

CARGAZING

A Crossover on a Diet

Cadillac's New XT5 Loses 278 Pounds, Feels Sportier

By Derek Price
CARGAZING.COM

When I think of Cadillac, there's one concept that never comes to mind: light weight.

Yet that's exactly what the classic American luxury brand is focusing on as it designs vehicles for a new generation of upscale buyers, people more interested in Earth-friendly fuel economy and sporty handling than the fuel-guzzling barges their parents and grandparents bought.

The latest example is the XT5, an all-new crossover that replaces the good but not exceptional SRX.

The XT5 is 278 pounds lighter than its predecessor, despite offering more leg room inside and a more substantial presence at the curb, something that helps its fuel economy. Cadillac also likes to brag that the XT5 is 100 pounds lighter than the impressive Audi Q5 and a whopping 650 pounds lighter than the Mercedes-Benz GLE.

The result is a vehicle that has a more snappy, crisp driving feel than



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CADILLAC XT5

With wheels pushed closer to the corners and a sleek, sloping roofline, the all-new Cadillac XT5 has the looks to back up its sportier driving feel.

the SRX, although without quite as much snappiness as I'd hoped.

While the XT5 is competent in corners, and certainly an improvement over the old SRX, I never felt like it wanted to be pushed hard. It seems to moan and groan about it rather than yell "wheee!" like the best crossovers in this class do.

Even its seat belts feel squeamish about cornering. When you pull enough G-forces in a turn, just at the point things start to get fun, the active safety system yanks the seat belts tight around your body because it apparently thinks you're going to die.

And that's a shame, because this new chassis feels like it has the potential to be spectacular. If it came with GM's sophisticated magnetic ride control, or maybe a high-performance V package, it could cross into the territory of the truly extraordinary.

As it is, it's a dramatic improvement over its forebears and a compelling vehicle to cross-shop against the pricey European and Japanese luxury brands.

I liked a lot of things about my XT5 tester: the looks, cabin, acceleration and a seemingly endless list of high-tech bells and whistles.

I even like its CUE digital interface, something other critics frequently target. To me, the CUE touchscreen system seemed to work very quickly, looked

beautiful and was easy to learn and understand.

I didn't find it as frustrating to use as Lexus' next-generation system, for example, which makes you operate it with a touchpad as if your 2017 luxury car was a 1997 black plastic laptop.

Inside, the cabin is as finely crafted as any of the competition — not that there are any slouches in this highly competitive class. It has a clean, simple look that almost evokes Scandinavian minimalism, but with natural colors and textures that beg you to touch them.

Given Cadillac's goal to make its crossover feel sportier, the decision for its new engine makes perfect sense. It utilizes the same delicious 3.6-liter V6 that powers the ATS and CTS sports sedans.

The result is an engine that revs quickly and bellows beautifully out the tailpipes when you ask it to exert itself. It makes 310 horsepower and 271 pound-feet of torque, numbers that until recently would be associated with truck-like V8 engines. Yet

its quick response and smooth, syrupy power delivery feel about as un-truck-like as you can get.

It feels less like an SUV and more like a sports sedan, which is exactly what Cadillac thinks the next generation of buyers will be looking for.

Pricing starts at \$40,390 and ranges up to \$63,890 for the Platinum trim.

What was tested?

2017 Cadillac XT5 Platinum (\$62,895). Options: Driver assistance package (\$2,340). Price as tested (including \$995 destination charge): \$66,230

Wheelbase: 112.5 in.

Length: 189.5 in.

Width: 75 in.

Height: 66 in.

Engine: 3.6-liter V6 (310 hp, 271 ft. lbs.)

Transmission: Eight-speed automatic

Fuel economy: 19 city, 27 highway

RATINGS

Style: 9

Performance: 7

Price: 7

Handling: 5

Ride: 6

Comfort: 8

Quality: 9

Overall: 8

Why buy it?

It has an all-new design with impressive looks, performance and technology. It feels like a sportier, more upmarket product than the outgoing SRX it replaces in Cadillac's rapidly improving lineup.



Authentic materials in natural colors make the XT5's cabin feel warm and inviting. It's designed to look clean and simple for a relaxing, calming impression.

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A CLOSER LOOK



AT A GLANCE: FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

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