



Photos by Michael Cooney

2010 Ford Mustang GT and Fusion Hybrid Muscle Car Meets Miser

Two Fords, redesigned for 2010, offer a major contrast: brute power or battery power. First up, the Mustang GT—descendant of the original pony car which debuted in April, 1964.

An “All American” hot rod, this GT possesses the look, the feel, and the sound to get it just right. Styling improvements for 2010 include a redesigned nose and tail, with sequential turn signals like the old Cougars and T-Birds. Looks “meaner” too.

Inside, materials have been upgraded, with contrasting stitching on leather seats and steering wheel plus nicer textures on the surfaces you notice most. The rear seats are short on legroom but place you in a bucket that is fairly comfortable. Optional heated front seats felt great on cold mornings.

With a 4.6L V8 putting out 315 horsepower mated to a 5-speed stick, that hot rod fun is right there, in a modern package that is solid and rattle-free. My only nit to pick is the gas tank—too small at 16 gallons.

A great bunch of teenagers helped me check out the Mustang. Carl, Ken, Ian, Juan and John all approved of its potent around-the-block acceleration and fantastic sound. They also unanimously agreed that the back-

up camera’s display in the rear-view mirror was *waaay* cool. Looks like five thumbs up!

On tight, twisty roads the GT’s 245/45 x 19-inch tires stuck really well, delivering high cornering limits. Combined with what has to be the best growls to exit from any new car’s exhaust pipes, the Mustang GT is entertaining, capable, and holds its own against Camaro SS and Challenger R/T intruders. Yes, the GT is down on power against the other two, but it’s also down on weight. Even match.

Moving to the “miser” side, the new Fusion Hybrid is a superstar when it comes to sipping gas while still offering mid-size comfort. The Fusion lineup garnered *Motor Trend’s* Car of the Year prize, and the Hybrid version surely contributed. It beats Toyota’s Camry Hybrid in fuel economy.

Its power train consists of a 2.5L 4-cylinder engine with 191 horsepower, a 275 volt electric motor run by NiMH batteries, and a CVT automatic. This combination offers good acceleration as I discovered during two

full throttle passes on country roads.


Piloting the Hybrid is entertaining if you scan the gauge package. It shows instant MPG, when the batteries are being charged, and when the battery is assisting the gas engine. It also shows how far you can push the “gas” pedal without starting the engine. I occasionally cruised at 40 to 45 on electric power alone.

Each time the key is turned off a trip summary appears. You can see distance traveled, MPG, and the amount of gas used. I had numerous trips around town yielding 55 – 60 MPG because I could drive part of the way without using any gas. I do wish it had a tachometer, though.

The Fusion Hybrid is a smooth riding, quiet car (so why are the turn indicators so loud?) with comfortable seats front and back. Good legroom in back, too.

Grip in the corners is decent, but limited by the Michelin Energy tires. They help the MPG a bit but give up early when pushed hard in the curves. It’s a nimble car for its size with a tight turning circle, and the entire car is nicely designed and finished.

The Mustang GT begins at \$30,995 and this one totaled \$35,205. It is EPA-rated at 16-city, 24-highway MPG. The Fusion Hybrid starts at \$27,270 and with options totaled \$29,590. It’s EPA-rated at 41-city, 36-highway, and I averaged 38.3 MPG during my week in it. Prices include destination.

So there ya go—two fun-to-drive Fords that conjure up the past and the future. The Mustang GT, though, has the kind of competence and raucous character that makes it *huge* fun to drive, and it’s now among my all time faves. 

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