

TAIHANG MOUNTAINS, CHINA



CADILLAC.COM/ATS

©2012 General Motors. All rights reserved. Cadillac® ATS®



THE DRIVER STARES INTO THE DEEP, DARK ABYSS.
THE LIGHT AT THE END FEELS WORLDS AWAY.

Ahead: nearly a mile of hand-chiseled chaos and disorder. China's Guoliang Tunnel—the handiwork of thirteen villagers who carved their way through the Taihang Mountains to connect with the outside world.



This isn't a road. It's a barbaric stretch. And the driver likes what he sees. A broken, uneven surface. Unrelenting turns. Sheer drop-offs. The perfect proving ground for the available Magnetic Ride Control in the all-new Cadillac ATS.

The tunnel walls constrict, light fades

to claustrophobic black.

The driver's pupils dart left, right. The road rises and falls as if it's inhaling, exhaling. Heaving without rhyme, reason.

The suspension attacks the surface, reading every jarring dip and bump 1,000 times per second, instantly stiffening and softening in rapid response, bringing the rugged terrain to its knees. Fully connected to and in command of the road, the driver bursts into the blast of light at the end of the tunnel.

The all-new Cadillac ATS. Setting the standard in every corner on earth.

THE ALL-NEW CADILLAC ATS. THE STANDARD OF THE WORLD



RETURN SENDER TO

I WAS CHARGING into Quibblebacher-Hohe at the top of fourth gear, the Cadillac CTS-V Sport Wagon still accelerating hard at well past 120 mph, when it really hit me: This is my old long-termer.

This is the same Cadillac CTS-V Sport Wagon I shepherded around Los Angeles for more than a year. The same crazy-fast station wagon I picked up on May 7, 2011, in Michigan, then promptly filled with beer from seven Midwestern breweries and drove 2000 miles back to Los Angeles. The exact same evil-looking, sparkle-black Cadillac with the black wheels and yellow brake calipers that I personally took to the dragstrip on four different occasions. The same one I drove on the glorious canyon roads above Los Angeles whenever the opportunity presented itself. The same Caddy Wagon in which I planned and ran a rally. The one we used as the remote-control helicopter support car when we filmed our epic 2011 Best Driver's Car 11-car drag race video, not only because the 556-hp station wagon could more or less keep up with big dogs like the Nissan GT-R and Ferrari 458 Italia, but because we learned that the V-Wagon could go above 100 mph with its liftgate up.



THE WORLD'S FASTEST STATION WAGON TAKES THE LONG WAY HOME

• Words Jonny Lieberman
• Photographs Michael Shaffer

SAVE THE
Kein ZiRING erplatz
Betreten der Sicherheitsbereiche und der Rennstrecke verboten.
Vorsicht: Lebensgefahr!
Bei Unfällen wird keine Haftung übernommen.

No spectators allowed here
Keep off the track – no access beyond this point.
Caution: Danger to life!
In the event of accidents no liability will be assumed.

www.nurburgring.de

LOWLANDS BE THE PLACE

It's hard to decide which is more fantastic: the medieval, beer-soaked fairytale city of Bruges or the how-can-this-actually-exist wonder of the Nürburgring. Let's go with the 'Ring.





MIND BOGGLED
While standing below a literal wall of Belgian beer is a pretty unbelievable experience, nothing will top the feeling of driving our long-term car on two continents.

The same muscled car of a station wagon that other staffers begged me to let them borrow just for one night. And here I am, driving at the outer limits of my admittedly meager abilities, in my old CTS-V wagon at triple-digit speeds on Germany's notoriously difficult Nürburgring Nordschleife. This is amazing! How on earth did any of this happen?

It all started about 18 months ago in Abu Dhabi. For reasons I'm still wondering about, Cadillac flew me to the United Arab Emirates to check out its operations in the Middle East. Driving ace and engineer John Heinricy was there to show my Middle Eastern and Russian colleagues just how fast the then-new CTS-V Coupe could fly around the Yas Marina F1 circuit. Over a particularly terrible "Italian" dinner, I asked John about the 7:59.32 lap time he set around the 'Ring in a CTS-V sedan. I was curious as to why that particular CTS-V had an automatic transmission, since I've driven both versions and thought the manual felt faster.

