adjustment. A multi-function massage feature includes an enhanced massage mode for the right-rear seat recliner that can be used separately or in conjunction with the seat heater and cooler. The package also includes a rear-seat wood-trimmed table and the rear-seat entertainment system features wireless headphones.

The rear climate control is upgraded with three infrared sensors located in the headliner that measure lap, upper body and seat on each side and then adjusts airflow accordingly.

An Active Power Stabilizer is also available and features 19-inch summer tires, high-friction brakes and an active-stabilizer system to help reduce body roll.

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2008 LS 600h L 10-10-10-10-10

Each limited Launch Edition LS 600h L will come in a unique Truffle Mica exterior color matched to an Alabaster and Black leather interior. Additional features exclusive to the Launch Edition model will include a leather-trimmed upper and lower black monotone instrument panel, 19-inch split five-spoke aluminum wheels with a shiny chrome finish, an etched chrome-finish "Launch Edition" interior badge including the vehicle's serial number, "Launch Edition" logo floor mats, and the Premium Package.

Superior Craftsmanship

Beyond the advanced technology and endless array of comfort and convenience features, at the heart of the LS 600h L is the meticulous pursuit of perfection for which Lexus has always stood. This is especially evident in the new LS build process. Through the use of a revolutionary production process, Lexus has elevated the bar on what has already been globally recognized as the best production facility in the world. A build process was developed specifically for the LS line at the award-winning assembly plant in Tahara, Japan. With remarkable levels of fit, finish, accuracy and refinement achieved through the combined skill, knowledge, and pride of Lexus master craftsmen and advanced technology, the LS 600h L exemplifies "world's best."

Premium Protection

All new Lexus vehicles come with a 48-month/50,000-mile basic limited warranty with roadside assistance for 48-months/unlimited miles. Powertrain and restraint system coverage is provided for 72 months/70,000 miles. Corrosion perforation protection is covered for 72 months, regardless of mileage. The hybrid-related components, including the HV battery, battery control module, hybrid control module and inverter with converter, are covered for eight years/100,000 miles.

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