

Road Beat: 2016 Lexus IS200t, a Euro fighter



2016 Lexus IS200t is worth the money. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

IS has been in the United States since 1999 as a 2000 model. It was designed to be the least expensive Lexus and to be the sportiest Lexus with rear wheel drive and a short 105-inch wheelbase and a length shorter than most compacts at 173 inches.

Lexus gave IS a 3.0L inline six that made 215-220 hp. It didn't become my favorite Lexus because it lacked a bit of power and that honor fell to the wonderful GS400. That was a car I recommended to a lot of friends who thanked me for a wonderful driving experience.

But in 2006 as the GS was getting fatter and a bit bloated,

the IS became the car it should have been with a new redesigned generation and a 306 hp 3.5L V-6 and with the suspension creds to match. It instantly became my favorite Lexus with outstanding world class performance, great looks and superb handling. Lexus lengthened the wheelbase to 107.5 inches and its length grew by seven inches, but still many journalists complained it was still too small. However, me, being of average height and weight thought it was the perfect size.

In 2013 IS while retaining its overall crisp, aggressive shape brought us its third generation, with wheelbase and length growing by about three inches (110 and 183 inches respectively) with the wheelbase actually exceeding that of the Camry based Lexus ES (by an inch) while remaining seven inches shorter. The only objection to IS's chiseled wedge shape is the signature L'finesse grille which looks like a frown.



Specifications

Price \$37,325 to about \$45,000

Engines

2.0L turbocharged, DOHC, 16 valve, inline four 241hp @ 5,800 rpm

258 lb.-ft. of torque @ 1,650-4,400 rpm

3.5L, 24 valve, DOHC V-6 255

hp @ 6,400 rpm (IS300)
236 lb.-ft. of torque @
2,000-4,800 rpm
3.5L, 24 valve, DOHC V-6 306
hp @ 6,400 rpm (IS350)
277 lbs.-ft. of torque @
4,800 rpm
Redline 6,600 rpm

Transmission

Eight speed automatic with
paddle shifters (IS200t-AWD
IS300 and 350 models receive
a six-speed auto)

Configuration

Longitudinal front
engine/rear wheel drive/all-
wheel drive (IS300/350 AWD)

Dimensions

Wheelbase 110.2 inches
Length 183.7 inches
Width 70.9 inches
Height 56.3 inches
Track (f/r) 60.4/61.0 inches
Weight 3,583 pounds
(IS200t)
Weight distribution 54/46
percent
Trunk capacity 13.8 cubic
feet
Fuel capacity 17.4 gallons
Steering lock to lock 2.84
turns
Turning circle 34.2 feet
Wheels (opt) 18X8/18X8.5
inch alloys
Tires (f/r opt)
225/40X18/255/35X18

Brake diameter (f/r)
13.15/12.2 inches
Coefficient of drag 0.28

Performance

0-60 mph 6.50 seconds
50-70 mph 3.45 seconds
50-70 uphill 4.96 seconds
Top speed Artificially
limited at 131 mph and I
believe them.
Fuel economy EPA rated
22/33/26 mpg
city/highway/combined
(IS200t). Expect 28 mpg in
rural country driving and
36-37 mpg on the highway.

Powering this Lexus is a 2.0L twin-scroll turbo charged inline four-cylinder engine that is hooked up to an eight-speed automatic driving the rear wheels. AWD is available with the IS300 and the IS 350 which both use the Lexus 3.5L V-6. However, the IS300 gets a detuned version with only 255 hp while the IS350 is rated at 306 hp (both at 6,400 rpm) at full tilt boogie. The turbo four is rated at 241 hp at 5,800 rpm and 258 pounds of twist at 1,650-4,400 rpm which means at just 1,650 rpm this engine is already knocking down about 60 hp. A normally aspirated engine of 2.0L would require about double the rpm to achieve an output of 60 hp.

One other interesting note is that there are at least three turbocharged 2.0L in production and 240 hp seems to be the standard with the IS besting the other two engines (BMW and Hyundai-Kia) by one hp. Torque production is also almost identical at about 260 pounds. Audi, Mercedes and Cadillac make 12 to 35 more hp out of their 2.0L turbo engines, more than likely from higher boost pressures. I wouldn't worry about the minor spec differences.

