

GM's crown jewel

Cadillac's casual car, the De Ville convertible, provides the last word in carefree driving

by John Ethridge
Technical Editor



CADILLAC OCCUPIES an enviable position in its field. Not only does it out-sell all domestic cars in its class combined, but it's often considered in the same league with foreign luxury cars costing over three times as much.

When you look into the underlying reasons, you find it isn't quality alone that accounts for Cadillac's enormous prestige. The car's quality is undeniably good — it compares favorably with that of any automobile at any price. But the makers realize that, by itself, quality won't guarantee continued leadership in the luxury field. They've long known that things bordering on the abstract, such as association (fine jewelry) and distinctiveness (even with all insignia removed, it's instantly recognizable as a Cadillac), help assure concrete benefits like high resale value and owner loyalty. These two things are mutually regenerating and are what really account for the unassailable position Cadillac has enjoyed for quite some time. The Cadillac people have carefully nurtured these things in their advertising and by such devices as affixing the original purchaser's signature to the car.

For the sake of identification, the current model has to look like those of past years. In fact, if you go back a decade, you'll find today's car bears a marked resemblance to the 1955 model. Yet there's nothing antiquated about it. From both styling and engineering stand-



points, it's as contemporary as anything on the road. The most significant styling change for 1965 is that the famous fins, which have adorned Cadillacs for 17 years, have receded into the rear fender line.

A new frame, the first in nine years, heads the list of engineering changes. Like those of other GM cars, the frame is a perimeter type, and it gives a weight saving of about 300 pounds over the old one. For the past several years, most Cadillacs have been sold with several hundred pounds of accessories. Weight was getting out of hand. The tires, brakes, and suspension will welcome the relief. Those of you who feel a Cadillac *should* be heavy shouldn't worry. It still weighs plenty and has one of the most favorable sprung/unsprung weight ratios (for good ride) of any car.

The engine's been moved farther for-

ward in the new frame, reducing the size of the transmission hump. The bulk of the Comfort Control heating/air-conditioning unit now occupies underhood space instead of being in the passenger compartment. This results in far more knee room for the front-seat passengers and simplifies servicing the unit.

The history of Cadillac is to a large extent the story of a list of well-engineered accessories available as extras on the car. Foremost is the Comfort Control unit. The heating and air-conditioning systems are combined and are controlled by a "brain" on the instrument panel. In engineering language, it's a *servo-mechanism*. It senses the difference between the temperature you've dialed and that of the passenger compartment, then gives the necessary commands to appropriate parts of the system

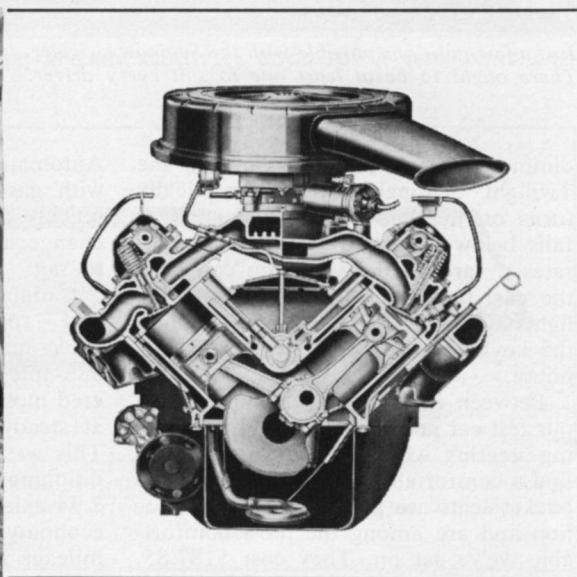
to adjust the temperature. In addition to turning the compressor and hot water on and off, the system also opens and closes various ducts. At one phase, both the heater and air conditioner go on simultaneously to de-humidify the air.

We approached the Comfort Control with a certain amount of skepticism at first, because we appreciate the problems involved in making a system like this — that sells for less than \$500 and still does all the things it's supposed to do. We were pleasantly surprised to find it worked perfectly under all tests we devised. It did tend to hunt (alternately blew hot and cold) when ambient temperature reached that set on the dial. This, though, isn't a real complaint. Changing the set temperature slightly cured it if we didn't want to shut it off and open the windows.

Besides the automatic headlight-



Numerous power-consuming accessories call for very busy engine compartment. Extra capacity of cross-flow radiator and condenser stops overheating.



Smooth, powerful "429" V-8 comes already broken in, uses Carter AFB or Rochester four-barrel carb.

GLASS REAR WINDOW CURES MAJOR CONVERTIBLE BUGABOO. TOP'S TAUTLY ATTACHED TO EACH BOW TO PREVENT BALLOONING AT HIGH SPEEDS.





Just a few positions possible with the Saginaw swiveler. There ought to be at least one to suit every driver.



New layout of engine and accessories adds to roominess and comfort inside. All manually operated controls can be reached with seat belt fastened.

CADILLAC continued

dimmer control, our test car had the Twilight Sentinel. This automatically turns on the headlights when sunlight falls below a certain level. It incorporates a variable delay so you can park the car, turn off the ignition, and the lights will stay on until you, say, find the keyhole and are safely inside your house.

Between the four-way bucket seat in our test car and the tilting and telescoping steering wheel, most everyone can find a comfortable driving position. The bucket seats are perforated for ventilation and are among the most comfortable we've sat on. They cost \$187.85, including a console with locking compartment.

We almost forgot to mention one optional extra (\$80.65) our test car had, so unobtrusively did it do its job. The

Automatic Level Control, which works with gas pressure on the rear shocks, quickly restores the status quo when a change in loading causes the rear end to sag.

