



The 1965 Catalina 2+2 was tough to beat as an all-around driving machine.

1965 Catalina 2+2

Pontiac originally offered a 2+2 option for its 1964 Catalina sport coupe and convertible. Modest sales of the original bucket-seats-and-badges package were taken in stride by Pontiac Motor Division, which made the 2+2 a "sports option" for 1965. This blossoming of the 2+2 coincided with new styling and a chassis redesign for all full-sized Pontiacs. The result was an extremely attractive automobile with outstanding performance.

The second 2+2 was available again in either two-door hardtop or convertible body form. The 2+2's performance was given a strong starting point thanks to the 1965 Pontiac's bold "ship's prow" front end with its stacked headlights and a fresh variation on the neo-classic divided grille. Providing sufficient identification were front fender louvers and 2+2 emblems on the hood, rear fenders and rear deck.

The Catalina 2+2 base engine was now Pontiac's 421-cid V-8 with a 10.5:1 compression ratio and four-barrel carburetor. Its ratings were 338 hp at 4600 rpm and 459 lbs.-ft. of torque at 2800 rpm. The standard transmission was an all-Synchromesh close-ratio four-speed. Pontiac specified a 3.42:1 standard axle ratio for the 2+2. It provided excellent all-around performance as reflected in the car's 0-to-60 time of 7.2 seconds, its 0-to-100 time of 20.5 seconds and a standing-start quarter-mile completed in 15.8 seconds at 88 mph.

If a Catalina 2+2 of this caliber didn't satisfy a buyer's performance desires, Pontiac offered a 421 HO version. *Car Life*, April 1965, quoted one happy 421 HO owner as saying "I will say this is the finest road machine I have ever driven—foreign cars included. It has comfort, performance and, in

my opinion, handling that should satisfy anyone but a road course driver." The 421 HO had ratings of 376 hp at 5000 rpm and 461 lbs.-ft. of torque at 3600 rpm. Replacing the standard Carter AFB four-barrel carburetor was Pontiac's Tri-Power setup featuring three two-barrel carburetors. The 421 HO also benefited from its quick-bleed hydraulic valve lifters, which made 5400 rpm a realistic rev limit.

It was possible to equip the Catalina 2+2 with a "ride and handling package" consisting of extra-stiff front and rear springs, heavier-duty shock absorbers, a front sway bar, aluminum wheel hubs, quicker-ratio power steering, a tachometer, a gauge package and a close-ratio four-speed manual transmission.

A Catalina 2+2 so equipped (and running a 4.11:1 "Saf-T-Track" limited-slip differential) was tested by *Car Life* in April 1965. Although its 0-to-60 performance of 7.2 seconds and its quarter-mile time of 15.5 seconds (at 95 mph) were impressive, *Car Life* said the car fell short of true 2+2 potential. "Optimum time for the quarter-mile," said *Car Life*, "should fall into the low 14-second category when the car is more suitably tuned and equipped."

With a list price of \$3,287, the Catalina 2+2 was a tremendous performance bargain. Even when equipped in its Royal Oak form, it listed for just over \$4,200.

Along with the GTO, the 2+2 further contributed to Pontiac's mid-1960s performance image that has become a modern day legend. Exciting to look at, exciting to drive and, most of all, exciting to own, the Catalina 2+2 was in a class by itself among American automobiles.