Performance for this nearly 3,600-pound car is about where you would expect with a 0-60 mph elapsed time of 6.50 seconds. Passing performance is a bit better with a 50-70 mph pass lasting 3.45 seconds and the same run up a steep (6 percent grade) lasting an average of 4.94 seconds. The factory 0-60 mph time is listed at 6.90 seconds. The driver must have left the emergency brake on.

There is some turbo lag apparent especially off the line, but in everyday driving it is not very apparent. However, as with most turbo charged cars, the throttle is not linear. In other words, when you ask for power from the engine room, sometimes you get more than you asked for and have to back off a bit a second or so later. It's something that you get used to, just like flying a jet powered or turboprop airplane. You add throttle and nothing happens for a second or two, then all of a sudden you get this rush of power. One other thing exacerbating this non-linear throttle is the tendency for the tranny to hunt by quickly dropping a gear or two under the slightest throttle pressure. But the tranny operates smoothly, like warm butter and the shifts a lightning quick.

Fuel economy is a bit better than the EPA ratings which are 22/33/26 mpg city/highway/combined. On the highway with the cruise control set at 70 mph the IS recorded 36.9 mpg in a two-way run. On a round trip from Placerville to South Lake Tahoe the average was 30.3 mpg with several full throttle passes. Overall including that trip plus several full throttle performance runs, some stop and go in traffic and some rural country driving the IS averaged 28 mpg. Early Volkswagen Bugs were lucky to get 25 mpg.

Now to what the IS is all about, handling. While most cars today get MacPherson struts up front, the IS gets a more sophisticated double wishbone system with multilinks suspending the rear. Of course, gas filled shocks and coils are at all four corners with stab bars at each end.

Being equipped with the F Sport option (\$3,545), other creds include special staggered 18 inch wheels, 8 inches wide in front and 8.5 inch in the rear shod with summer tires 225/40 in front and wide 255/35 in the rear. In addition to the suspension is tweaks, it gets some cosmetic enhancements. Steering lock to lock is a quick 2.84 turns and it has a tight 34 foot turning circle. It adds up to predictable, powerful handling and grip. Understeer is mild, turn in extremely crisp and it feels more like a go kart with almost no body roll going directly where you point it. Is there a negative? Yes, one minor niggle in that when the steering wheel is at full lock, left or right, it doesn't want to unwind by itself.

Ride quality is understandably on the firm side, but still quite smooth with no harshness. I prefer this type of ride quality. It still is quite supple, compliant and well controlled. It is also quiet which is good as the sound of four cylinder engines do little to stir my soul except for high winding inline motorcycles. There is not much, if any, whine from the turbo, either. There is some noise however, from the high-performance summer tires. The engine spins a very low 1,900 rpm at 70 mph which is part of the reason for its exceptional highway fuel economy. IS also gets a large 17.4-gallon fuel tank.

Braking is spectacular with huge four wheel ventilated discs and all the acronyms. It has all the electronic interventions and no less than eight airbags. The optional (F Sport or premium package) LED headlights were fantastic on low and high beam, with the low beam being wide, long and flat with a remarkable cutoff so as not to blind oncoming traffic.

Inside are great body fitting seats with standard full power. A center tach encircles a digital speedo with a complete info center to the left. While the center stack still operates with a mouse, it is getting easier to use as it was not an issue for me. Materials of the interior were top quality except for the seats which were done in NuLuxe, Toyota's name for vinyl.

If you want leather, it requires the Luxury Package.

Rear seating has improved with the 3 inches of extra wheelbase and the trunk, while not huge (13.8 cubes), is well shaped.

Pricing for the IS200t starts at \$37,325 plus \$940 for the boat from Japan. My tester had the F Sport Package (\$3,545) and the Nav/Mark Levinson Sound system (\$2,645). Some other smaller items like Blind Spot monitor (\$600) and illuminated door sills (\$425) a cargo net (\$65) and a cargo mat (\$105) brought the sticker total to \$46,650.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Death Valley heat record comes under fire

By Henry Brean, Las Vegas Review-Journal

A new analysis of a 103-year-old weather observation is throwing cold water on Death Valley National Park's claim to the world record for heat.

