



Nissan 370Z

Photos by Michael Cooney

2011 Nissan 370Z Touring and Maxima SV Strong Performance Priced for Value

Nissan clearly believes in having fun. In their respective categories, each of these cars deliver the goods.



When it comes to sports cars, Nissan's 370Z exemplifies the phrase "bang for the buck." With a 3.7L 332 horsepower V6 engine and 6-speed stick (automatic optional) the Z delivers 0-60 mph in just 4.9 seconds according to *Road & Track*. That's practically unheard of for a sports car in this price range.

The Z's striking design conveys that hunkered down look—ready for business. Its lines are taut, with not an inch in excess length or width. Head and tail lamp styling unifies front and rear.

Inside you'll find all you need for showing yourself a great time. This unit had the optional navigation package, including stereo upgrade, DVD playback and backup monitor. With the Z's large blind spot over your right shoulder, the backup cam may just save you far more than the package's \$2,150 price tag.

Inside, leather and synthetic suede sport seats (heated) offered perfect support for my 5-10 frame, and felt great. When you drive for long periods and don't notice the seats, you know they're good. The height adjuster needs more upward range, however, not moving high enough for shorter drivers.

Your nearest winding roads uncover the Z's true personality. The Z was made for 'em, and you'll find a truly capable handler with high limits and confidence inspiring cornering ability.

Immense grip (this had optional 19" wheels and wider tires) and a firm yet supple suspension gives you *huge* fun in the twisties.

It's a blast.

Similarly, Nissan's Maxima gives you a lot of performance in a mid-size fwd package. You could call the Maxima a "sleeper" because its styling is so conservative. About the only clue hinting at its abilities are the wide 245/40 VR19 tires mounted on racy wheels.

A solid black interior is rather dull. How 'bout a splash of color somewhere? As with the Z, the Maxima's seats were supportive and comfortable. The \$700 Monitor Package includes the backup monitor. I guess I'm getting spoiled—watching the monitor I backed to within a few inches of the car behind me without a single look over my shoulder. Loved it.

In the handling department, this front driver does a decent impression of a rear-drive performance sedan. When pushed very hard through tight corners, understeer finally enters the picture, but not until you're hustling along at a genuinely fast pace, and tire grip is commendably high. Its 3.5L 290 horsepower V6 launches the Maxima with authority, and its CVT automatic with both stick-shifter control and paddle shifters lets you bang off quick up- and down-shifts as needed. If you enjoy strong acceleration and cornering yet require back seats, this one's worth a look.

The 370Z Touring starts at \$35,280 and this nicely optioned example totaled \$41,895. It is EPA-rated at 18-city, 26-highway mpg. I averaged 22.8 mpg. Maxima's SV begins at \$33,530 and this one came to \$37,240. The Maxima is EPA-rated at 19-city, 26-highway mpg. I got 22.1 mpg.

Both Nissans represent solid value in their categories; the Z stands out in particular. They're very different cars, of course, but depending on your needs, each can deliver a great deal of driving enjoyment. Discover more at nissanusa.com.



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Nissan Maxima SV