"Oh," said John, his calm demeanor masking the fact that he's perhaps the most aggressive driver I've ever encountered, "we'd been programming the transmission software for the previous two weeks, so I



was really familiar with the automatic. So when I got the opportunity to go for a fast lap, I was ready to go with the automatic." In my mind, then, a manual Cadillac CTS-V should be even faster around the notoriously hellish 12.9-mile track where it was developed.

When he was our editor-in-chief, Angus MacKenzie told me, "Your job is to think of stupid ideas. Mine is to pay for them." At about the six-month point of my time with the CTS-V Wagon, it occurred to me that it wouldn't be fitting for the car to just go back to the manufacturer like any other long-term. Not only was it typically the fastest, best-handling car in our fleet (until EIC Edward Loh's Nissan GT-R Black Edition showed up), it was without question the most special. The world will never again see the likes of a supercharged 6.2-liter V-8 station wagon with a six-speed manual transmission. The thing's a unicorn.

A special opportunity like this—one year with the V-Wagon—required a special ending. What if my car could return home to General Motors as not only the first long-term vehicle to serve duty on two continents, but with the title of World's Fastest Station Wagon, at least in terms of the legendary Nürburgring?





ONCE AGAIN As far as we know, our sparkle-black CTS-V Sport Wagon is the first Cadillac ever to be used as a beer hauler on two continents.

Feature Caddy at the 'Ring

Moreover, what if the manual-transmission CTS-V proved faster than the slushbox version? I think that would qualify as a sufficiently stupid idea, eh, Angus?

To pay homage to our history together, I decided to pull off one last beer run in the Caddy Wagon. Since the town of Nürburg is quite close to the beer nirvana that is Belgium, the plan was to grab some beer from the Kasteel brewery in Ingelmunster and run back to my buddy Pascal's bar, Café de Kuppe, in the wacky yet gorgeous medieval city of Bruges. Seeing the Cadillac rolling among the towering cases of beer inside Kasteel's warehouse brought back wonderful memories of the first week I spent with her. Compared with the Great Midwestern Beer Run, this Belgian version of just over 100 bottles seems puny. Still, if you do need to haul



suds from one location to another, I really can't think of a better vehicle. But we're not here to talk about beer. We're here for the 'Ring. Rest assured, we had fun in Bruges with Pascal and his intern, but it was nothing against the fun we had in Germany.

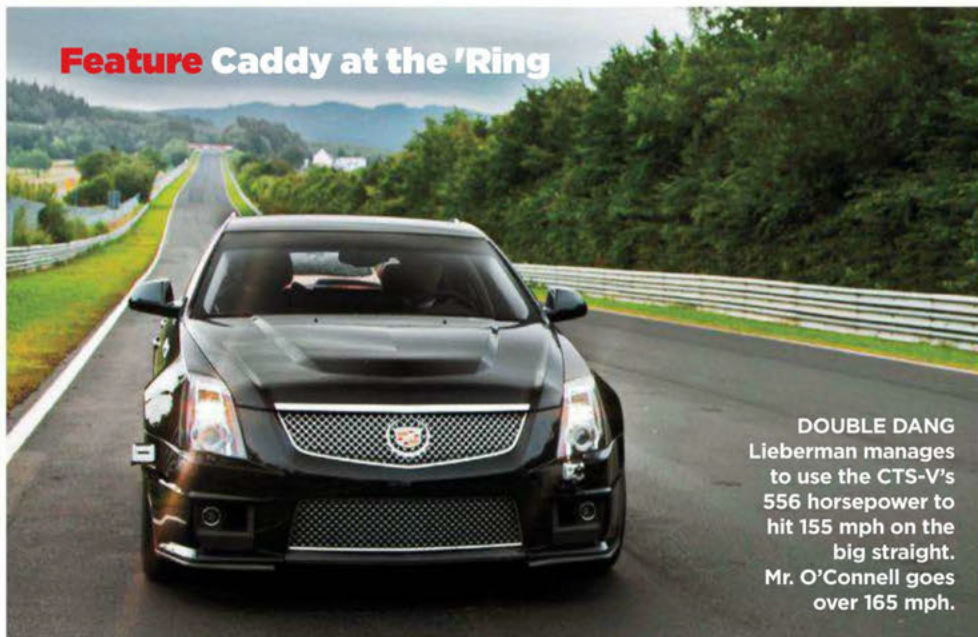
Johnny O'Connell's a guy who should be a household name. He's won Le Mans four times, podiumed nine, and won Sebring eight, making him the Florida race's winningest driver. He's currently racing for Cadillac in the World Challenge. He's also one hell of a nice guy. Like me, Johnny doesn't have the names of the Nürburgring's seemingly never-ending corners memorized. (With the exception of Whipperman, every corner is named after a tree or a stream or a hill.) "I call this part Oh Shit One," Johnny shouted as the Caddy went airborne and I banged my helmeted head against the CTS-V's roof. We'd just caught some air at 130 mph in a station wagon that weighs more than 4300 pounds.