According to the United Nations' World Meteorological Organization, the official keeper and verifier of global climate extremes, the highest air temperature recorded anywhere in the world is 134 degrees at Death Valley's Greenland Ranch on July 10, 1913.

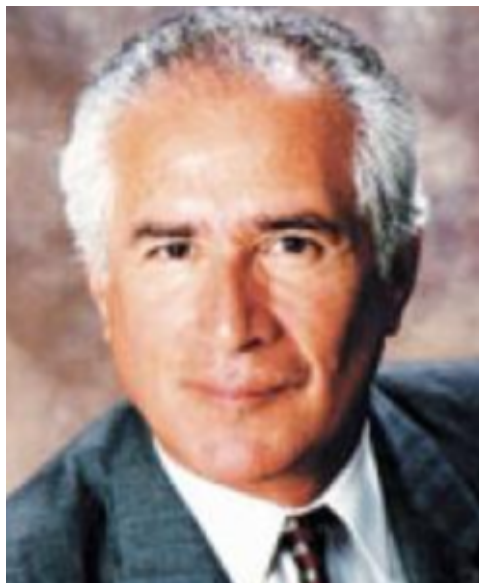
But California climatologist and storm chaser William T. Reid believes the record is bogus, and he's got decades of

exhaustive research to back him up.

“It’s essentially not possible from a meteorological perspective,” Reid said.

Read the whole story

John Joseph Castellanos – 1949-2016



John Joseph Castellanos

Longtime South Lake Tahoe attorney John Joseph Castellanos died Nov. 5, 2016. He was 67.

Castellanos was born Oct. 31, 1949, in Stockton. He was the second of six children born to Jose Juan and Lucille Castellanos.

Castellanos spent his early years in Stockton, attending local schools. He graduated from St. Mary’s High School, attended

San Joaquin Delta College and enlisted in the U.S. Army.

Upon his return from military service he completed his undergraduate work at Sacramento State College. He then graduated from Lincoln Law School.

He practiced in Sacramento before moving to South Lake Tahoe.

Castellanos was an avid golfer.

He believed in making the world a better place, in helping people and in the importance of family and friends. He strongly believed in the power of hope and love.

Castellanos is survived by his wife, Lisa; son Zach; stepson Michael Wood; daughter and son-in-law Sara and Carlos Cortez; granddaughters Luz and Sofia; brothers and sisters Stephan (Linda Derivi), Christine, Susan Gonyo (Bill), David (Sharon) and Catherine (Kevin Heverin); and numerous nieces and nephews, including Gian and Anna Derivi-Castellanos, Allyson and Kevin Gonyo, Joshua and Emma Castellanos-Rose, and Miles and Gabriel Heverin.

Funeral services will be Nov. 16 at 1pm at St. Theresa Catholic Church in South Lake Tahoe. A reception will at Tep's Villa Roma.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Heart Association.

Barton's grants help with

prevention, intervention

Barton has distributed grants totaling \$40,000 to help address the community's most pressing health needs – mental health, substance abuse, and access to services.

The grants were awarded to nine South Shore organizations. Recipients included Live Violence Free, Lake Tahoe Unified School District, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) – El Dorado Chapter, SOS Outreach, South Tahoe Family Resource Center, Tahoe Art League, Tahoe Magic, Tahoe Turning Point, and Tahoe Youth & Family Services.

It is estimated more than 4,500 children and adults in the South Lake Tahoe area will benefit from the money.

This cycle's grant recipients addressed the themes of prevention and intervention.

Essay contest worth a lifetime hunting license

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife and California Wildlife Officers Foundation are co-sponsoring the annual Passing on the Tradition essay contest for young hunters.

The grand prize winner will receive a lifetime California hunting license.

This year's contest has entrants sharing their favorite hunting memory.

The contest is open to all junior hunting license holders, as

well as youths under 18 who have earned a hunter education certificate. Entrants must submit an essay of 500 words or less, describing a past hunting experience (either their own or observing a mentor) that was particularly memorable or special.

Entries should be submitted via email to john.nores@wildlife.ca.gov by Dec. 16 at 5pm. Applicants must provide date of birth and a contact telephone number. The winners will be notified by telephone.

For additional information, contact Lt. John Nores at 408.591.5174.

