

FREEZE, SUCKA! NEXT-GEN COP CAR SHOOTOUT

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TITLE



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FIRST DRIVES FORD FOCUS ST • CADILLAC ATS
AUDI ALLROAD • BMW X1 XDRIVE

PATAGONIA, CHILE



CADILLAC.COM/ATS

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THE ENGINE ROARS TO LIFE.

THE WIND TIGHTENS ITS FIST.

Hands vice-grip the wheel, tires grab the road. The all-new Cadillac ATS launches into an epic duel to test its advanced aerodynamics. The nose punches forward, refusing to bow to the 45-mph wind. Welcome to Patagonia—end of the earth, empire of the wind. The needle surges. The landscape blurs.

A mile in and the wind looks winded. The available hidden active aero grille shutters are closed, deflecting air up and over the hood. The integrated rear spoiler then ingeniously uses the air



to create downforce, helping the car stay pinned to the road. Deftly streamlined, the ATS literally slips through the wind's grasp.

Suddenly, the wind pivots, striking the ATS with a diabolical left hook. The car doesn't flinch. Driver and machine are at one with the road. They erupt past a lone flag tree—a fitting finish to conquering one of the windiest places on earth.

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

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



BAVARIA

CAN CADDY PUT ITS CAR WHERE ITS MOUTH IS?

CADILLAC HAS been running its mouth for some time now about the new ATS, with Nürburgring videos and talk of benchmarking not the new 3 Series, but the “best one,” the E46. BMW, meanwhile, simply rolled out the best 3 Series yet and swept the field (“The More Things Change...”, May 2012).

The singular question, then, is whether Cadillac can back it all up, and the answer is yes. In fact, here are the only four things I don't like about the ATS: the instrument cluster is boring and uninspired; the shift paddles on the steering wheel are too far from your fingertips; the back seat is too cramped;

and the 2.5-liter base engine doesn't belong. That's it. But does that make it better than the 3 Series?

I drove the three ATS engine variants on beautiful and treacherous Georgia back roads, and I was more than surprised. The ATS is smooth



and composed on rough roads and through turns, with or without the optional magnetic shocks. The ride is appropriately stiff for a car with sporting intentions, but never harsh or brittle. Cadillac claims the ATS weighs as much as 160 pounds less than the last 3 Series we tested, but it retains a solid, weighty feel on the road. It comes off planted and confident, ready to glide through corners with ease rather than attack them with unbridled fury. Should you overcook it, the ATS defaults to progressive understeer.

On the road or the track, the ATS imparted a sense of balance—the engine never overdrove the suspension or tires.

● Words **Scott Evans**



BOUND

(First Test) 2013 Cadillac ATS





GO AND STOP The turbocharged 272-hp four-cylinder engine, left, provides strong acceleration and good fuel economy. The Brembo brakes, right, deliver confident, fade-free stopping power. The cabin boasts high-quality materials, and Cadillac's CUE interface is like having a iPad in the dash.

Steering feel is very good for an electric unit, and the car turns in quickly with a nice bit of weight to it. The Brembo brakes, standard on turbo and V-6 models, provide excellent, linear stopping power and resist fade well. GM's six-speed auto has been tuned up for performance and offers upshifts so quick, you'd be hard-pressed to tell the difference between this torque converter auto and a dual-clutch unit. Downshifts, though still quite good, are where the torque converter loses time and a little composure. The six-speed manual, available only with the turbo four-cylinder, is a very nice box with short, crisp throws that have a pleasant mechanical feel.

While I drove all three variants on the road, I was able to test only the top-shelf V-6. Without a proper dragstrip on hand, I used the front straight at Road Atlanta, where our trusty VBox recorded a 0-60-mph time of 5.7 seconds and a quarter-mile of 14.1 at 101.6 mph. (Cadillac predicted it should do a 5.4 to 60 and 14 flat in the quarter.) Extreme weather may have overtaxed our SAE correction factors, so we'll retest the car when one becomes available in California.

In the braking and skidpad tests, the ATS stopped in just 111 feet from 60 mph and pulled 0.94g average. The 2.0-liter turbo, Cadillac says, will be three-tenths of

a second behind the V-6 to 60 mph.

The turbo four and V-6 are quick, smooth, and quiet until you spur them, when each makes a pleasant noise. Then there's the 2.5-liter naturally aspirated four-cylinder. The ATS doesn't need this engine. The 2.0-liter turbo gets the same fuel economy and costs just \$600 more than the 2.5-liter, while still undercutting the 328's base price by \$1600. Ditch it.

Keep CUE, though. It's like having an iPad in your dash, and anyone comfortable with a smartphone will find it familiar. The controls are touch-sensitive and generally quick to react. Menus are easy to navigate, and some

(First Test) 2013 Cadillac ATS



2013 CADILLAC ATS

BASE PRICE	\$42,090
PRICE AS TESTED	\$48,190
VEHICLE LAYOUT	Front-engine, RWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan
ENGINE	3.6L/321-hp/275-lb-ft DOHC 24-valve V-6
TRANSMISSION	6-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT	3500 lb (mfr)
WHEELBASE	109.3 in
LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT	182.8 x 71.1 x 55.9 in
0-60 MPH	5.7 sec
QUARTER MILE	14.1 sec @ 101.6 mph
BRAKING, 60-0 MPH	111 ft
LATERAL ACCELERATION	0.94 g (avg)
EPA CITY/HWY FUEL ECON	19/28 mpg (est)
ENERGY CONS, CITY/HWY	177/120 kW-hrs/100 mi (est)
CO2 EMISSIONS	0.87 lb/mi (est)

common controls fade out when not in use, only to pop back up when your hand gets near the screen. The fonts are large and legible, and the graphics are crisp and sharp. Transitions between apps sometimes have a short delay, but no worse than I've experienced on my iPhone. Controls on the faceplate are slower and require a more purposeful push.

The ATS' interior is, by comparison with its gizmos, fairly reserved. The styling takes no great chances, and the gauge cluster looks pretty ho-hum, but the materials throughout are high-quality and well-assembled. The front seats offer a good compromise of comfort and

sportiness, and the butt-vibrating lane-departure warning is a neat feature. The rear seat, also comfortable, is a tight squeeze in both head- and legroom.

In all, then, the new Cadillac ATS is a very, very good car. But is it better than the 3 Series? The honest answer is...I don't know. Despite driving the ATS and my long-term 328i less than 24 hours apart, I just can't say without driving them directly back-to-back. To say that the ATS is as good as the 3 Series is a grand compliment by itself, but determining which car is better will have to wait for the inevitable comparison test. ■

