

What state has the worst drivers?

This insurer has ranked every state in the union.

PAGE 2



Let it snow

Bet your Ford didn't come with this option.

PAGE 3



Is the VW dune buggy back?

PAGE 2



The area's most complete automotive resource and listings.

1,639 vehicles for sale inside — plus more than 7,000 online at timesunion.com/cars

Automotive

timesunion.com/cars

Fact check:

Are electric cars really better for the environment?

PAGE 3

TEST DRIVE

Lexus Maximus

2019 Lexus LS 500

DAN LYONS | text
Special to the Times Union

Lexus' full size, LS 500 sedan was fully redesigned last year. The fifth generation, five-passenger flagship is offered in LS 500, LS 500 hybrid and LS 500 F Sport models. Prices for the "base" model start at \$75,300 in rear-wheel-drive trim. Upgrading to all-wheel-drive (and living around here, why wouldn't you) takes the starting sticker to \$78,520.



With its curvy, coupe-like roofline, last year's restyling yielded a car that's longer and lower than before, and looks it. The front view is dominated by the bold, Lexus spindle grille. The signature styling statement is contro-

versial, largely because it contrasts with the conservative designs of past models.

The interior poses no such debates. The stylish, front cabin features a flowing, two-tier dashboard. The standard materials and trims have a quality look and feel, and you can option your way into some truly unique

2019 Lexus LS 500

MSRP: \$75,300 (RWD), \$78,520 (AWD)
As Tested: \$104,230

looking finishes, if you wish. Apple CarPlay compatibility has been added for 2019 (along with Amazon Alexa functionality), though it's still a no go, for Android Auto.

Safety System+ 2.0 — Lexus suite of standard, active safety equipment — is standard on all models, and its content has been broadened for 2019. The safety package now consists of a pre-collision system with automatic braking (detection expanded to include bicyclists in daylight and pedestrians in daylight/low light), lane tracing assist, lane departure alert with steering assist, adaptive cruise control, automatic high beams, and road sign assist.

Speaking of safety, three popular, use 'em every day features are standard on all models: blind spot monitoring, parking assist and rear cross traffic assist with braking.

Many of the adjustments for seats, sound, settings, HVAC and navigation are absorbed into the 12.3-inch central display screen. It's accessed via touchpad on the center console. The process is inexact and distracting, and the system also buries items that should be more



THE 2019 LEXUS LS 500 is a four-door luxury sedan from Toyota's upscale marque. Last year's restyling continues with a curvy, coupe-like roofline and the Lexus' bold spindle grille.

easily accessible, like switches for the heated seats, or changing the direction of air flow in the cabin. Drilling down through multiple menus with a jumpy touchpad to get to there gets tiresome.

Buyers of large luxury sedans typically do so because they regularly bring people with them when they travel, and they prefer how a car feels and drives over an SUV. So, the back seat is a big deal in a luxury sedan. The Lexus headroom and leg room (37.3 inches and 38.9 inches, respectively) is on the short end of segment "comparables" like the Mercedes S450 (39.2 inches, 43 inches), Audi A8 (38.5 inches, 44.3 inches) and the Cadillac STS (37.8 inches, 40 inches). Trunk capacity in the LS500 measures 16.9 cubic feet, which trails the

Buyers of large luxury sedans typically do so because they prefer how a car feels and drives over an SUV.

Cadillac (18 cu. ft.), but edges its midsize line mate (the ES 300, 16.7), and bests both the Mercedes (12.3 cu. ft.) and the Audi (12.5 cu. ft.). The LS 500 will comfortably hold six-footers in both rows. If you select the robustly priced (\$12,270!) Luxury package, some of the features added are heated, reclining outboard rear seats, and power side window sun shades.

Folding down the center armrest in back removes the center seating position, but allows access to a touchscreen console with HVAC, sound system and seating controls. The rear reclining feature is nice (as are the accompanying, reading lights and drop down, lighted mirrors), but its usefulness is height (and foot size) dependent. If there are tall people in front, like size rear passengers will find, as they recline, that their knees

Continued on page 2

GO AHEAD. OPEN IT UP.



The Times Union Auto section indulges your need for all things fast and furious.

timesunion.com/cars
TIMES UNION

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER