



Nissan 370Z

Photos by Michael Cooney

2010 Nissan 370Z and Infiniti G37 Sport

Fast, Fun... One Question—2 Seats or 4?

Long ago and far away, Nissan brought out the (then) 1970 Datsun 240Z. Yep, it's been 40 years. And the 370Z, no surprise, is light years ahead of its ancestor.

The Z's 3.7L V6 engine boasts 332 horsepower and 270 lb.-ft. of torque. You choose between a 6-speed stick like this one, or a 7-speed automatic. With the stick, count on 0-60 times near 5 seconds flat. That's quick. The engine's sound is unusual, but I liked it. Kind of a slightly coarse, mechanical whirring sound.

This is one of those rare cars that looks and photographs great from any angle. No matter how you approach it, the Z carries that hunkered-down, ready-for-business stance. Wide fender flares and a fastback type hatch make it appear both sleek and menacing. And cool.

Inside, the design is a bit scattered, with separate sets of components drawing your eyes in three directions: instruments, center stack, and upper-dash-mounted gauges. Leather is optional but I loved the fabric seats. More agreeable when hot or cold. Great support in the right places, too. Very comfortable. The hatch covers a decent sized storage area for hauling stuff.

No doubts here—the Z is an enthusiast's sports car. Strong engine,

quick responses, wide sticky tires, and a firm well-tuned suspension delivered superb driving fun and excitement. Stability and traction control (both cars) helped keep things in line when pushed hard. For the money, it's hard to think of a more capable, well-rounded high-performance sports car. And don't write me about Mustangs, Camaros and Challengers. Those aren't sports cars.

Next, add rear seats, 16 inches, 400 pounds, some \$\$\$ (along with more luxurious materials and extras) and you get an Infiniti G37 Coupe. Same engine and transmissions (although down 2 horses at 330). The sleek look and practical hatch are there too. This example had the "Sport Tuned Suspension" and 6-speed stick so it's called the "Sport."

Displaying more sedate styling, the G37 Coupe is smooth and easy on the eyes, but doesn't possess the "mean" look of the Z. Even so, it's a highly capable performer in its own right.

The sport suspension is extremely firm. Weekend warriors who live for canyon curves or

track days will love it. For most, the standard suspension is a better choice and still handles beautifully. With the sport setup, you will feel every crack and bump on the road, and on uneven pavement, you'll get tossed around a bit. On smooth surfaces, the sport suspension is great and gives this coupe outstanding cornering ability.

Inside, the front seats are supportive and very comfortable. Among the best ever in a sporty car. The leather had a nice feel and seat heaters sure feel good when it's cold. Rear seating and headroom are good for most folks under five-ten or so. In a nod to its luxury nameplate, the steering effort is a bit too low—I preferred the Z's steering feel.

The G37's clutch engaged rather abruptly. On level pavement, it was easier to start out in second gear and slip the clutch a bit more when not in a hurry. On smooth winding roads the G37 Sport is great fun. With a longer wheelbase and extra heft, it's not quite Z-nimble. Nonetheless, it enjoys very high limits and should put most other 4-seaters to shame in the twisties.

Nissan's 370Z with 6-speed stick is EPA-rated at 18-city, 26-highway mpg. This one with options including a sport package totaled \$34,605 including destination. Can you scream "Performance Bargain!?" Infiniti's G37 Sport Coupe with stick is EPA-rated 17-city, 25-highway mpg (it's those extra 400 pounds). Its sticker showed \$43,115 with destination.

Both cars are great performers. I'll pick the Z because it's more nimble and responsive, a bit more fun, and easier to park! Either way, though, you'll get loads of driving satisfaction. And look cool, too!



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Infiniti G37 Sport