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TEST DRIVE

## Luxury on a Small Scale

### 2019 Lexus UX 200

DAN LYONS | text  
Special to the Times Union

Owing to its popularity, the crossover segment continues to expand and subdivide. The latest subsegment is Luxury Subcompact Crossovers, of which this week's test vehicle — the Lexus UX 200 — is the newest member. I've been in a number of Lexus models recently (Lexuses? Lexi?); all of which were wearing the company's signature, spindle grille.



It's a bold styling feature, and can be polarizing, but less so here than elsewhere in the lineup. The mesh pattern in the grille on my UX 200 tester was black (rather than chrome), making it blend in (rather than stick out). And too, an edgy front end seems more at home on a small, youth-leaning hatchback than it does on other models.

There are a number of players in this space — Audi Q3, Infiniti QX30, Mercedes GLA, BMW X1 and Volvo XC40 among them. The last mentioned is the first that

**2019 Lexus UX 200**  
MSRP: \$ 33,200 - \$37,700  
(plus \$995 destination charge)

I thought of for comparison to the UX 200, for several reasons. Both are the first model to roll on a new, global architecture for their respective lineups (GA-C platform for Lexus, CMA for Volvo). Both target urban dwelling millennials, who are far more likely to travel in canyons made from concrete, glass and metal than those formed by nature.

Finally, Lexus is dipping its toe in the subscription-based ownership waters — in addition to the conventional purchase process — which is a path pioneered by Volvo last year. A two-year Lexus subscription program is initially being offered only in select, big city markets (Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami).

The size of the latest Lexus is consistent with its mission as a city ride. In congested urban areas, a modest footprint can be a plus, allowing you to squeeze past double-parked dullards, and slip into undersized parking spaces.

The downside on downsizing is less room for people and their stuff. Six-footers may find themselves wishing for an extra inch of front leg room (as I did), and with that seat at full pushback, legroom behind is practically



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER

2019 UX 200 is Lexus' upscale entry in the popular luxury subcompact crossover section. It's powered by a 2.0-liter inline four-cylinder, rated at 169 horsepower, and is also available as a hybrid with four-wheel-drive.

nil. The Lexus measures out at 33.1 inches in back, which compares with 36.1 inches in the XC40, (and also in the Lexus NX, by the way). The last time I checked, the leader in leg room for row two in this segment was the BMW X-1 (37 inches), which also held the top slot for cargo capacity (27.1-58.7 cubic feet). The UX 200 measures out at a modest 21.7 cubic feet of stowage space. Rear seatbacks fold forward, though that leaves you with a split-level load floor, and a moderate lift over height to negotiate.

Up front, the UX shows best with two-tone upholstery rather than monotones. My test car was upgraded with the Premium package (\$1,175). That bundle includes blind spot monitoring (gotta have it), power moon roof,

heated/ventilated front seats, rain sensing wipers and special "Washi" trim. Even so, the look and feel of the cabin materials in mid-trim level cars like this one seem underdressed, for a 30-\$omething vehicle. A console-mounted touchpad is the primary means of accessing many system controls, like climate, audio, navigation and general system settings.

Happily, full HVAC controls are collected in a bank of buttons mid-way up the center stack, so you can bypass the touchpad. That's also true for the audio controls, which have dedicated buttons and dials embedded in a palm rest, just north of the center console armrest.

Both of these secondary switchgear locations are preferable to the touchpad, which like all touchpads, is

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