

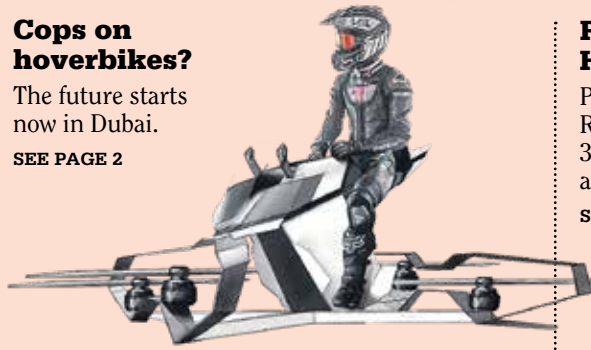
Cars you can't have

A select list of sour grapes we don't want anyway. SEE PAGE 3



Cops on hoverbikes?

The future starts now in Dubai. SEE PAGE 2



Rebel Honda

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TEST DRIVE

Hybrid, Reconsidered

2019 Lexus ES 300h

DAN LYONS | text and photos
Special to the Times Union

First impressions can't be ignored, but they are subject to change. Lexus' design makeover for the top-ranging LS series included sleek, sharply-creased lines capped with a prominent (and controversial) spindle grille. The new styling has had a trickle-down effect on the new ES series. The seventh generation ES looks classy and contemporary, and while the grille still demands attention, the look of the front end is more integrated here than in the LS; a face that's less in your face.



The 2019 ES is longer, lower and wider than the previous model. Riding on the also-new Global Architecture-K platform, the wheelbase has been stretched two inches, with front and back tracks tugged slightly wider. The dimension changes outside don't noticeably impact the interior — although your luggage will be happy.

2019 Lexus ES 300h

MSRP: \$41,410-\$45,060

The cabin space comfortably houses adults in either row. Front legroom is slightly increased; rear head and leg room slightly decreased compared to the outgoing model.

Trunk capacity measures 16.7 cubic-feet. That's notable for two reasons. First, it's considerably larger than the former hybrid's cargo capacity (12.1-cu.ft.), and also because it's the same in both hybrid and gas powered models. Lexus relocated the hybrid's battery pack that powers the electric motor from the trunk to beneath the rear seat. So, a bigger trunk, with a center pass-through for skis, fishing poles or other



LONGER, LOWER AND WIDER FOR 2019, the Lexus ES 300h's hybrid drive system combines a 2.5L Atkinson-cycle four-cylinder gas engine (left) with a 29.1kW electric motor, for a combined system output of 215 horsepower.

similarly long, skinny gear.

The view from the driver's seat starts with a 7-inch cluster of digital instruments. On navigation equipped models, the top center of the dashboard is reserved for a 12.3-inch screen. The display is bright and crisp, and the infotainment system is now compatible with Apple CarPlay (though still not with Android Auto).

However, the main interface with the system — a touchpad on the center console — requires finesse moves to operate, is inexact and distracting, and the menu logic is unintuitive. Secondary (button) controls are available for several system adjustments, and are preferable to the primary controls.

Interior storage space is modest, including door

pockets, glove box and a covered center console bin. Upholstery and trim choices allow you to customize the look and feel of the interior. Auto audiophiles may

be swayed to swap the standard 10-speaker Pioneer sound system for the available 17-speaker, 1800 watt (!) Mark Levinson surround sound system (\$900).

Lexus Safety System+ 2.0 is standard on all ES models. Included among these features: an emergency automatic braking system (which now includes bicyclist detection),

lane departure assist with steering control, lane tracing assist, adaptive cruise control, road sign assist, automatic high beams and rear parking sensors. Other popular safety technology items are available optionally, such

The seventh-gen ES looks classy and contemporary, and the grille still demands attention.

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