2005–2006 PONTIAC G6 GT

The G6 replaces the Grand Am and is built on the Epsilon platform, which also underpins the Saab 9-3 and Chevrolet Malibu. It has the same long wheelbase as the Malibu Maax. The G6 is currently offered in sedan form in base and GT trims, both of which are powered by a 3.5 litre V6.

The 2006 model year will see two new models—a coupe and retractable-hardtop convertible—join the family. In addition, the base sedan will get a 2.4 litre four-cylinder (167 HP) engine, while a 3.9 litre V6 (240 HP) will power the GTP sedans and coupes. GTP models will ride on 18 inch tires.

Interior and trunk

Front seat access is easy, but because the doors open very wide, they can be hard to close. The seats are comfortable, but larger people will find the prominent lateral supports a bit confining, and shorter people will find the passenger seat low. The driving position will suit the vast majority of drivers.

The rear seat is easy to get into and comfortable for two adults. Though legroom is very good, taller people may like more headroom. The rear seat splits 60/40, but does not fold completely flat.

The opening is small, but the trunk offers good cargo space and a flat floor. Trunk liftover is high.

Convenience and safety

Fit and finish is good, road noise is well muffled, and the car boasts many generous storage spaces. Unfortunately, the glove compartment is not lit.

The instruments and controls are well laid out and illuminated at night. The air conditioner does its job effectively. The cabin has no grab bars, which is unfortunate for people who have a hard time getting into cars. The G6 can be equipped with an optional four-panel panoramic sunroof where the three back panels slide to the rear.

Photos: Pontiac
On the safety front, the G6 comes with two front airbags and four headrests. Visibility is good—but nothing more—because of the wide roof pillars. It is also difficult to gauge distances when reversing, and the headrests are not high enough for tall people. Side and curtain airbags are optional. The low beams are bright, but the high beams leave a bit to be desired.

**Engine and transmission**

The 3.5 litre V6 generates a modest 200 horsepower and 220 pounds of torque. We say modest because the similar-sized V6 engines in the Accord and Altima both generate 240 horses, while the 3.0 litre Camry engine delivers 210. Nevertheless, the G6 is quick off the line, with enough power for safe passing. The engine is a bit noisy in moderate to heavy acceleration.

The four-speed automatic transmission is very smooth in most cases, and can start up in second gear. Gear changes are a bit sluggish in manual mode. Most competitors feature a five-speed automatic transmission.

**On the road**

The four-wheel independent suspension makes for a smooth ride. Firm but not excessively so, it handles uneven road surfaces without jarring. The car is always comfortable and able to negotiate winding roads with ease. We heard some less-than-reassuring noises from our test vehicle’s suspension.

The electric power steering is well calibrated, stable, precise, and quick enough. However, it provides little road feel. As well, the four disc brakes are a bit on the small side, so braking power is just adequate. And as is often the case with GM, brake costs are high.

Inspection of the G6 at a CAA-Quebec Technical Inspection Centre showed that the underbody is robust. However, the emergency brake does not look built for durability, and there is no dipstick for checking wiper fluid levels.

**Conclusion**

With a platform that is visibly more rigid and modern than that in the Grand AM, the G6 is a more harmonious and appealing car to drive. And its long wheelbase ensures more room for backseat passengers. With the arrival of the four-cylinder engine and the other models and trims, it won’t be hard to find the G6 that’s right for you.

**PROS:** Comfortable seats, ride, handling, smooth automatic transmission, enjoyable steering, rearseat legroom, soundproofing

**Photos:** Pontiac
CONS: Small trunk opening, headrests not high enough for taller people, blind spots caused by wide roof pillars, lack of grab bars, price of brakes, visibility when backing up

2005 PONTIAC G6

Engine: 12 valve, 3.5 litre V6
Horsepower: 200 HP at 5,800 RPM
Torque: 220 pound-feet at 3,200 RPM
Transmission: Automatic 4 speed
Suspension: Independent/independent
Brakes: Disc/disc
Length: 480.2 cm
Width: 178.9 cm
Height: 144.9 cm
Wheelbase: 285.2 cm
Weight: 1,551 to 1,554 kg
Tires: P215/60R16
Towing capacity: 454 kg
Airbags: Standard. Side and curtain airbags optional

Fuel consumption:
- According to Transport Canada: City: 11.7 L/100 km (24 mpg);
  Highway: 7.7 L/100 km (37 mpg)
- Test drive: 11.2 L/100 km (25.5 mpg)
- Temperature: 10°C to 31°C

Fuel tank capacity: 62 litres

Acceleration
0–100 km/h: 8.7 seconds  60–100 km/h: 6.3 seconds

Competitors: Chevrolet Malibu, Chrysler Sebring, Ford Taurus, Honda Accord, Hyundai Sonata, Kia Magentis, Mazda6, Mitsubishi Galant, Nissan Altima, Subaru Legacy, Toyota Camry, Volkswagen Passat

Warranties:
- Full basic coverage: 3 years/60,000 km
- Powertrain: 3 years/60,000 km
- Surface corrosion: 3 years/60,000 km
- Perforation damage: 6 years/160,000 km

Photos: Pontiac
Emissions control system:
- 3 years/60,000 km (full coverage)
- 8 years/130,000 km (catalytic converter and electronic control module)

Factory replacement parts:
- Rear bumper: $1,014
- Front brake disc: $228
- Brake pads: $173
- Muffler: $494
- Front fender: $262

Average insurance cost: (Quebec City, replacement cost endorsement, claim-free insurance record, male or female driver 30 to 40 years old): $946 to $1,408

Price according to trim line:
- Base: $24,700
- GT: $27,715

Main options:
- Panoramic sunroof: $2,175
- Leather seats: $1,870
- Side and curtain airbags: $950
- ABS brakes: $600
- Sunroof: $1,065
- Onstar service: $995

Price as tested: $30,955

Freight and preparation: $1,000

No. of dealers: Quebec: 173 Canada: 697

© June 2005. All rights reserved, CAA-Quebec