Cadillac continues with its powerful and — for its size — economical 429-cubic-inch V-8. Overall average for our 888-mile test was 12.1 mpg, which covered mostly city driving. A freeway trip at steady legal speed gave 14.2 mpg. This was, of course, with the air conditioning and 3.21 axle. The standard 2.94 axle should yield phenomenal fuel economy. Performance runs dropped mileage to 10.5 — our low for the test.

Although stopping distances weren't unusually short, the big 12-inch brakes showed no signs of fade during turn-arounds after our acceleration runs. About seven out of 10 cars we test

won't get through these turn-arounds without some degree of fade.

As for the rest of the Cadillac line, all models except the Series 75 are pretty much as we've described the De Ville. The nine-passenger 75s continue with last year's X-braced tubular frame and horizontal headlamps. Also, the 75s retain the two-piece driveshaft, while other models have gone to a single shaft. What was formerly called the Series 62 is now more euphoniously referred to as the Calais.

You always get that extra that comes with every Cadillac at no extra cost: It's an unmistakable status symbol in the eyes of the well-to-do as well as the man in the street. With this on top of good engineering and distinctive styling, what more could you ask for in a luxury car? /MT

CADILLAC DE VILLE

2-door, 5-passenger convertible

OPTIONS ON TEST CAR: Comfort Control, bucket seats, AM-FM radio, automatic level control, electric seats, electric windows, power door locks, adjustable steering wheel, controlled differential.

BASE PRICE: \$5639

PRICE AS TESTED: \$7494.60 (plus tax and license)

ODOMETER READING AT START OF TEST: 4785 miles

RECOMMENDED ENGINE RED LINE: 5200 rpm

PERFORMANCE

ACCELERATION (2 aboard)	
0-30 mph	3.3 secs
0-45 mph	6.0
0-60 mph	9.5

PASSING TIMES AND DISTANCES	
40-60 mph	.52 secs., 382 ft.
50-70 mph	6.0 secs., 528 ft.

Standing start 1/4-mile	
17.2 secs. and 82 mph	
Speeds in gears @ 4400 rpm (shift point)	
1st	45 mph
2nd	76 mph
3rd	113 mph (observed)

Speedometer Error on Test Car	
Car's speedometer reading	32 48 54 64 74 85
Weston electric speedometer	30 45 50 60 70 80
Observed mph per 1000 rpm in top gear	25.2 mph
Stopping Distances — from 30 mph, 37 ft.; from 60 mph, 184 ft.	

SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

Engine

Ohv V-8
Bore: 4.13 ins.
Stroke: 4.0 ins.
Displacement: 429 cu. in.
Compression ratio: 10.5:1
Horsepower: 340 @ 4600 rpm
Horsepower per cubic inch: 0.79
Torque: 480 lbs.-ft. @ 3000 rpm
Carburetion: 1 4-bbl.
Ignition: 12-volt coil

Gearbox

Turbo Hydra-Matic 3-speed automatic with variable-vane torque converter; column-mounted lever

Driveshaft

1-piece, open tube

Differential

Hypoid, limited slip
Standard ratio: 3.21:1

Suspension

Front: Independent, with coil springs, upper A-arm, SLA with strut, tubular shocks, anti-roll bar
Rear: Rigid axle, coil springs, 4-link arms, tubular shocks

Steering

Ball nut sector with coaxial power assist
Turning diameter: 44.7 ft.
Turns lock to lock: 3.7

Wheels and Tires

15 x 6JK 5-lug, slotted steel disc wheels
9.00 x 15 4-ply tubeless whitewall tires

Brakes

Hydraulic, duo-servo, self-adjusting, dual master cylinder
Front: 12-in. dia. x 2.5 ins. wide
Rear: 12-in. dia. x 2.5 ins. wide
Effective lining area: 203.6 sq. ins.
Swept drum area: 377.0 sq. ins.

Body and Frame

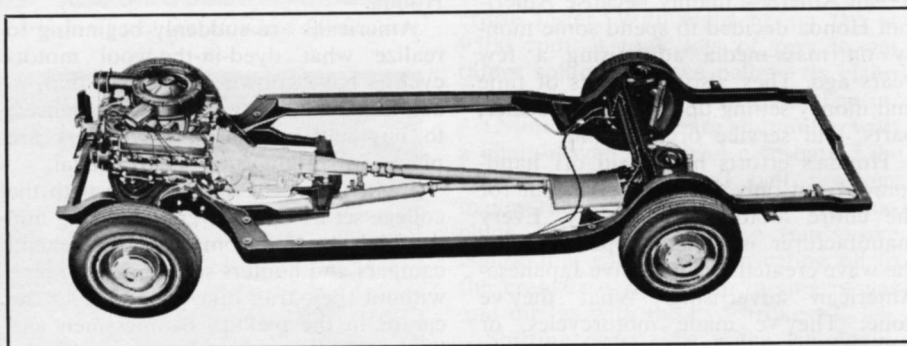
Separate steel body on perimeter frame
Wheelbase: 129.5 ins.
Track: front, 62.5 ins.; rear, 62.5 ins.
Overall length: 224.0 ins.
Overall width: 79.9 ins.
Overall height: 54.6 ins.
Curb weight: 4820 lbs.



WIDENED TREAD AND LOW-PROFILE 9.00 X 15 TIRES IMPROVE CORNERING STABILITY, ALREADY RELATIVELY GOOD FOR A 4800-POUND CAR.



De Ville convertible stows top within body outline, without sacrificing any trunk room.



New weight-saving perimeter frame mounts engine farther forward. Four-link rear suspension's been redesigned. Two-piece driveshaft's been abandoned for one-piece unit.

