

Lincoln is packed with technology

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 under cornering to the appropriate rear wheel. A six-speed automatic transmission with selectable manual shift is standard.

Lincoln Drive Control lets the driver chose between three modes (Comfort, Normal and Sport) with makes it possible to adapt steering and suspension settings to the individual and is aided by continuously controlled damping and adaptive steering.

The Continental also features leading-edge driver safety aids such as Pre-Collision Alert, Pedestrian Detection with radar and cameras. Optional is adaptive cruise control that can automatically slow Continental in stop-and-go traffic resuming speed when traffic clears.

Of course, there's lane keeping assist and electronic stability control.

If you think this sounds something like semi-autonomous driving, you'd be right. But the Lincoln engineers I talked to downplayed that, saying there is still a long way to go.

But you and I both know they're working feverishly on it back in Dearborn.

Standard engine is a 2.7-litre twin turbo, direct injection V6 with 335 hp and 380 lb/ft of torque. Optional (\$3,000) is a 3.0-litre twin turbo direct injection V6 with 400 hp and 400 lb/ft of torque.

At the press introduction of the new Continental in Los Angeles, we drove the 3.0-litre V6 that was as silent in running as it was lusty.

We think of AWD as being for snow, slush and wet, but there are more challenging surfaces than those in the world, which is why I headed to surfer country north of Malibu. Here you find sandy entrances to the beaches that can catch you out with just two driving wheels in the soft surface, which can cause you to be bogged down.

My favourite photo stop in California is such a place, but getting to and from the water wasn't a problem with the AWD.

Heading back, I took the torturous Decker Canyon Road where falling rock is common, and I fact, I came across a soccer ball sized bolder on the climb up from the beach and alerted a road crew to it working further up the road.

Here the advantages of a real AWD, unlike simple slip-and-rip systems, rewards the driver, while the near instant grunt of the twin turbo V8 made seemingly endless series of 15-20 mph switchbacks easy - never a chore, as the first time I drove this 20 years ago before all of the current technology was possible.

After years of being second fiddle to Ford, with the Continental, Lincoln is no longer the other domestic luxury sedan, but a world-class premium luxury player in its own right.

What's Interesting: Packed with technology, great lines and solid performance.

What's Worst: Cramped back-seat headroom for the tall. The

optional rear seat package with reclining seats helps, but it also adds \$5,000 to the purchase price.

What's Interesting: The E-Latch powered doors which use capacitors and electric motors to open and shut the doors.

BODY STYLE: Full-size premium sedan.

DRIVE METHOD: Front-engine, full-time all-wheel-drive, six-speed SelectShift automatic

ENGINE: 2.7-litre, twin turbo, direct injection V6 (335 hp, 380 lb/ft); 3.0-litre twin turbo, direct injection V6 (400 hp, 400 lb/ft)

FUEL ECONOMY: 2.7-litre, 14.0/9.5/12.0L/100 km. city/highway/combined: 3.0-litre 14.4/9.7/12.3L/100 km

CARGO CAPACITY: 16.7 cu ft

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