Before we got to Oh Shit Two, Johnny absolutely scared the you-know-what out of me through

**TEAM JOHNNY/
JONNY**
Lieberman made fast friends with Johnny O'Connell, the most winning American racer in the history of Le Mans. He's won in Germany, too.



Feature Caddy at the 'Ring



DOUBLE DANG
Lieberman manages to use the CTS-V's 556 horsepower to hit 155 mph on the big straight. Mr. O'Connell goes over 165 mph.



MACKENZIE TOLD ME, "YOUR JOB IS TO THINK OF STUPID IDEAS. MINE IS TO PAY FOR THEM."

Motherf--ker One. I don't get carsick, and I'm rarely a frightened passenger, but there were a few moments where I was convinced there was no way the Caddy could do what Johnny was asking of it. Of course, that's why he's the pro, and I'm the guy who's maybe strung two successive corners together. Case in point: When I gave the CTS-V Wagon back to Cadillac, the built-in g-meter recorded highs of 1.15 g to the left and 1.01 g to the right. After Johnny was done with it, the meter showed 1.47 g left and 1.56 g right. Dang. But that's the Nürburgring for you, especially when the car running around it is in the hands of someone who can drive.

It had rained all day and Johnny's first attempt at beating Heinrich's 7:59.32 time was scheduled for 5 p.m. At around 3 p.m., we seemed to catch a break in the weather, but it was just a tease. The track, especially after the mini Carousel, was soaking wet. It was just too risky to make a flat-out attempt (which Johnny indicated by sticking his thumb under his chin, meaning the edge of the sword). So instead they threw

me in the car. Brilliant, right? Now, I'm lucky enough to have driven six laps of the 'Ring by myself and been a passenger another half-dozen or so times. I'd also just spent a year with the car I'd be driving. And the night before, I spent 12 euros to run a few laps on a simulator where I was promptly crushed by photographer Mike Shaffer and video guy Duane Sempson, both of whom had never so much as set foot on the Nordschleife. (Shaffer did manage to perform a barrel roll on the virtual Carousel.) Anyhow, to say I was unprepared is an understatement.

The Nürburgring is one of the few things in my life that lived up to the hype and surpassed my expectations. It's a relentless track; there's simply no letting up. Even if something looks like a straight, it's actually an elongated turn tricking you into a wrongheaded moment of relaxation. For instance, at the end of a big straight, you enter a left-hander flat-out. I managed to do it at 155 mph, thank you very much. On my lap with Johnny, he got to 165 mph.

A FOND FAREWELL Find out how the CTS-V performed during its year as a beloved MT garage long-term. **Page 136**



**"I CALL THIS PART 'OH SHIT ONE,'"
JOHNNY SHOUTED AS THE CADDY WENT
AIRBORNE AND I BANGED MY HELMETED
HEAD AGAINST THE CTS-V'S ROOF.**



Popular theory holds that it takes about 1000 laps to get a solid handle on the Nordschliefe, and that the real 'Ring specialists have clocked more than 10,000. The Nürburgring is that complicated, that nuanced, that special. No one can agree on how many corners there actually are. O'Connell says he was told there are 71; others have told me more than 180.

