

# Shifting Gears

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## [Dodging Arrows and Raising Dust: Revving the Horses in a CTS-V](#)

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The hawk sat motionless, like death on a holiday, in the arms of the elm tree, its brown wings blending in to the yellow and brown fall canopy billowing over the Taconic highway rolling through the Hudson River Highlands.

It was easy to tell it was a teenage predator, by the color of its tail feathers, and the unmistakably cocky attitude as it cocked its head and slowly surveyed the Cadillac CTS-V Coupe on the grassy knoll below it. There was a grudging sense of approval as it gazed at the sharply angular face, with the short open-mouthed grill over an aggressive, low scoop with the Cadillac emblem resting in the middle. As a bird of prey, the hawk's nose has a center mounted pillar which produces a more even air flow as it dives at speeds exceeding 100 miles an hour.



The emblem on the face of the CTS-V doesn't serve quite that function. Its eight-cylinder, 556-horsepower, supercharged V-8 engine replaces the wings and propels the car from 0-60 in just 3.9 seconds, en route to a top speed of 196 miles per hour. The coupe's windshield slopes sharply back, melding into a side expanse of glass on the sides. That provides a wide field of vision which the hawk can only emulate by swiveling its head 180 degrees.

The sides of the CTS-V are heavy and smooth, with a slight airfoil at the bottom seemingly designed to help it glide through the air. In reality, the CTS-V is decidedly earth bound, with angular shapes modeled after those old stealth fighters to minimize air interference and keep noise to a minimum. In fact, even at speeds approaching 200 miles an hour, the interior of the coupe is surprisingly quiet, the result of a blend of heavy padding and smooth design. Its airfoil is such that the car is quieter at speeds over 80 MPH than under it.

The rear is pointed, with wide red tail lights flanking the corners – a touch the juvenile hawk could respect since its tail feathers turn redder with age and experience. The young hawk cocked its heard in that universal, teenage arrogant gesture meaning “I could take you if I wanted to.” And then it flew off.

Actually, it couldn't.

If one were to believe the latest round of Cadillac commercials the CTS-V, one of the world's fastest production cars, was designed to emulate the aerodynamics of a high performance bow and arrow ( <http://bit.ly/p8fCsd> ). And as if to prove the point, the car takes off over the straight desert course just as a small army of archers loose their black-shafted arrows. Not surprisingly, they never catch up with their streaking target.

While the imagery of the black hunting arrows chasing the streaking black Cadillac – whose paint is infused with soft gold flecks which make sunlight dance off its skin – is captivating, in reality the

origins of the design are grounded in the modern Air Force. For Ed Welburn, General Motors' design chief, the latest incarnation of the Cadillac is an evolutionary knockoff of fighter jet technology. The huge tailfins on the Cadillacs of the 1950s emulated the technology of the huge, lumbering, Korean War-era bombers that ruled the period's skies. They were known more for their size than speed – hence the common nickname of Hogs.

The new edition, however, takes its design cues from the angular stealth fighters, capable of racing half way around the globe and attacking before anyone knows they are there.

This new edition Cadillac comes in three flavors: the standard, \$50,000 CTS Coupe, powered by a 304-horsepower V-6 engine; the supercharged, \$71,000 CTS-V Coupe; and the slightly slower, 191-mile per hour, CTS-V Station Wagon whose sticker price is about \$71,500. All of them roll on 19-inch wheels. The latter was introduced at the 2010 New York Auto Show and when asked why he would design a racing station wagon Welburn replied, grinning, “Because we can. Besides, does that look like a station wagon to you?”



The station wagon bears no resemblance whatsoever to the surfboard-toting family wagons popularized by Hollywood beach movies of a bygone era. In fact, the functional station wagon did not look like one at all. The rear was more tapered, the windows were trapezoids under a sloping roof reminiscent of Acura's crossover, the ZDX, and the front was the aggressive grill of the Cadillac cat.

“Who wouldn't want one?” asked Welburn, rhetorically.

It can be a family car. There was more than enough room in the back to take three grandchildren – two of them still in children seats – and assorted toys and presents on a day trip through Virginia's scenic Blue Ridge Mountains. Two tall adults would also enjoy the ride in the rear seats. And when the kids were gone, the rumble of the big V-8 engine became a smooth, baritone vibration as the speedometer hit 120 along the sparsely traveled mountain highway.

The interior of the Cadillac triplets are what you might expect from a premium car line. The interior décor is leather with a generous amount of wood accent on the steering wheel, doors and dash. The

steering wheel, with fingertip audio, Bluetooth, and cruise controls, tilts and retracts. The CTS features a pop up, seven-inch, touch information screen which makes the satellite-augmented navigation system extremely easy to use. It also provides crystal clear viewing from the backup camera.



For entertainment, there is a single disc CD player, iPod, USB and MP3 connections, as well as AM/FM and XM Satellite radio. The system contains a massive 40-gigabyte hard drive to hold a few thousand of your personal favorite tunes, and the sound comes clearly through a Bose system.

If there is a down side, it's that the huge engine with the CTS-V drinks gasoline like kids go through soda. The CTS-V wagon, with an EPA rating of 14 miles per gallon in city driving and 19 miles per gallon on the highway, carries a \$1,300 gas guzzler tax while the Coupe, with a 12 mile per gallon rating in the city and 18 miles per gallon on the highway, has a \$2,600 gas guzzling penalty. That's not surprising. The actual mileage for the wagon, for example, was slightly less than its EPA billing, at 12.5 MPG in city driving and 18 MPG on the open road. The stats for the Coupe were just 10 MPG in the city and 17 MPG on the highway. The standard CTS with the V-6 engine avoids the tax and has an EPA rating of 18 MPG in the city and 27 MPG on the highway.

But you don't get a Cadillac – particularly one with GM's most powerful engine – if saving gas is your primary concern. You get it for the comfort and the joy of driving.

And if low flying in style is what you crave, the Cadillac CTS-V provides a good place to start.



### **2012 Cadillac CTS-V Wagon**

<b>MSRP:</b>		<b>\$71,485</b>
<b>EPA Mileage:</b>	<b>14 MPG City</b>	<b>19 MPG Highway</b>
<b>As Tested Mileage:</b>	<b>12.5 MPG City</b>	<b>18 MPG Highway</b>

### **Performance / Safety:**

<b>0 – 60 MPH</b>	<b>3.9 Seconds</b>
<b>Top Speed</b>	<b>191 MPH</b>

### **2012 Cadillac CTS-V Black Diamond Edition Coupe**

**MSRP:** **\$70,790**

**EPA Mileage**      **12 MPG City**                      **18 MPG Highway**

**As Tested Mileage:** **10 MPG City**                      **17 MPG Highway**

**Performance / Safety:**

**0 – 60 MPH**                      **3.9 seconds**

**Top Speed**                      **196 MPH**

6.2-Liter, supercharged, aluminum alloy V-8 engine producing 556 horsepower and 551 pound-feet of torque; 6-speed automatic transmission with electronic manual mode and paddle shifts; magnetic ride shocks; Brembo brakes; 4-wheel independent suspension; 19-inch aluminum wheels and Michelin performance tires; stability and traction control; fog lights; high definition headlamps with adaptive lighting; backup camera; front & side impact airbags; head curtain side airbags.

**Interior / Comfort:**

AM/FM/XM Satellite radio; Bose sound system; iPod, USB and MP3 connections; single disc CD Player; 40 GB hard drive; Bluetooth; tilt & telescope, leather wrapped steering wheel with fingertip audio, phone and cruise controls; OnStar; satellite navigation system with 7-inch pop-up screen; heated front seats; leather seating; split, folding rear seats.