

## 30-Minute Test Drive - The Cadillac CTS

Sunday, 22 May 2005

My assignment for a mundane Monday morning was to check out XM's NavTraffic system in action. Don't get me wrong, its technology I've been waiting to try out. I just figured I'd get a tour of Santa Monica with XM executives or something. In this case, it was wrapped in a 2005 Cadillac CTS and this is where technology journalism differs from automotive journalism. They just give you the keys and ask that you be back in 30 minutes. That's just asking for trouble.

### The Cars

The CTS comes in three flavors, starting with a 2.8L V6, 210 HP version for entry level folk. In the middle is a 3.6L V6 putting out 255 HP, but that still makes my Monday morning pretty uneventful. The interiors felt cheap and performance uninspired compared to competitors like the Lexus IS300 or Infiniti G35. Then there's the CTS-V powered by a 5.7L V8 (basically a Corvette engine) that spits out 400 HP and 295 lb-ft of torque. Now that's more like it.

All the numbers don't mean much unless you're a car enthusiast. So let me put it this way &ndash; the CTS-V is a rocket. From a standstill, expect to hit 60 mph in 4.6 seconds. On a relatively quiet stretch of the Pacific Coast Highway, I'm pretty sure I hit the mark somewhere around the 7000 RPM mark, a tad over the 6500 RPM redline.

The CTS-V with its TREMTEC 6-speed manual transmission shifts smooth and power pours onto the road effortlessly. In hard cornering, the CTS-V remains flat and responsive despite its 3850-pound body sloshing about. The CTS-V is an exhilarating drive, especially for a four door sedan. But the Cadillac badge makes it even more surprising. I've always thought of Cadillac's as smooth riding cars with zero handling and suspensions like boats. So, I'm wrong.

### XM NavTraffic

How did NavTraffic work? That was the assignment, after all. Well, I never did get a chance to see it in action. With the CTS-V, Cadillac covered so many bases from the supportive and luxurious leather seats to the leather door inserts. The interior feels elegant, but Cadillac's navigation system is anything but. There's no touch screen, instead relying on a series of dynamic buttons to navigate through the options. Entering an address is a chore without a touch screen and it's amazing that designers didn't figure that out. For that reason, I gave up and enjoyed the drive instead. Thankfully, the CTS-V is a car you'll want to get lost with.