

Buttoned down and fired up

BY JOE SAGE

The Cadillac CT4 is one of many highly significant vehicles with the misfortune of coming to life during the last couple of years' lockdowns and auto show cancellations—introduced in 2019 as a 2020 model (thus our sample here being its third year). CT4 replaced the ATS, itself introduced seven years prior, as a smaller alternative to the CTS, introduced ten years prior to that (and replaced by the CT5 on the same cycle as CT4).

While all of the above have been aimed at the most popular European sports sedans, they have run a bit larger in size, welcome by some but not

others—hence the addition of the smaller ATS and then CT4, respectively.

In line with their Euro-competitive strategy, these models have been built on rear-drive architecture, with all-wheel-drive availability, and have often offered that most elusive enthusiast feature, the manual transmission.

All that is great, but it gets greater. The standard CT4 bears either a 237-hp 2.0L four-cylinder twin-scroll turbo and 8-speed or 310-hp 2.7L turbo-four and 10-speed automatic. But wait. There is then the CT4 V-Series (or CT4-V), with the 2.7L

bumped up to 325 hp. Not enough? That brings us to this version: the CT4 V-Series Blackwing, with a 472-hp 3.6L twin-turbo V6—and the aforementioned manual transmission, a 6-speed Tremec unit with LUK twin-disc clutch, standard (with a 10-speed GM Hydra-Matic automatic available).

Pricing is simple enough: low-mid \$30s for the CT4 (add \$4k for the bigger engine), mid-\$40s for the CT4-V, and way-upper \$50s (and sure to pass \$60k) for the CT4-V Blackwing. Any and all prices compare favorably against their Euro competitors.

Though considered a compact, and while recognizing that size categories are becoming ever fuzzi-er, the CT4 feels tidily spacious inside. The interior is especially nice, with selectively quilted, vented black leather. There is piping on the seats, an off-white grey (as it follows the seat's curves and contours, if we had our smartphone cable sprawl-

ing from console to phone on the other seat, the piping and cable look surprisingly related).

It wasn't until we saw it from the second floor of our office building, joined by a Toyota Camry, that we realized it is indeed smaller on the outside—though only slightly smaller than the Camry, which is a midsize. Inside it's a tad more generous in the front seats, a bit less so in the rear.

The advantageous differences of a performance build are clear at higher speeds and during aggressive cornering. When such a car is a daily driver, you'll also notice how it performs at low speed. The CT4-V's steering and performance suspension are supremely solid and buttoned down at high speeds. At parking lot speeds or just starting out, you may notice some rocky behavior, as well as on uneven pavement (though it's surprisingly smooth on speedbumps). At speed, grounded in almost two tons of heft, it is rock solid.

The clutch and brakes are equally tight and solid, all for the better. The Tremec 6-speed man-

ual is a fine unit, delivering precise shifts through smooth gates, with all gear positions accurate and well spaced. We used the range exactly as we would expect to, which may sound like a given, but often is not, in others.

Discreetly badged and with style points only mildly modified, the CT4-V is a pretty good sleeper—only the cognoscenti would occasionally roar up next to us in hopes of a challenge. If we wanted to, we could give any of them quite a surprise. This thing is a rocket on any freeway ramp.

Our time behind the wheel was a bit more limited than we would have wished, but have no fear—while wishing we had more, and while having talked about the CT4's size, we learned that we will have a CT5 in just a few weeks—in fact, another V-Series. In fact, another Blackwing with 6-speed manual. It will even be blue, though not the same blue. It will also cost almost \$30 grand more. Stay tuned, as that car, in turn, will shed more light on this car. Can't wait! ■



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	.....Lansing, Michigan
CONTENT	.....46% US/Canada, 21% Mexico
ENGINE/TRANSMISSION	.....Austria / US
ENGINE	.....3.6L DOHC twin-turbo 24v V6, DOHC, dir inj w electronic throttle control, contin VVT, cast alum / cast alum, titanium rods (w manual), oil-spray piston cooling
HP/TORQUE	.....472 hp / 445 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....10.2:1
TRANSMISSION	.....Tremec 6-spd manual w LuK twin-disc clutch; (opt 10-spd auto)
DRIVETRAIN	.....RWD
0-TO-60 MPH	.....(manual trans) 4.1 sec
TOP SPEED	.....189 mph
LATERAL ACCELERATION	.....1.04g
HOT LAP	.....(VIR Grand Course) 2:52.5 min
REAR DIFFERENTIAL	.....electronic limited-slip w aluminum housing, high-perf cooler
SUSPENSION	.....F: MacPherson type w cross-axis dual lower ball joints, ZF MVS passive dampers & direct-acting hollow stblzr bar, Magnetic Ride Control 4.0; R: five-link indep, coils w ZF MVS passive dampers & hollow stblzr bar, MRC 4.0
STEERING	.....rack-mounted elec var pwr-asst
BRAKES	.....staggered Brembo 4-whl disc, high-performance copper-free linings, F: 6-piston, R: 4-piston rear
WHEELS	.....forged alum: F: 18x9; R: 18x9.5
TIRES	.....Michelin Pilot Sport 4S sum perf F: P255/35ZR18 / R: P275/35ZR18
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....187.6 / 109.3 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....na
TURNING CIRCLE	.....38.85 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....38.3 / 36.5 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....42.4 / 33.4 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....10.7 cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....(manual trans) 3860 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....prem / 17.4 gal
MPG	.....15/23/18 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	.....\$58,995
WAVE METALLIC PAINT	.....625
JET BLACK: w Jet Black accents, leather seat surfaces, high performance steering wheel, sueded microfiber wrapped trim pkg	.....4900
PERFORMANCE DATA/VIDEO RECORDER	.....1600
TECH PKG: air ionizer, heads-up display	.....725
CLIMATE PKG: both front seats power lumbar massage; both front seats ventilated	.....600
BRAKE CALIPERS, BLUE	.....595
FRONT LICENSE PLATE BRACKET	.....15
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....995
TOTAL	.....\$69,050

CADILLAC CT4 LINEUP

2021 pricing	.....RWD	.....AWD
Luxury		
2.0L turbo-4, 237 hp	.....\$33,395	.....\$35,395
Premium Luxury		
2.0L turbo-4, 237 hp	.....37,595	.....39,595
2.7L DV turbo-4, 310 hp	.....41,495	.....44,670
Sport		
2.0L turbo-4, 237 hp	.....38,695	.....40,695
2022 pricing	.....RWD	.....AWD
V-Series		
2.7L DV turbo-4, 310 hp	.....46,095	.....48,095
V-Series Blackwing		
3.6L twin turbo V6, 472 hp		
6-spd manual	.....▼ 58,995	
10-spd automatic	.....62,170	
"Fully configured"	.....86,780	