

Lexus offers up a few firsts

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A Lexus first is a Wireless Charging Tray which allows compatible cellphones to charge up. Other available technology includes: the new Lexus Remote Touch Interface with a touch pad; Pre-Collision System with All-speed Dynamic Radar Cruise Control; Blind Spot Monitor with Rear Cross Traffic Alert; power folding rear seat and Lane Departure Alert.

The drive route was BC's famous Sea To Sky Highway from sea level in Vancouver to the high ski slopes of Whistler.

On the route down in a NX 200t Premium, one had to be very careful about speed, with limits changing all the time and Mounties ready to pounce.

With the road surface widened and vastly improved for the Winter Olympics, the drive gently turns, following the topography of the mountains as they plunge into the sea.

The NX was serene in a settling like this, but I'd like to book one at a later date to find out if it is as agile in city cores as Lexus says.

Coming back up from North Vancouver the highway is basically a 90 km slow climb but a climb nonetheless all the way.

With 194 hp and the extra weight of the battery and electric motor, the NX 300h felt strained at times with the rev counter swinging up and down as the engine cut in to assist.

Both NX models I drove were described by my driving partner as feeling "substantial", not surprising with a curb weight of 1,755 kg (4,050 lb) for the 200t.

I was watching the average fuel consumption on the driver info screen in the 300h and my final in Whistler was 11.9L/100 km, which is not bad when you consider the workout getting there.

On the transmission tunnel is a rotary switch that lets the driver select from

three driving modes (Eco, Normal, Sport) that changes the driving dynamics to suit road conditions or fun. On the F Sport there is a fourth mode, Sport + that dials in more aggressive ride and handling.

There will be four trim models of the NX 200t, Standard, Premium, Luxury and Executive. The F Sport will be available in Series 1 and Series 2 versions, while the 300h comes in topline Executive trim with everything in the NX option list included.

Getting back to the price, Lexus sees its main competitor as the Audi Q5, which means expect the NX to be similar in pricing or probably a bit below.

Lexus also feels they can sell 4,000 of them in the first year which is a very lofty target, which also says to me aggressive pricing/leasing numbers will be offered.

Either way, Lexus is confident the NX will not only equal or exceed the Germans summed up by one official who told me, "If I can get people in the seat, the NX will sell itself".

BODY STYLE: Compact entry-level luxury CUV

DRIVE METHOD: front-engine, all-wheel-drive; 200t, six-speed automatic transmission; 300h, CVT transmission with manual shift mode

ENGINE: 2.0-litre twin scroll turbo-charged inline four-cylinder (235 hp, 258 ft/lb); 2.5-litre Atkinson-cycle inline four-cylinder with electric motor (194 hp combined, NA lb/ft)

FUEL CONSUMPTION: (Premium recommended) NA

CARGO: 500 litres (17.6 cu ft) behind second row, 1,545 litres (54.6 cu ft) behind first row

SEATING CAPACITY: Five passengers

TOWING CAPACITY: 640 kg (2,000 lb)

FUEL ECONOMY: NA

PRICE: NA



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