den treatment all its life.

Or possibly it's the ride that wins us over. This car creams over the streets without a flutter, yet the suspension is disciplined. A few staffers felt mildly inhibited on the tearing-around roads, not quite sure they had enough feedback—particularly from the steering—to proceed with the usual abandon. But they came around after a bit. The Goodyear Eagle GA tires were developed with ride quality as a high priority, but they man-

age, in concert with the suspension, to produce a highly predictable steering feel on the curves.

Our test Lexus was equipped with nearly every option in the book. Leather is \$1400 extra; we highly recommend it. The air suspension, at \$1500, may be more a matter of gilding the lily. For sure, the load-leveling feature is a good idea if you carry heavy loads. The Sport damping position on the console switch seems to be more of a personal decision.

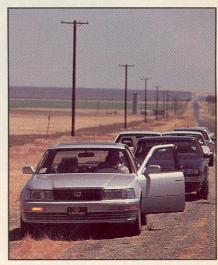
Some of our drivers never switched out of it on the twisty road, others never bothered to engage it. Even in the Sport setting, ride quality is quite reasonable.

Easily the most controversial part of the Lexus is the grille. It doesn't look original. For a car that seems to break new ground in all of its executions, such an ambivalent face is troubling.

Not too troubling, though.

A luxury sedan is more than speed,

| | interio | or sound level, dBA | fuel economy, mpg | | | |
|------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----|----------------|-----------------------|
| idle | full throttle | 70-mph cruising | 70-mph EPA city | | EPA highway | C/D 600- mile trip |
| 46 | 76 | 68 | 68 | 14 | 18 | 15 |
| 51 | 76 | 66 | 65 | 15 | 19 | 16 |
| 47 | 74 | 68 | 68 | 16 | 25 | 14 |
| 43 | 73 | 66 | 67 | 16 | 22 | 16 |
| 48 | 75 | 69 | 69 | 17 | 22 | 18 |
| 39 | 74 | 67 | 67 | 18 | 23 | 16 |
| 43 | 74 | 67 | 67 | 15 | 18 | 15 |



| and the state of t | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------|-----------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| curb weight, Ib | weight distribution, % F/R | fuel tank, gal | interior volume, cu ft | | ne, cu ft | suspension | | TEDSESO E | | | |
| | | | front | rear | trunk | front | rear | brakes, F/R | tires | | |
| 4040 | 60.4/39.6 | 21.1 | 52 | 42 | 17 | ind, strut located by a lateral link and an anti-roll bar, coil springs | ind, unequal-length control arms, coil springs | vented disc/ vented disc; anti-lock control | Pirelli P600, 215/60ZR-15 | | |
| 3800 | 49.0/51.0 | 21.5 | 54 | 46 | 13 | ind, strut located by 1 leading link and 1 lateral link, coil springs, anti-roll bar | ind, semi-trailing arm, coil springs, load- leveling shocks, anti- roll bar | vented disc/ disc; anti-lock control | Pirelli P600, 225/60ZR-15 | | |
| 3540 | 63.8/36.2 | 18.8 | 52 | 44 | 14 | ind, strut located by a control arm, coil springs, anti-roll bar | ind, strut located by a control arm, trans- verse leaf spring, load- leveling shocks, anti- roll bar | vented disc/ disc; anti-lock control | Goodyear Eagle GT+4 M+S, P215/60R-16 | | |
| 4020 | 57.2/42.8 | 22.5 | 57 | 39 | 15 | ind, unequal-length control arms with a two-piece hub, coil springs, anti-roll bar | ind; 1 diagonal link, 2 lateral links, and 1 control arm per side; coil springs; anti-roll bar | vented disc/ disc; anti-lock control | Michelin Sport XGT V, P215/65VR-15 | | |
| 3920 | 53.1/46.9 | 23.2 | 51 | 40 | 15 | ind, unequal-length control arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar | ind, 1 control arm and 1 fixed-length half-shaft per side, coil springs, load-leveling shocks | vented disc/ disc; anti-lock control | Pirelli P5 Cinturato, 205/70VR-15 | | |
| 3940 | 52.8/47.2 | 22.5 | 56 | 41 | 14 | ind, unequal-length control arms, air springs, anti-roll bar | ind; 1 trailing link, 2 lateral links, and 1 control arm per side; air springs; anti- roll bar | vented disc/ vented disc; anti-lock control | Goodyear Eagle GA, 205/65VR-15 | | |
| 3900 | 53.3/46.7 | 23.8 | 51 | 47 | 15 | ind, unequal-length control arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar | ind, semi-trailing arm, coil springs, anti-roll bar | vented disc/ disc; anti-lock control | Michelin MXV, 205/65VR-15 | | |