

Buying a CTS-V

I get questions from Peach State members about all sorts of things pertaining to Cadillacs. I'm not so naïve as to think these questions come to me because of my vast knowledge. Instead, our folks know that I can facilitate some good sharing of ideas among those 125+ members who DO have vast knowledge – and I am happy to fill that role. Sometimes these questions have to deal with a brake performance issue, the right oil to use, the proper tire rotation schedule, or some other aspect of keeping our beloved make on the road. Other times folks ask about selling a Cadillac. Sometimes a member is looking for guidance on how to FIND the right Cadillac for their wants and needs. These are the times when a \$25 membership really pays off. And if that entices a curious friend to join us, even better! Below is an exchange that you might find interesting regarding the purchase of a CTS.

Doug

Doug and Martina,

My good friend Steve has questions about the CTS-V (see his note below). He is looking for one and has a couple of questions. You are the first two I thought of that could help. Do you think Ron Zahn, Bob Winchell, or Brandon Clifton might have some thoughts to share with Steve? If so, please forward.

Sandy Partridge

Sandy,

I figured I'd ask the all-seeing, all-knowing, Maha Sandy about the '06-'07 CTS-V, and maybe the '09-'10 CTS-Vs. The former are muuuuch more affordable, but less refined, and not as powerful, but still run the very respectable LS2 motor. The latter have the supercharged LSA motor. I don't HAVE to have the supercharger, but if I could find a nice, low-miles '09-'10 with the Recaro seats and a manual trans, I could be tempted to spend a tad more. The problem is finding these cars. Very low production numbers. Do you follow the CTS-V much?

Steve

SO, LET'S ASK A FEW OWNERS OF CTS-V CADILLACS!

- 1. Which is it then, the LS2 from 2006 and 2007 or the huskier, brutish and supercharged V-cars from 2009-'10?**
 - 2. Where does one go to find either one, particularly one that is low in mileage and not a thrashed edition?**
 - 3. While I'm at it, might as well kick it up a notch: Which body style is tops: the coupe or the wagon?**
- Heh heh heh...

Doug

Doug, Steve, Sandy, Martina...

1. Which is it then, the LS2 from 2006 and 2007 or the huskier, brutish and supercharged V-cars from 2009-'10? Depends on how much power you want. Reliability from OEM should be the same. First Gen (both early and late) are 400hp/400lb-ft peak. Early (2004-2005) are 5.7L, Late (2006-2007) are 6.0L. The Late (6.0L) has greater area under the torque curve, which should yield faster quarter-mile times (not that I have ever raced anything). They also have a beefier differential and axles. Early ones were prone to pinion seal failure resulting from carrier bearing failure attributed to differential housing flexure. My 2005 has 76,000 miles and no issues yet- but it was driven gently its whole life.

2. Where does one go to find either one, particularly one that is low in mileage and not a thrashed edition? Auto Trader or Ebay. No telling whether it will be trashed or not. I got really lucky. Anecdotally you probably want to avoid red ones. All the red ones I found were driven hard (one had a broken clutch rod)

3. While I'm at it, might as well kick it up a notch: Which body style is tops: the coupe or the wagon?

Heh heh heh...For me, a 35 year old guy who wants kids and who likes to surprise people, wagon. If your wife is driving it, coupe. If you want a first gen, sedan is your only choice.

As much as I hate to say it- these cars are still cheaply-built American cars. They have more bells and whistles than, say, a Malibu, but overall a Honda Civic is a better car from a quality standpoint. I'll probably get booted from the club for that, but it's the truth. Within the first 40,000 of my car's life the XM receiver was dead and the paint was peeling off the radio buttons and the window and door controls. The remote works sometimes, if you are within 3 feet of the car. The radio bezel is a cheap thin plastic piece with fragile clips and the leather squeaks when you sit on it. The time pressure monitors have failed, and the chrome is peeling off the bead (the tire's sealing surface) or the rims causing slow leaks that have to be sealed with black goop when I get the tires changed. The DIC never quite works right, the battery is some bastard size that costs 30% more than the 75 group size battery used in damn-near EVERY OTHER GM CAR and also has more cold cranking amps, and now I have a mystery problem with the MAF, the MAF plug, or something in the MAF wiring. Three mechanics as well as me (I have worked professionally as a mechanic for 23 years, have a Mechanical Engineering degree, and am an extreme hobbyist) cannot figure out the problem. I'm not outright calling this car a piece of junk- but I really expected more from a car that cost \$65,000 new.

