

2014 Cadillac CTS Rides 'The Ring' in Germany – and Passes

Cadillac validated its all-new 2014 CTS midsize luxury sedan and power-packed CTS Vsport at the world's most demanding test track – Germany's Nürburgring – and recorded lap times to enhance the nameplate's reputation as a driver's car.

Notably, the 2014 CTS Vsport, featuring Cadillac's first Twin-Turbo engine and eight-speed transmission, recorded a lap time of 8:14.10, almost six seconds faster than the first-generation CTS-V recorded 10 years ago with a larger V8 engine.

"It's been about 10 years since Cadillac first went," said Cadillac spokesman Brian Corbett. "Since then, we've been going there for various vehicles.

"That's because the Nürburgring is the most challenging course in the world."

Corbett said Cadillac engineers learned a lot about the vehicle's performance, handling, cornering and ride by testing it at Nürburgring, also popularly called, "The Ring."

"It's the longest course in the world and when you're doing laps, you're really pushing the car as far as it can go, doing high performance driving that long," Corbett said.

"Going to the track really validated what we expected of the CTS. One of Cadillac's core missions is to deliver world performance. You need to stand out from the crowd in both design and performance."

Corbett said Cadillac wants the CTS to be fun to drive and be a

car that really engages the customer.

"That's what all of our cars need to be, but as far as the track goes, it shows how far you can push the car," Corbett said. "It's not like our customers can take corners at high speeds, but it's nice to know our cars can do that in a sophisticated manner."

The Nürburgring validation certified that all CTS suspension packages are capable of handling the extreme conditions and unlimited speeds of Autobahn driving, Corbett said. CTS development included Autobahn and track calibrations of the steering system, shock absorbers, chassis controls and powertrain cooling.

"The Nürburgring's extreme conditions allow us to push cars to the limits of stability, steering, braking, ride and handling," said Dave Leone, CTS executive chief engineer, Performance Luxury Vehicles. "The new CTS models had a lot to live up to considering the nameplate's history of outstanding performance, and we were not disappointed."

Measuring 12.9 miles and including some 154 turns, the Nürburgring's Nordschleife ("north loop") is widely considered the world's most-demanding course for vehicle validation.

Cadillac vehicle dynamics performance engineers Kevin Zelenka and Jeff Grabowski drove full production models of CTS and CTS Vsport with no performance modifications, which they say validates the new 2014 CTS sedan that goes on sale this fall.



2014 Cadillac CTS speeds around the track at Nürburgring.

"The new CTS was an absolute riot to drive on the Ring," said Zelenka. "It's more athletic and refined, and the Vsport proved extremely capable. If a car performs well on the Ring, it will perform well on any road in the world."

The CTS has been the centerpiece of Cadillac's portfolio for more than a decade. The third-generation CTS is one inch lower, five inches longer and more than 200 pounds lighter than its predecessor. The new car also has lower curb weight, greater structural stiffness and more horsepower than its primary competitors, said Corbett.

He added that the new CTS is engineered from the ground up to deliver a driving experience that combines sport-tuned handling with world-class comfort. Its segment-exclusive Magnetic Ride Con-

trol and electronic limited slip differential constantly monitor rear-wheel rotation to ensure optimal handling in a variety of road conditions, Corbett said.

GM officials announced that the 2014 CTS standard model will start at \$46,025, including \$925 destination. Three collections of option packages – Luxury, Performance and Premium – will be offered with either the 2.0T turbocharged four-cylinder or 3.6L naturally aspirated V6 engine in either rear- or all-wheel drive. The CTS Vsport model starts at \$59,995, including \$925 destination, and features the new Cadillac Twin-Turbo 3.6L V6 (420 hp) in RWD only with an eight-speed transmission.

Ford Sizzles with Baconized Fiesta

Just in time to celebrate International Bacon Day Aug. 31, Ford has introduced what is believed to be the first bacon-wrapped car – a 2014 Ford Fiesta.

Ford is announcing the availability of custom bacon graphics that pork purists can have installed on their new Fiesta. The small car synonymous with fun and individuality is hitting dealerships around the country.