The track can be sunny, rainy, and snowy, all on the same lap! Word on the muddy paths that surround the circuit is that one mile driven in anger here is the equivalent to 100 street miles in terms of stress on a car. My seventh lap of the track, and first in the CTS-V Wagon, was both frustrating and fantastic. I barely put a wheel wrong, but I sure wasn't fast, even though I

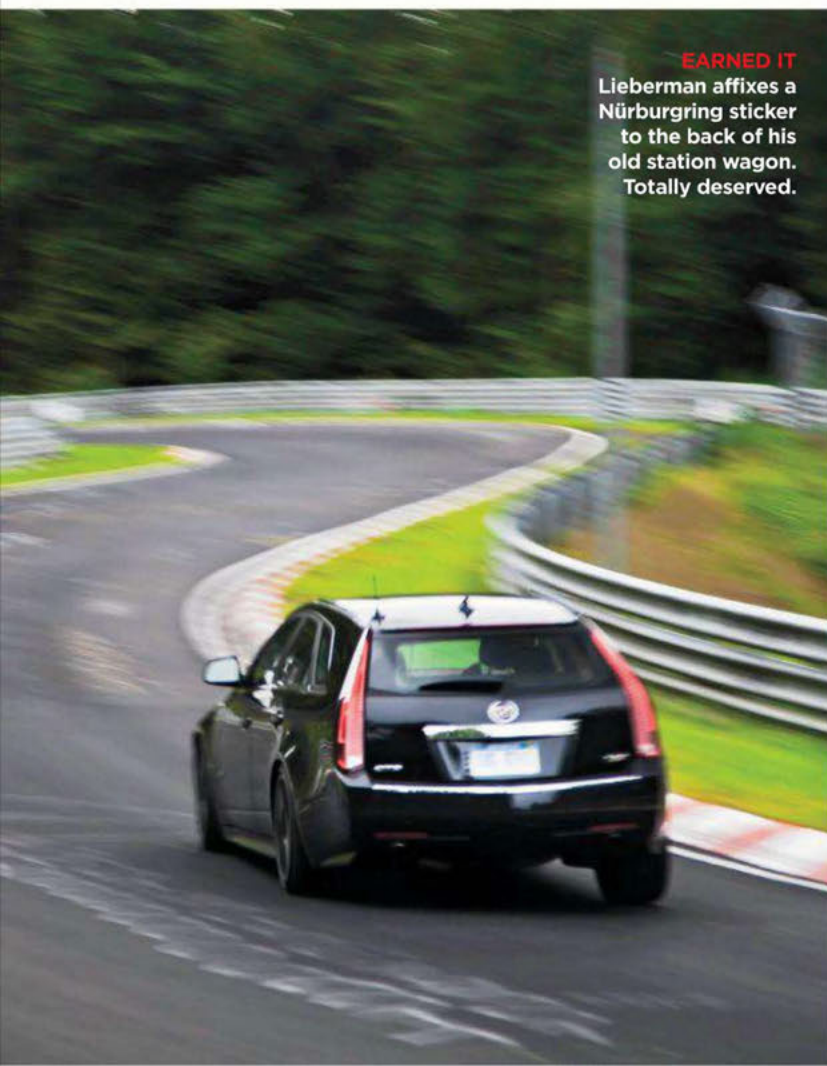
did have O'Connell coaching me from the passenger seat. I won't even bother mentioning that the track was wet. I will say that, if I had 993 more chances, I think I'd do all right.

The next morning at 7, Shaffer and I accompanied Johnny on a reconnaissance lap. It was still cloudy, but no one had seen a raindrop since 6 a.m. The beginning of the track was definitely drier than when we drove it the day before—a great sign. Even better, as we drove through the aptly titled Eiskurve (or Ice Curve, the wettest part of the track that gets the least sunlight), it was much drier than the day before.

We got back, and Johnny decided to go for it. He blasted out of T13 (where OEMs have taken to starting and stopping), and we had nothing to do but stand around for the next 8 minutes, looking at our stopwatches and listening for the roar and whirr of the big, force-fed V-8. Around 7:35 into his run we heard him. "That's not good," opined a GM engineer. "He made a big mistake." Johnny passed us, and I hit "lap" at 8:15.3. Not nearly fast enough. However, we had 30 minutes blocked out, which gave Johnny enough time for a cool-down lap (the brakes were flaming after the run) and one more thumb-under-the-chin attempt.

At the end of the cool-down, he once again rocketed out of the pits. This is the last chance for him to break the CTS-V sedan's record. The day before Johnny had explained, "If I don't do it, I'm going to get a lot of grief from Heinrich." Seconds turned into minutes. I think I heard something, but it was just a car going under a





EARNED IT
Lieberman affixes a
Nürburgring sticker
to the back of his
old station wagon.
Totally deserved.

bridge below us. We waited and waited and...too slow. The fastest lap was 8:12.1 by my watch.

