



Lexus CT 200 Hybrid

By Steve Schutz, MD

About a decade ago, the Toyota Prius was developed to provide optimal fuel economy in a reasonably-sized car. Toyota knew then what they know now—micro cars are not popular—so they designed their hybrid system to maximize gas mileage in any vehicle. And despite being just a first step, the Prius ended up being a huge hit, attracting economy-conscious customers plus a lot of well-heeled buyers who loved the technology and wanted a visible badge of eco-friendliness. Since then, Toyota has been working hard to hold on to the first group of buyers with more efficiency and lower prices, and the second group with more Lexus hybrids.

Lexus' first bite of the hybrid apple was the 2005 RX 400h small SUV, but that wasn't quite what higher demographic Prius buyers were after. (As it turns out, neither was the where-did-my-trunk-go GS 450h, the nerdy HS 250h or the very expensive LS 600h.) Last year, Toyota's luxury arm introduced the sporty CT 200h, and it looks like they have finally found the right formula. Oh, by the way, it should attract younger buyers to the brand, something Lexus needs to do to counter the success of the BMW 1-series and Audi A3.

For the record, it's a stretch to call the CT 200h "sporty". Underneath its stylish duds is the same wheezy 1.8 liter four-cylinder engine/electric motor hybrid system you'll find in the Prius, which translates to a zero-to-sixty MPH time of 10.0 seconds and a top speed of 113 MPH. That's neither quick nor fast, though for everyday driving it's fine, especially around town where the CT 200h feels most at home.

Like the Prius, the CT 200h's *raison d'être* is its impressive gas mileage, and with EPA figures of 43 MPG city/40 MPG highway, it delivers. (For comparison, the Audi A3 TDI diesel gets 30



MPG city/42 MPG highway.)

The ride is more firm than the Prius', presumably due to wider wheels and tires combined with more aggressive suspension tuning, and the CT drones more than I'd like at interstate speeds; but overall, the feeling you get behind the wheel is that of a Prius that's been to the gym and lost a few pounds.

Design-wise it looks like that, too. Gone are the techno styling cues of the Prius, replaced by a very European five-door hatchback design that could almost pass for a Renault. Low and wide, the CT 200h looks aerodynamic—though not as aerodynamic as the Prius—and decidedly un-Lexus-y. When I look at the Lexus ES, RX or LS, I always feel as though they were designed for the U. S. market first and foremost. I'd say the CT was designed for England, Germany or Spain.

The interior looks like that, too. Unlike its Lexus stable mates, there's a notable lack of wood inside the CT 200h's cabin, which is probably what Lexus' (young) target demographic for this car expects. They also expect excellent ergonomics and the typical Lexus visual interfaces, buttons and knobs don't disappoint. Having said that, some of the materials are less Lexus-like than I'd



like—during a quick trip to the market, a trim piece on the passenger side front door came off in my son’s hand. You won’t see that happen in an LS (or ES, for that matter).

Interestingly, the CT 200h has a great steering wheel. It feels right when you hold it, and looks terrific, too. The more expensive IS sedan should have a steering wheel this good.

The Lexus 200h comes with a host of standard equipment including keyless entry/ignition, tilt and telescoping steering wheel, heated side mirrors, 10-way power-adjustable driver seat, dual-zone climate control, premium leatherette upholstery, Bluetooth (with audio streaming), and six-speaker stereo with satellite radio and USB jacks. The Premium trim package adds heated front seats and a sunroof.

with Lexus’ pre-collision supplemental safety system. Two F-sport packages are also offered.

The Euro-flavored Lexus CT 200h is a Prius with extra personality (if not performance), and that is likely to attract hybrid fans who are looking for more luxury and pizzazz than the Prius provides. The fact that buying the CT 200h gets you superb Lexus dealer customer care helps too, and I expect it to do well in the marketplace. Certainly, it will sell better than previous Lexus hybrid cars.



CUSTOMIZE YOUR OPTIONS

at an Award-Winning Cambridge Healthcare Property

METHODIST BOERNE MEDICAL CENTER

- Serving the fastest growing counties in South Texas
- Area needs all specialties, providing excellent growth opportunity for your practice
- Full-service (24/7) high-volume Emergency Center brings patients to your door
- Flexible time-share office opportunity available

134 Menger Springs (off IH 10W)



Leasing information:
Elize Pruske, CCIM
210.614.4488 x 2303
epruske@cambridgeinc.com



WESTGATE MEDICAL CENTER

- Conveniently located at the gateway to South Texas Medical Center
- Ideally suited for physicians and medical retail services
- Imaging, pharmacy, lab, and multi-specialty tenancy — referrals for you and convenience for patients
- Extensive upgrades provide fresh and inviting atmosphere for patients

5282 Medical Drive (at Balconet)



Both buildings feature Cambridge’s service teams who create exceptional experiences for physicians and patients.

Cambridge Healthcare Properties develops, owns and manages award-winning medical facilities across the United States. Visit us at www.cambridgeinc.com.