

# Pontiac's Wave is following current compact trend

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The Wave is right in step with the trend in compacts and subcompacts by being narrow but also tall to maximize passenger seating especially for we taller North Americans. In terms of cargo space the trunk behind the 60/40 split rear seats offers 350 litres (12.4 cu ft) of luggage capacity. With the back seats folded flat, it is quite easy to stow ski bags with all your boots and poles.

In addition to standard front headrests that tilt, the doors and seatbacks have pockets as well as hooks on the headrest posts to hold grocery bags or even backpacks.

The interior is simple and functional with a nice choice of materials used like the cloth seats that are designed with North American girth in mind. An AM/FM stereo with four speakers is standard with an optional system that supports MP3/CDs. An auxiliary jack for MP3 players is standard.

The SE adds fog lamps, power heated side-mirrors, air conditioning, cruise control, power door locks, remote keyless entry, power windows and a "no charge" sunroof

There is also the special edition Wi. For \$1,095 more it includes an iPod, premium six-speaker sound system, steering wheel audio controls, 15-inch aluminum wheels and spoiler.

For such a little car the doors are big and that helps a guy my size. As mentioned the seats are large and the fabric is grippy without being grabby. With the wheels out to all four corners and a wide track for a car in this segment, handling



The interior of the 2007 Pontiac Wave.

is light. Pontiac has the steering box fixed to the cross member of the front suspension for stability, while the speed-sensitive power steering allows for quick turns at slow speeds, perfect for city driving.

The "feel" through the steering wheel tightens progressively as the speed increases. Shorter wheelbases always mean quick reaction in cornering and this is improved by a front stabilizer bar.

If you go for the optional ABS it includes Electronic Brake Force Distribution.

The Wave tested here was made available during a special ride-and-drive event staged by GM's fleet sales group and

there were a number of vehicles there I would have liked to drive like big dual-axle pickups and heavy-duty cubevans, but I concentrated on the cars like the Saturn Aura, the Chevrolet Aveo and the Wave.

The Wave looks pretty sharp considering the price with three-dimensional headlights that are fared back into the fender line and hood. The shape is the result of considerable wind tunnel testing to make it more slippery through the air to lessen drag and thus use less fuel. Little things like moulding the radio antenna into the rear glass instead of poking up into the wind results in a pretty good coefficient of drag of 0.326 or

similar to a Porsche.

The engine is not the quietest in the segment, but by no means is it the loudest. There is little torque steer (the tendency of front-drivers to veer left or right off the line) as modern engineering has all but done away with the phenomenon in all cars with front-drive.

Steering was a bit dead on centre, but it responded swiftly to driver inputs. In simulated panic braking, the Wave hauled itself down straight and true with no wander from the narrow section tires.

It does everything its main competitors do and is a solid alternative to the likes of the Hyundai Accent, Suzuki Swift+ and the Kia Rio. What General Motors has to do is promote these stout cars like the Wave and sister Chevy Aveo with the same verve as the competition.

If you are shopping on a budget for your first car, adding a second or third to the family, or just looking for a robust runabout, it may be time to go visit your Pontiac dealer and catch the next Wave.

<p><b>PONTIAC WAVE 2007</b>  <b>AT A GLANCE</b>  <b>BODY STYLE:</b> Sub-compact four-five-door sedan.  <b>DRIVE METHOD:</b> front-engine, front-wheel-drive.  <b>ENGINE:</b> 1.6-litre, 16-valve inline four-cylinder (103 hp, 107 lb/ft)  <b>FUEL ECONOMY:</b> (Est.) 9.7L/100 km (29 mpg city); 6.3L/100 km (45 mpg) highway.  <b>PRICE:</b> Base, \$12,950; SE, \$15,450; Wi, \$16,545.  <b>WEBSITE:</b> gmcanada.ca</p>
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