"I had to swerve around a rabbit," Johnny told me, smiling. I guess the look in my face screamed, "Screw the rabbit!" because he quickly added, "It was a big rabbit." Pick an excuse, really. A German 'Ring specialist there testing cars for GM told us that the track was still too wet. Even with the lighter manual transmission, the wagon version weighs 100 pounds more than the sedan. My old long-termer had 36,500 miles on the odometer, and those are AMC (Ain't My Car) journalist miles. Before the trip, Caddy replaced the brakes, brake fluid, tires, and the clutch, but it left on the same wheels. The same wheels that their engineers noted "weren't exactly round any more." Our staff really enjoyed curbing those black rims, and Cadillac just colored in the scratches with black marker. It didn't touch the engine.

And that's the Nürburgring. Any little factor plaguing a car is magnified like crazy. If you're losing a second per mile because of a blend of a damp track, a tired engine, 100 extra pounds, warped wheels, and a suicidal bunny, that's almost 13 seconds. It's also almost exactly the amount of time Johnny O'Connell trailed John Heinricy's lap: 12.8 seconds. The Cadillac/Motor Trend team was disappointed until we realized that 8:12.1 makes our old long-term Cadillac CTS-V Sport Wagon the World's Fastest Station Wagon, because no other station wagon has ever gone around the Nürburgring as quickly. I, for one, am good with that. ■



2011 Cadillac CTS-V Sport Wagon Jonny Lieberman



"The Caddy CTS-V Wagon is a high-water mark not just for GM, but for performance sleepers everywhere. I can't accept the fact that it's gone."

The Cadillac CTS-V Sport Wagon wears a weird crown. Consider a Ferrari; Aston Martin; Lamborghini; big, sexy Jaguar coupe; or fire-engine-red Corvette—all are wonderful, loud, boisterous sports cars. Each is a blast to drive, makes a statement, and has been telegraphing its intention since its designer scribbled something similar on his/her Pee Chee folder back in the 1980s. Everyone knows what a sports car is saying. But a sparkle-black 556-hp station wagon with a six-speed manual? I spent one year with such a car, and I'm still trying to figure out just what it—and Cadillac—are saying. I think it's "Do Not Mess With."

Well, the sleeper crown has been passed. There have always been sleeper kings. The original Pontiac GTO comes to mind, as well as all those other big, muscular '60s and early '70s Detroit bombs. But they were mostly two-door affairs and

Service life / 14 mo/36,457 mi
Avg CO2 / 1.31 lb/mi **Energy cons** / 228 kW-hr/100mi
Unresolved problems / None **Maintenance cost** / \$0 (3- oil change, inspection, rotate tires; 1- engine-air filter)
Normal-wear cost / \$2107.45 (four new Michelin Pilot Sport PS2 tires, alignment, mounting) **3-year residual value*** / \$27,472

*Automotive Lease Guide



EPA CITY/HWY/COMB FUEL ECON 14/19/16 MPG AVERAGE FUEL ECON 14.8 MPG

looked the part. Of course, the Mercedes-Benz 6.3 and 6.9 sedans really introduced the world to the notion of a four-door supercar. The wholly unholy Buick GNX is another, though that was also a coupe. Really, though, the car that originated the crown is the AMG Hammer. Nothing was as intimidating as a black Benz that could outrun Ferraris and Lambos. The four-wheeled bully that carried the flag for super-stealth ships between the Hammer and the Caddy—and the one that still

fills me with glee whenever I see one—is the E39 BMW M5. Talk about bad to the bone. And now we have the CTS-V, and specifically this Wagon.

A little story if I may. We were photographing a comparison test between the 2013 Nissan GT-R Black Edition and the 2012 Porsche 911 Turbo S. We brought the CTS-V Wagon along as a support vehicle because it could not only haul all the bounce boards and other gear, but maybe keep up with those two missiles. We set off along one

WILLIAM WALKER





of our favorite routes with Scott Evans in Godzilla, me in the yellow Porsche, and photographer Mike Shaffer in the Cadillac. The GT-R simply ran away from us because that's what it does. However, Shaffer and the Cadillac were on me like pine tar. Could not shake 'em. I began questioning my driving abilities until after lunch when I said, "Shaffer, you take the Porsche, I'll take the Caddy." Guess what? He could not lose me or the 4300-pound V-Wagon. The Cadillac is that good.