"It's no secret that bacon inspires a lot of passion, and that's what the Fiesta celebrates," said Liz Elser, Ford Fiesta Marketing manager. "Our customers have a hunger for self-expression. Plus, it's just awesome to drive down the road in a piece of bacon."

Chrysler's SRT Helps Promote Racing Movie

Chrysler's SRT brand is teaming up with Universal Pictures in the United States to promote "Rush," a Ron Howard biographical action film.

The movie is based on the true story of Austrian Formula 1 champion driver Niki Lauda and his return to racing after a 1976 crash that almost took his life. The movie opens nationwide Sept. 27.

SRT (Street and Racing Technology) will help promote the movie to its fans at racing events, via the brand's website – www.drivesRT.com, where "Rush" movie stills can be viewed – and on the brand's social media channels.

"SRT owners and fans are genuine auto and racing enthusiasts," said Beth Paretta, director of Chrysler's SRT Brand and Motorsports Marketing and Operations.

"Every aspect of performance vehicles and motorsports is part of their DNA, and they'll love the action and adrenaline of 'Rush,' the story of one of the greatest rivalries in Formula 1 racing history."

The SRT brand has added graphics from the film to its No. 91 Rush SRT Viper GTS-R race car that competes in the GT Class of the American Le Mans Series (ALMS).

Upcoming ALMS events where the SRT motorsports team was scheduled to compete include the Aug. 31 Grand Prix of Baltimore presented by SRT weekend and the Sept. 21 Circuit of the Americas race in Austin, Texas.

In its first ALMS event appearance Aug. 11, the "Rush"-sponsored No. 91 Viper GTS-R race car driven by Marc Goossens and Dominik Farnbacher raced to victory in the GT Class at Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wis.

The win was the first for a Viper in ALMS competition since 2000.

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1970 Dodge Charger R/T Chosen as the 'Top Eliminator'

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While he was inspired as a nine-year-old by watching the "General Lee" Dodge Charger fly through the air each week on television, it was a father-son restoration project with a '68 as a teenager in the mid-1980s that cemented Mann's bug for Chargers. In late 1989, he found the car he was looking for in Spokane, Wash.

The initial restoration took five years to complete and then, following an accident that damaged the vehicle, a second restoration was finished in late 1998. Committed to keeping the car as original as possible, Mann rebuilt as many parts as he could.

He swapped notes with friends and fellow Mopar club members and spent time going to swap meets to find parts such as new old stock fenders and quarter panels to finish the car. Since then, the Plum Crazy '70 Charger R/T was Original Equipment (OE) Certified at the Chrysler Nationals in 2000, and served as his wedding car in 2002.

Over the years, Mann has taken the Charger to car shows and brought it to this year's Carlisle show so he could meet other members of the 1970 Dodge Charger Registry Club, Hecker said.

"Totally shocked," is how Mann says winning this year's Top Eliminator honors left him.

"When Mopar tells you that your car is among the best, there's not much else to say," Mann said.

He said the equipment on his car includes the 440 Magnum V8, automatic transmission, performance axle package, power front disc brakes, air conditioning, power steering and an 8-track tape player.

The '70 Charger R/T belonging to Mann, is from Piscataway, N.J.,

and will join the first Mopar Top Eliminator winner chosen in 2013, a 1964 Plymouth Savoy owned by Miles Watsko of Winnipeg, Manitoba, as featured cars in the Mopar display at the Woodward Dream Cruise, Hecker said.

As a new addition to the program, the third Mopar "Top Eliminator" vehicle selection will focus on the top rides that will race down the track at the upcoming National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) U.S. Nationals in Indianapolis, Ind., on Labor Day weekend in September.

Mopar will recognize a Sports-

man racer who competes in a Chrysler Group vehicle with the "Top Eliminator" trophy, and the chance to lead the HEMI Challenge parade during the event.

Similar to the current "Top Eliminator" criteria, this program expansion honors an entrant's performance and personal statement brought to life in the vehicle they compete in during race weekends, Hecker said.

Candidates for a fourth "Top Eliminator" winning vehicle will be selected online allowing aficionados to upload images of their Moparized ride, with a fan vote selecting the best.



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