Brandon

Doug, Sandy, Steve, Brandon...

Wow, I really like Brandon's honesty. I own a 2014 CTS and I am totally in love with my car. I have totally bonded and besides the four recalls I have not found anything to bitch about. And the recalls were overkill.... Anyway, my 5 cents worth. Thanks Brandon, I really appreciate your comments...

Martina

Doug, Sandy, Steve, Brandon and Martina ...

As I see it, this is no different from looking for any other specialty automobile. Get informed about the differences between the years, then "stick or automatic?" The early ones are all manuals, as they did not have an automatic that would handle the torque and abuse that lots of these cars get. Then narrow your search for a specific year, model and color that you would be happy with. Lastly, don't be in a rush and don't settle for less than you want – particularly if you have to hire mechanics to do your repair work. You may want a later year that has an extendable warranty vs an earlier model without one. If the desired car is far away, hire an expert to inspect it up close. *[This is another advantage of belonging to a network of Cadillac club members all around the country. Doug]* Well worth the \$300 or so to get it done. Other than the powertrain, they are just plain old GM cars with a short shelf life as far as electronic glitches, rattles and squeaks, etc... Newer cars that have not been abused on rough roads, revealed by crunches and bangs, will have fewer of these problems. The engine and transmissions are very robust.

These cars do come up for sale. Just be patient and fussy. A good one will come along. It might be 6 months or so. My 2012 CTSV wagon will be for sale if Cadillac builds a replacement in 2015 with the Z-06 engine. But if no wagon is available, I will keep this one. Spring will tell us. Good luck.

Bob Winchell

Doug, Sandy, Steve, Brandon, Winch and Martina...

Good summation Bob! However, I personally would hold out for the later 556hp supercharged engine. My red 2011 CTS V Coupe now has nearly 40,000 completely trouble free miles. It doesn't matter if I'm demonstrating performance, going to the grocery store or cruising 1,600 miles for Thanksgiving, it remains a Cadillac. There have been no recalls, no warranty work, no adjustments, no rattles/squeaks, no reason to go back to the dealer except for the free oil changes. This is the first new car, out of many, that I can say that. Great job, Cadillac! If they build another V series coupe or wagon with a V8 engine I will buy one, but the 2011 will be staying in my collection as long as I'm still breathing. Happy Cadillac'ing!

Ron

Doug, Sandy, Steve, Brandon, Winch, Martina and Ron...

I'm looking for a daily driver / long-trip car. I dearly love having a 2-seat track car, but that's a different animal, and different budget. So far, I'm leaning toward an '06-'07 as I have a soft price cap of \$20k. Additionally, as a general rule, I avoid the first year of a new platform/generation of car. There are really two things that need to happen at this stage:

1. I need to sit in, and/or drive a CTS/CTS-V to see if the car fits me physically, and fits me mentally meaning: the gauge placement makes sense, I intuitively operate all the necessities, stuff like that.
2. I need to have an "a-ha" moment while looking at one of the interior and exterior combinations, or look at them until some color combination "grows on me." I'm not usually super picky about stuff like that, but as the price goes above \$750, I get more picky ☺

Time-wise, I'm thinking Q1 of 2015. Usually, I do not do timeframes. 1 day, 1 month, 2 years... I don't care. A buyer in a hurry is an idiot with money (or credit), but not for long. ☺ Think I'll go hit Google for some CTS images.

Steve

Doug, Sandy, Steve, Brandon, Winch, Martina and Ron...

Now that is what I call serving our members (and hopefully, our future members)! You guys posed a detailed question, then weighed in on a number of important considerations, providing some terrific answers. Now, I got to get me one of these cars myself!

Doug

Photo: Ron's 2011 CTS-V in the desert near Vegas