Cheap to maintain, too. Well, cheap if you don't beat it like a rented mule, which we did. Like all cars in the luxury segment, Cadillac offers free routine maintenance. So everyday stuff like oil changes, air filter replacements, and tire rotations are covered for the first 50,000 miles, and I took full advantage of that. However, Caddy sure doesn't cover tires, and we burned through two sets of very pricey Michelin Pilot Sports during our time with the CTS-V Wagon. You can expect to pay about \$2000, installed, per set. Our tires got so

dead because collectively we just couldn't resist doing childish things on skidpads and runways. Not only did the tires go bye-bye, but so did the rear alignment, to the tune of \$300. Note: The gas mileage shot up by 4 mpg combined once we got the rear wheels back in line.

To recap my year with the Caddy wagon: I smiled every time I walked out to my driveway. I laughed every time I saw the range meter indicate there were 99 miles left with half a tank of fuel. I loved every single full-throttle downshift, each of which felt as if the car was getting slapped in the butt by a big shovel. I marveled at the fact that we returned the car to Cadillac with 36,457 miles on the odo and not one single mechanical thing had gone wrong. And when it left, I became misty-eyed. Because not only was the Cadillac CTS-V Sport Wagon gone from our fleet, but I knew that gas-guzzling supercharged sledgehammer station wagons with row-your-own gears are simply not coming back. Fare-thee-well, sweet king.



Dismal mpg ensures that supercharged barnstorming humdingers like the Caddy's LSA are not long for this world.

2011 Cadillac CTS-V Sport Wagon

POWERTRAIN/CHASSIS

Drivetrain layout	Front engine, RWD
Engine type	Supercharged 90-deg V-8, aluminum block/heads
Valvetrain	OHV, 2 valves/cyl
Displacement	376.0 cu in/6162 cc
Compression ratio	9.1:1
Power (SAE net)	556 hp @ 6100 rpm*
Torque (SAE net)	551 lb-ft @ 3800 rpm*
Redline	6250 rpm
Weight to power	7.8 lb/hp
Transmission	6-speed manual
Axle/final-drive ratios	3.73:1/2.35:1
Suspension, front; rear	Control arms, coil springs, adj shocks, anti-roll bar; multilink, coil springs, adj shocks, anti-roll bar
Steering ratio	16.1:1
Turns lock-to-lock	2.6
Brakes, f;r	15.0-in vented disc; 14.7-in vented disc, ABS
Wheels, f;r	9.0 x 19-in; 9.5 x 19-in, forged aluminum
Tires, f;r	255/40ZR19 96Y; 285/35ZR19 99Y Michelin Pilot Sport PS2

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase	113.4 in
Track, f/r	61.8/62.0 in
Length x width x height	191.3 x 72.6 x 59.1 in
Turning circle	37.9 ft
Curb weight	4353 lb
Weight dist, f/r	52/48%
Seating capacity	5
Headroom, f/r	38.8/37.2 in
Legroom, f/r	42.4/35.9 in
Shoulder room, f/r	56.7/57.4 in
Cargo vol behind f/r	58.0/25.4 cu ft

TEST DATA

Acceleration to mph	
0-30	1.7 sec
0-40	2.3
0-50	3.3
0-60	4.1
0-70	5.1
0-80	6.5
0-90	7.9
0-100	9.7
Passing, 45-65 mph	1.9
Quarter mile	12.5 sec @ 114.8 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	105 ft
Lateral acceleration	0.91 g (avg)
MT figure eight	25.3 sec @ 0.75 g (avg)
Top-gear revs @ 60 mph	1800 rpm

CONSUMER INFO

Stability/traction control	Yes/yes
Airbags	Dual front, front side, f/r curtain
Basic warranty	4 yrs/50,000 mi
Powertrain warranty	5 yrs/100,000 mi
Roadside assistance	5 yrs/100,000 mi
Fuel capacity	18.0 gal
EPA city/hwy econ	14/19 mpg
Energy cons, city/hwy	241/177 kW-hrs/100 mi
CO2 emissions	1.22 lb/mi
Recommended fuel	Unleaded premium

* SAE Certified