

Cadillac, concisely

by Joe Sage

This era of alphanumeric Cadillacs has just two sedans (CT4, CT5), which succeeded all-letter sedans (ATS, CTS, DTS, STS, XTS) that in turn had succeeded an era of distinctively recognizable names: Eldorado, Seville, DeVille, Fleetwood and more.

For utilities, Cadillac has maintained the name-name for its big boy Tahoe- and Suburban-cousin Escalade family, while one smaller model, the SRX, was added earlier this century, since then expanding to a range of utilities, now with all models below Escalade having become alphanumeric (XT4, XT5, XT6).

The SRX had been launched in 2003 in more of a wagon-like form (but the US resists

this term), then taking one big lane change in 2009 to a more typical utility form, with its badge changing to XT5 in 2016 (for model year 2017), as the middle of an expanded lineup of three sub-Escalade models. While the smaller XT4 is direct sibling of the Buick Encore GX, the XT5 strikes us as bearing more of the cutely bold or boldly cute style and stance of the Buick (which itself bears much of the magic of the tiny yet highly capable Buick Encore)—and this is where we find its appeal. The Buick pair are beautifully outfitted, comfortably sized, high-performing little premium beasts. Despite actually being the next size up, our epiphany for the week was that the Cadillac XT5 is their closer luxury cousin.

Though once unfathomable, the idea of a compact Cadillac—from a brand once defining luxury as a plush living room on wheels—makes sense from every angle today.

XT5 comes in three trim levels, with two engines and front- or all-wheel drive (the middle trim offers both engines; the top trim is AWD-only). Our sample is the top unit of the mid-trim—a Premium Luxury with the 310-hp 3.6L V6 instead of 235-hp 2.0L turbo-four, and with AWD. Sport, about four grand pricier, has performance suspension and semi-aniline leather, which were add-ons on ours.

Fully outfitted, ours ran \$10 grand higher than the top Sport's base price—though all its add-ons are appealing and would be tough to slice out, particularly for a luxury vehicle. Options included a rear camera mirror, great for

removing the structure of the vehicle from your view, greater still if you have rear passengers. We turn this off, as its video screen requires constant changes between near and distance vision, while a real mirror maintains the same distance focus as windshield and side mirrors. Lacking was lumbar control.

Electric steering can be a mixed bag, as it was here—a bit jumpy, yet highly accurate at the same time, while also delivering a tighter turn than its numbers suggest, great for boulevard U-turns. Auto start-stop, which we love to turn off, is easily accessible on the screen.

Touchscreen functions can suffer from an ergonomic oddity—immediately below the screen is a touchpad bar, and if you rest the heel of your hand here to work the screen, as most people will, you will inadvertently deliv-

er yourself some settings surprises.

All in all, the XT5 is a familiar build with a familiar set of variables, but with a layer of Cadillac luxury atop it. Pricing follows this same thinking. We liked the size—tidy and maneuverable on the outside, with a spacious luxury experience on the inside. To spend a little less or to have a little more interior volume, there are the XT4 and XT6 (and Escalades). But if XT5 were the only one you were exposed to, you would find it plenty satisfying, with no further questions.

At face value, the Cadillac XT5 might seem just another compact utility, at the pricier end. But seen in context, it offers a great deal—a neat little luxury SUV with a big spirit. ■



Our Cadillac XT5 was rich and handsome in a deep grey called Wilder Metallic.

SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY.....	Spring Hill, Tennessee
ENGINE / TRANSMISSION.....	USA / USA
CONTENT.....	US/Canada 39% / Mexico 24%
ENGINE.....	3.6L V6 DOHC 24v VVT dir inj, cast alum / cast alum, cast-in-place iron bore liners
HP/TORQUE.....	310 hp / 271 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION.....	Hydra-Matic 9T65 9-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN.....	AWD
SUSPENSION.....	F: MacPherson strut, direct-acting hollow stblzr bar; R: indep five-link, specifically tuned coils, hollow stblzr bar; F/R: incl opt continuous damping control
STEERING.....	var-assist rack & pinion w rack-mounted belt-driven elec assist
BRAKES.....	F: 13.6 disc; R: 12.14 disc
WHEELS / TIRES.....	18-in alum / P235/65 R18
LENGTH / WHEELBASE.....	189.6 / 112.5 in
GROUND CLEARANCE.....	na
TURNING CIRCLE.....	38.7 ft
HEADROOM (F/R).....	39.7 / 38.4 in
LEGROOM (F/R).....	41.2 / 39.0 in
CARGO CAPACITY.....	30 / 63 cu.ft
WEIGHT.....	(Prem Lux 3.6L AWD) 4286 lb
TOW CAPACITY.....	3500 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY.....	prem unl / (AWD) 22 gal
MPG.....	18/25/21 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE.....	\$51,995
ENGINE: 3.6L V6.....	1000
PAINT: Wilder Metallic.....	625
PLATINUM PKG: semi-aniline leather, premium carpeted floor mats, real-time damping performance suspension w mode select, illum front door sill plates.....	4850
TECHNOLOGY PKG: HD surround vision, rear pedestrian alert, rear camera mirror w washer, 8-in color gauge cluster w personalization, color heads-up display, auto park assist w braking.....	2275
NIGHT VISION.....	2000
WHEELS: 20-in 6-split-spoke alloy w polish/android finish.....	1700
DRIVER ASSIST PKG: adaptive cruise, enhanced auto emergency brake, reverse auto brake, auto seatbelt tightening.....	1300
TRI-ZONE AUTO CLIMATE.....	1200
DESTINATION CHARGE.....	1395

TOTAL.....\$68,340

(Note: prices have increased; see below.)

2023 CADILLAC XT5 LINEUP

Engine	HP	lb-ft	trans	MPG (city/hwy)
2.0 turbo-4	235	258	9AT	FWD .....22/29 AWD.....21/27
3.6L V6	310	271	9AT	FWD .....19/26 AWD.....18/25
Luxury.....	2.0L	FWD	.....	\$45,590
.....	2.0L	AWD	.....	47,590
Premium Luxury.....	2.0L	FWD	.....	51,340
.....	2.0L	AWD	.....	53,340
.....	3.6L	FWD	.....	52,340
.....	3.6L	AWD	.....	54,340
Sport.....	3.6L	AWD	.....	58,490