

The Third Generation Lexus IS

MENTION Lexus and immediately luxury springs to mind. Introduced in 1999 the brand has certainly grown in numbers and with the arrival of the third generation IS at last there is a car that can compete head to head with the premium German brands and in many respects it wins.



The newcomer is a real eye catcher, possibly the best exterior design to come from Lexus ever and being larger in every respect than the outgoing model adds further to the appeal factor.

For some earlier generations of the IS have been too bland in the looks department while they delivered a very satisfying interior package.

For Lexus in our market the IS is a major player accounting for half of all sales and for the first time it features hybrid technology.

While the exterior is striking, the same can be said of the interior with a cockpit

inspired by the LFA. At last the interior environment is not only a focus for the driver but also for all whom travel in the new IS.

In bringing this new model to market extensive testing was carried out, some 1.6 million kilometres including extensive testing on the famous Nurburgring in Germany.

After having spent some time behind the wheel of the new IS in Austria it came very clear to me that all who made this car possible had a number of goals in mind, quality, economy and performance and for me my score sheet is a high one.

I suppose it would have been so easy for the Lexus designers and engineers to produce a car which majored on performance; yes they have succeeded in delivering performance aplenty, but the other goals; luxury the best in class in my opinion and very important economy.

An emission figure as low as 99g/km has been achieved, no other car in this class has scored that goal and the emphasis on hybrid and no diesel availability speaks volumes, Lexus are looking to the future and to what taxes governments might introduce.

Customers can choose from two powertrains, IS 250 with a 2.5 litre V6 petrol engine and the IS 300h with the full hybrid system which combines a 141bhp/105kW electric motor with a new 2.5-litre 178bhp/133kW four-cylinder Atkinson cycle petrol engine, equipped with next-generation D-4S fuel injection, Dual VVT-i intelligent variable valve timing and high efficiency exhaust gas recirculation.



The system drives the rear wheels via an electronically controlled continuously variable transmission. Total system output is 220bhp/164kW, enabling rest to 62mph in 8.3 seconds (IS 300h SE) and a 125mph top speed.

Combined cycle fuel consumption is 65.7mpg with class-leading CO₂ emissions of 99g/km (IS 300h SE).

The hybrid battery is located beneath the luggage compartment floor and the IS 300h has a 50:50 front: rear weight distribution.

The transmission can be switched to a sequential shiftmatic mode, operated using paddle shifts on the steering wheel and the transmission has been tuned to more closely match increases in engine speed with increases in vehicle speed, to give a more engaging driving experience.

Wait for it, Active Sound Control, which compliments the sound of the engine with an audio feed through a dedicated speaker in the cabin. Some people may not like this while others certainly will.

The 24-valve 2.5 litre V6 petrol engine in the IS 250 develops 153kW/205bhp at 6,400rpm and 252Nm of torque at 4,800rpm. Acceleration from rest to 62mph in 8.1 seconds and the maximum speed is 140mph.

The combined fuel figure is 32.8mpg with 199g/km CO₂ emissions (both figures for IS 250 SE and Luxury)

The F Sport package is available for both IS 250 and IS 300h, with sporting styling elements inside and out. The other trim levels are SE, Luxury and Premium.

The new IS abounds with technology with powerful multimedia systems, multiple connectivity options and access to Lexus Connected services. All models come with high equipment levels which in the main beat the competition

Advanced safety systems including Blind Spot Monitor, Rear Cross Traffic Alert and Tyre Pressure Warning System, this car has it all and more.

Is it value for money? Yes, prices start at £26,495 and the forecast from Lexus is that the Luxury trim will be the big seller.



Ian Lynas

