



# LUXURY MEETS TECHNOLOGY 2013 CADILLAC XTS

MSRP: \$60,900 · AS TESTED: \$90,535

Cadillac's transformation continues. Gone from the lineup is the DTS, and with it the last of the company's former generation of full-size luxury sedans. Assuming the flagship role is the XTS. The styling of the four-door sedan shows another variation of Cadillac's "Arts and Science" design language.

Though more toned down than some of the new generation Cadillacs (like the CTS), the razor cut edges, bold grille and big (19-, 20-inch) rims put a modern, Cadillac stamp on the XTS. One hallmark of a good design is that it can make a large car seem smaller than it is. That's true here: The XTS is sneaky big, though it's still half a foot shorter than the DTS was.

XTS is offered in Base, Luxury, Premium and Platinum trim levels, with prices starting at an MSRP of \$44,075. Front-wheel-drive is standard, with all-wheel-drive available on all but Base cars. My test drive was split between two AWD models; one in Platinum trim, and the other Premium.

The sole powertrain pairing for XTS links a 3.6-liter V-6 with a six-speed automatic transmission. The LFX engine is rated at 304 h.p. and 264 lb. ft. of torque. That translates to a 0-60 time in the high six second range, and in practice, it's ample power for your driving needs. Really, the only surprise about the powertrain has to do not with what's here, but rather with what's not.

The luxury class is about surplus; giving you more than you need (but might possibly want). The option sheets on many premium cars include multiple engines, at least one of which typically provides more power than you'll ever find a use for. Not here, at least not yet. That said, the sole six is smooth and competent, and it also returns some respectable numbers for fuel economy. Interestingly, the choice of FWD or AWD has little impact on your MPG's. The EPA estimates that the



XTS will return 17 miles per gallon city, 28 highway (FWD); 17/26 for AWD models.

The car's interior is impressively large and comfortable. Six footers fit easily in either row. The look and feel of the cabin are in line with expectations for a fine car. Materials look rich to the eye and feel substantial to the touch; creature comforts abound. Ambient lighting give the car a cozy, luxury vibe after dark. The layout and format of the digital dash can be selected by the driver. A head's-up display is also part of the equipment list on Premium and Platinum models. The content of the display can be configured to suit the driver's needs.

Cadillac eschews traditional knobs and switches for controlling many functions, in favor of touch-sensitive technologies. You swipe and poke at the 8-inch screen and related access points, using moves that will be familiar to many smart phone

or tablet users, and perhaps foreign to some Cadillac shoppers. Addressing both markets, an iPad is included with each new XTS. Preloaded with several, Cadillac apps, it provides new age owners with a gateway for interacting with their new car, as well as some cross-training for less tech-oriented buyers.

A Driver Awareness Package is standard on the top two trim levels. It includes forward collision warning, lane departure warning, rear cross-traffic alert, blind spot alert and Safety Alert Seat. The latter feature is intriguing: the seat cushion vibrates, to warn the driver of potential problems. With all the potential distractions from one's driving that we deal with today – inside and outside the car – any reminders to pay attention are a good thing. The effectiveness of this particular method of notification depends on how willing you are to take

advice from the seat of your pants.

Speaking of pants, they have pockets, and when it's time to unload them, the interior has a fair number of spots to park your belongings. Larger items go "trunkward," and while XTS is far from old school, in this regard, it's downright traditional. The XTS trunk measures 18 cubic feet. Vacation sized, it is, with fold down rear seats to accommodate longer items, and an additional small, storage bay hidden beneath the trunk floor.

All XTS models enjoy the benefits of GM's Magnetic Ride Control suspension. Experience in other GM products so equipped has impressed us with the reflexes of this system. Real-time adjustments keep the car's suspension on the same page as its driving conditions. In this application, the emphasis is more on ride comfort than handling, and it's still very effective. The XTS corners competently, and has a firm, yet comfortable ride quality. Cadillac's use of a hydraulic power steering unit in favor of the electromechanical units currently in vogue is surprising, but also welcome. The XTS steering is well-weighted for feel, yet properly boosted for ease.

XTS is slotted, sized and priced about midway between the midsize and full-size premium segments. So, while future product plans from Cadillac may well include a full-size rear drive sedan that would bump XTS from its flagship role, it would slide to a spot still distinct from its premium, midsize competition. For luxury leaning buyers who appreciate comfort and cutting edge electronics, XTS offers real value for the money.

A regular contributor to the Times Union for the past 20 years, Dan Lyons is the award-winning author of six books, and photographer of 135 calendars. Read Dan's recent reviews on line anytime at [www.timesunion.com/cars](http://www.timesunion.com/cars).

