Lexus UX 250 h – Road Test

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The Lexus UX 250h Takumi E-four AWD urban SUV…

…tried and tested by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

Robin says, “Lexus has been a mover and shaker in the UK car market in every sector it’s entered and with the latest UX urban SUV its challenge intensifies”.

Intended as an introduction SUV to the Lexus range, the UX is their first contemporary compact SUV with the urban driver in mind rather than the country living/loving driver who needs a more serious off-roader.

That’s not underselling the Lexus UX as it is the first to get the latest Global

Architecture–Compact platform with low centre of gravity and suspension designed to promote good handling with comfort.



At night it turns heads with 120LEDs across the tailgate with an upkick at the back corners. In daylight its very deep front grille and shark-like nose accentuate the three-quarter view.



A lot of effort went into body design to minimise air turbulence, reduce drag and wind noise so the underbody is flat. It’s time well spent.

At the moment, prices run from £38,000 to £43,885 and our Takumi test car was priced at £42,850 in the Lexus list. Another model joins the range in 2021.



Three grades include. basic UX with four option packs of premium, premium plus, premium sport and premium pro; F-Sport with three packs and the Takumi headline model with its E-Four AWD system.

The Takumi, named in celebration of Lexus's skilled takumi craftsmen, offers smooth leather upholstery, washi paper-grain trim inlays, integrated front seat heating and ventilation, a bespoke Mark Levinson 13-speaker Premium Surround Sound system, 10.3-inch Lexus Navigation and multimedia display, 360-degree camera, colour head-up display, sunroof, power tailgate, auto-folding function for the door mirrors, smart entry system, 18-inch alloy wheels, Blind Spot Monitor and Rear Cross Traffic Alert with braking function.

A 2.0 litre 181 bhp four cylinder electrically assisted petrol engine comes with continuously variable transmission producing the feeling of six gears and either front wheel drive or electrically powered all-wheel-drive as in our Takumi together with normal, eco and sport modes to suit driving styles.



The UX always starts in electric mode and will silently pull away, shifting to petrol mode as dictated by the on-board management system and the driver's right foot. When required, the petrol engine gets immediate assistance from the traction battery and electric motor for performance pick up or the driver can select pure battery mode in zero emissions zones. It is the best of all worlds.

The power delivery, both petrol and electric, is immediate and strong with low noise levels when the ICE is running, and you have good overtaking and cruising ability. Our overall fuel consumption of 45.3 mpg was slightly worse than the manufacturer's WLTP of 47 mpg but only marginally so.

The transmission was very smooth accelerating or slowing down and the Sport setting on the lever was welcome along with the rotary switch for eco, normal and sport modes on the fascia.

Steering is electrically assisted but it still retained a good degree of feel and feedback, the brakes were very strong underfoot with a good electric parking brake as well.

Secondary controls were contained on two stalks for lights and wipers front or back with many supplementary buttons on the wheel-spokes or spread across the console for most commonly used controls.

This is a better idea than pushing everything into the big infotainment screen in the dash's centre as I found the buttons for radio, phone and other things were far too sensitive and distracting to use. I liked the essential dials in front of the driver and the way they changed with the mode button's selection.

Heating and ventilation was simple but comprehensive throughout the cabin and the heated seats were a nice touch on cold mornings. Powered windows were quick and quiet and the sunroof a good size.

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Oddments space was reasonable front or back, the boot had a high flat floor with a compartment beneath and it was sensibly shaped and quickly expanded in capacity with the seats individually dropping in the back which overcame its compactness.



Access to the cabin was easy and once inside the room was generous throughout for all but the tallest in the back.

Front seats have powered assistance and they were particularly well shaped and supporting and all were extremely attractively leather trimmed with a cream finish in the test car.

Visibility with any SUV can be an issue when parking but the good view to the front and sides overcame most hidden spots and the rear camera system and images were very good when reversing and was essential.

Big wipers front and back matched with intelligent headlights were ideal for this driver on early winter nights and the heated mirrors quickly cleared morning dampness.

In performance terms it's not fast but respectable, while its agility is excellent around town or sweeping along country roads and you always felt it was fully in touch with the road and never put a wheel wrong. Handling was surefooted and safe with the intelligent 4×4.

Noise levels were low except for some suspension and wheel bump-thump over bad bits of road and much of the calmness must be down to the aerodynamic profile and skate-board underfloor shaping.

Those bumps were shown up by the low profile run-flat tyres and bigger 18-inch wheels and I am not sure they are a good feature to have when it mars the Lexus experience of refinement and shakes it up, but not in a nice way.

VERDICT

There are longer established rivals to the Lexus UX in the compact luxury SUV sector but it benefits from coming later into the market and it may be just the model to overtake them. It certainly merits consideration.

For: Refined and sophisticated powertrain with luxury interior, host of driver assistance systems, excellent seats and agile handling, good economy.

Against: Some road noise from low profile run-flat tyres, occasional suspension stiffness with 18-inch wheels, tax penalty over £40K, too sensitive trackpad touch controls.

Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:



Lexus UX 250h Takumi E-four AWD urban SUV.

Price: £42,850.

Mechanical: 181 bhp, 2.0 litre, four cylinder petrol engine with electric assistance, CVT with four–wheel-drive.

Performance: 110 mph, 0 – 62 mph 8.7 seconds, Combined MPG on test 45.3, CO2 emissions 136 g/km.

Tax costs: VED First Year Alternative Fuel rate road tax £205 then Standard rate £140 + £325 annually for five years as it costs over £40k, BiK company car tax 30%.

Insurance Group: 26E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles (five years traction battery).

Dimensions/capacities: L 4.50 m (14.76 ft), W 2.08 m (6.82 ft), H 1.54 m (5.05 ft), boot space 283 – 1,194 litres (9.99 – 42.17 cu.ft), five doors/five seats.