Climate change and oceans subject of talk

Oceans are warming, becoming more acidic, and are being depleted of oxygen. How aquatic life reacts to these changes can help people understand more about this issue.

Andrew Whitehead, associate professor UC Davis Department of Environmental Toxicology, is a comparative genome biologist and molecular ecotoxicologist. He will be discussing Developing Models for Climate Change Research Using Ocean Species on Dec. 8 at Sierra Nevada College.

The program will begin at 6pm, with refreshments and no-host bar from 5:30-6pm at 291 Country Club Drive in Incline Village.

A \$5 suggested donation will be collected at the door. **Registration** is necessary.

Jill Stanton-Bricker – 1968-2016



Jill Stanton-Bricker

Jill Stanton-Bricker, age 48, of South Lake Tahoe, passed peacefully on Nov. 9, 2016, with her family by her side.

Jill loved Tahoe and called it home for over 20 years; after growing up in a town near Cleveland, Ohio, and attending Bowling Green University. She enjoyed skiing and adventuring, both the beaches and the mountains.

She was a great mother and friend, who could make anyone

laugh. She made many strong bonds with people, as she was a very friendly person. You could sense her presence when she walked into a room due to her outgoing personality. Jill could turn a serious situation into one filled with laughter and smiles. She impacted many people's lives for the better.

Jill is survived by her daughters, Korinne and Ashley; brother, Tim; parents, Nancy and Jack; ex-husband, Scott; along with nieces, nephews, uncles, aunts, cousins, and many loving friends.

The family appreciates the dedicated service and staff of the Reno's Renown Regional Medical Center. A private serve is to be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made in Jill's memory to **Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care** or **Protect our Winters**.

We will always carry your spirit in our hearts. We love you, Jill.

'60 Meters to Anywhere' author coming to TC

Critically acclaimed Semi-Rad.com author Brendan Leonard will present stories from his newest book "Sixty Meters to Anywhere" on Dec. 9.

The presentation will take place at the Tahoe Art Haus & Cinema in Tahoe City at 7pm.

Leonard is a contributing editor at Climbing magazine, Adventure Journal, and the Dirtbag Diaries. Denver-based Leonard is most known for the funny and inspirational

adventure essays he's published on Semi-Rad.com since 2011, but his path to the mountains started in a much darker place

This is being described as a "motivational stand-up comedy show."

Tickets for the show are \$11 in advance, \$14 that night.
<http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2711794>

Tahoe Adventure Film Festival marks year 14

Marking 14 years of adventure sports cinematography and culture, Tahoe Adventure Film Festival is the annual gathering of the who's who of outdoor adventure.

It's where the industry's best filmmakers premier their latest adventure sports films one night only hosted by festival creator and adventurer Todd Offenbacher. Many of the segments are special edits, including previews of films that have not been released.

This year the festival will include edits that highlight the lifestyle of the action and adventure athlete. Several films delve into the mindset of the adventurer and how each lives their life to the fullest. The film "Snow Flake" reveals the passion of one of Switzerland's happiest ski bums. A sneak peek of "Dirt Bag Climber" is a film Offenbacher has been directly involved in for 15 years. The film follows the life and commitment of 93-year-old American climber Fred Beckey. The full-length version will be released in spring 2017.

For the past 11 years, Offenbacher has presented the Golden

Camalot to honor action and adventure sports pioneers for their astounding contributions, excellence, achievements, and leadership that have shaped so many lives and defined our culture.

A raffle sponsored by Mammut will raise money for the nonprofit Sierra Avalanche Center.

The 2016 Tahoe Adventure Film Festival debuts at its birthplace in South Lake Tahoe on Dec. 10 at MontBleu in Stateline. The doors open at 6:30pm, followed by the films at 7:30pm. Tickets can be purchased at the MontBleu ticket office – 775.588.3515.

Starting in January, Offenbacher takes his show on the road to Petaluma, Park City, Jackson Hole, Sun Valley, San Francisco, Mammoth, Reno, and Minden.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Goldy

Goldy is a 2-year-old shorthair cat. She came to the shelter with kittens and now that they have all found their homes she is ready for one of her very own. She is a nice cat and loves to pose for photos.

Goldy is spayed, microchipped, tested for FIV, and vaccinated. She is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go **online**.

– Karen Kuentz