

2000 LINCOLN LS

Designed to attract a younger slate of buyers, the brand-new Lincoln LS was developed along with the Jaguar S-Type as a luxury sport sedan alternative to Audi, BMW, Mercedes, Lexus, Infiniti, et al. Two engines are now available for the rear-drive LS, a V-8, and a V-6 available with a 5-speed manual gearbox.

Interior and trunk

To ease entry and exit from the driver's side, the seat automatically moves back and the steering wheel moves forward. The doors open wide, and even for tall people it is a long reach to close them. The bucket seats are very comfortable, and drivers can quickly find and then electronically register their preferred driving position. Tall individuals will find that the sun roof is a bit close to their head.

The easily accessible rear bench can comfortably hold two adults. There is plenty of leg room but head room is tight for tall people. The bench has a 60/40 split-fold seatback and three lap-and-shoulder seat belts.

Liftover to the average-sized trunk is high and the trunk is shallow, particularly from the base of the rear window and back. The trunk lid does not open very high, and you have to watch your head.

Safety and convenience

The passenger cell is well finished but needs more attention if Lincoln is to woo buyers away from the European and Asiatic competitors. Some materials are cheap looking, road-noise is poorly suppressed, and storage spaces are few and small. The high beam-low beam combination switch too much amplitude and not enough resistance, making it too easy to switch the high beams on when signalling a turn.

The climate control system is very efficient and the heated seats warm up fast. The windshield wipers have a rain sensor that works on the intermittent cycle "Automatic" setting. It was a hit-and-miss affair on our test vehicle, with the wipers sometimes running full blast when it was barely raining or taking a break during a steady, fairly heavy rain. An element at the bottom of the windshield de-ices the wipers.

Safety features include dual front air bags, dual side air bags, five lap-and-shoulder seat belts, four head restraints and anti-lock brakes. The rear head restraints are not adjustable and the front restraints cannot be raised high enough to protect tall people. The headlights should be brighter. The driver has to take his left hand off the wheel to use the intermittent wiper cycle, and the wiper lever should be on the right side of the steering wheel. Visibility is very good to the front and as far back as the B pillars on each side. The wide B pillars create a deep blind zone, and the rear head restraints impede the view.

Engine and transmission

The 3.9-litre V-8 designed by Jaguar usually runs smoothly, but sometimes with a low whine or growl. Well adapted and efficient, it provides energetic, almost instantly responsive standing and passing acceleration and all the performance you could hope for.

The well-gearred transmission generally shifts very smoothly. However, the transmission is sometimes slow to downshift, and when you slow down sharply, the car will sometimes lunge forward when you re-accelerate, a problem compounded by the fact that the accelerator is hard to gauge. With Ford, you still have to release the gear shifter to shift from “D5” to “N”, which is impractical in an emergency braking situation.

On the road

The fully independent suspension provides a very smooth ride on good pavement. When the going gets rough, however, it reacts stiffly, and often almost harshly. It lacks the quality, stability, assurance and smooth blend of suppleness and stiffness found in its main rivals. The LS is stable and predictable and has a very tenacious grip in turns.

Steering is stable, precise and quick but practically exempt of any road feel. It is a bit heavy at low speed and has a short turning circle. Braking is consistently powerful.

An inspection at the CAA-Quebec test centre showed that the engine compartment is well laid out and that the brake discs are well shielded. However, the brake lines are poorly protected, the speed sensor for the variably assisted steering system is exposed to damage, the rear fenders look poorly made underneath, and holes in the front fenders are not sealed.

Conclusion

The Lincoln LS offers many of the qualities that luxury sport sedan enthusiasts look for, such as a powerful engine, inspiring handling, and a relatively high level of equipment. Though the LS lacks a few points on the refinement scale when compared to some of its rivals, its price-quality ratio is interesting nonetheless.

FOR

Lively engine
Handling
Smooth transmission
Comfort
Smooth ride
Precise steering

AGAINST

Perfectible soundproofing
Shallow trunk
Weak headlights
Insufficient storage spaces
Three-quarter and full rear visibility
Windshield wiper control

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Engine: 24-valve, 3.0-litre V-6; 32-valve, 3.9-litre V-8	Horsepower: 210 h.p. @ 6,500 rpm; 252 h.p. @ 6,100 rpm
Torque: 205 lb.-ft. @ 4,750 rpm; 267 lb.-ft. @ 4,300 rpm	Transmission: 5-speed manual; 5-speed automatic
Suspension: fully independent	Brakes: 4-wheel disc
Length: 492.5 cm	Width: 185.9 cm
Height: 145.3 cm	Wheelbase: 290.8 cm
Weight: 1,608 to 1,675 kg	Tires: P215/60R16; P235/50R17
Towing capacity: 455 kg	Air bags: dual front and dual side

Fuel consumption:

- Transport Canada rating: city: 13.8 L/100 km (20.5 mpg); highway: 10.2L/100 km (27.5 mpg)
- Test result: 15 L/100 (20 mpg)

Fuel tank capacity: 69 litres

Acceleration: 0-100 km/h : 7.3 seconds 60-100 km/h : 4.3 seconds

Competition: Audi A6, BMW 5-Series, Jaguar S-Type, Lexus GS, Mercedes Class-E, Saab 9-5, Volvo S80

Maintenance (amount may vary from dealer to dealer):

Frequency: 3 months/5,000 km; total cost to 100,000 km: \$1,211

Warranty:

- Full basic coverage: 4 years/80,000 km
- Powertrain: 4 years/80,000 km
- Surface corrosion: 4 years/80,000
- Perforation damage: 5 years/unlimited mileage
- Emissions control system: 4 years/80,000 km (full coverage); 8 years/130,000 km (catalytic converter, electronic control module and on-board diagnostic device)

Factory replacement parts:

Rear bumper: \$801

Brake pads: \$67

Front fender: \$510

Front brake disk: \$102

Muffler: \$772 each, including
the resonator

Average insurance premium (Quebec City, replacement cost endorsement, claim-free insurance record, female driver or male driver 30 to 40 years old): \$1,048 to \$1,308

Price according to trim line:

V-6: \$40,595

V-8: \$46,995

Main options:

Automatic transmission: \$500 (V-6 only)

Convenience Package: \$2,000 (V-6 only)

Alpine audio system: \$900

Sport Package: \$1,500

Sun roof: \$1,539

Price as tested: \$49,534

Freight and preparation: \$940

Dealers: Quebec: 127

Canada: 600