

Special  
E-print  
Edition

USA  
TODAY

NO. 1 IN THE USA

As seen in



Money

November 2, 2007



**Marvelous:** The precision-tuned 2008 Infiniti G37 is a dream to drive, and, unlike many sports cars, it's a dream to own, too.

## Test Drive

# It doesn't get much better than this

Infiniti's G37 is sporty and insanely fun, and it's not hard to live with.

# New G37 inspires lust at first sight

## Sportster has all your heart's desires

By James R. Healey  
USA TODAY

Hit the starter button in the Infiniti G37 coupe and it's as if electricity flows through your body.

Pull the automatic transmission lever into gear and it's as if somebody substituted a precision-tuned rifle bolt for the shifting mechanism. Lean into the throttle and it's as if somebody answered your prayers.

Sweet, smooth, slick, sudden. Infiniti gets it.

Oh, sure, you murmur in Neanderthal tones. Nice for all the boy and girl racers. What about the rest of the world? You know, the folks who like a little flavor in their Jell-O, but not some muscle-bound machine that you can't drive in traffic and that sets the neighbors cluck-clucking.

Well...

The G37, like most cars sold by Nissan's luxury division, will burble through the burbs just fine, and when you push the long pedal, it will scream down the macadam like a school kid late for lunch.

The seats coddle. The optional sport suspension held the test car's body as close to



By Guy Spangenberg, Infiniti

**Hot stuff, but practical, too:** 2008 Infiniti G37 blends muscle and athleticism with class and comfort.

level as you're likely to find in tight, fast corners, yet soaked bumps like an expert skier on a double-black-diamond hill dense with moguls. That's to say, there are some jolts, but the fun is generally worth the discomfort.

The automatic transmission blips the

throttle between downshifts when you manually control it, revving the engine to the right speed to avoid shift shock. And in lighter duty, the five-speed automatic moves through the gears with the grace of a runway model. In ordinary driving, the exhaust chuckles distantly. But nail the

## 2008 Infiniti G37 coupe

► **What is it?** Update of the brand's small, rear-wheel-drive, two-door, high-performance luxury coupe. Manufactured at Tochigi, Japan.

► **How soon?** On sale since August.

► **How much?** Base model starts at \$34,965, including \$715 destination charge. Journey model starts at \$35,715. Sport starts at \$36,265.

Test car, Journey with most options, was \$44,665.

► **Who'll buy?** Typical: married man in his 30s, college degree, no kids.

► **How many?** At least 2,200 per month to match the previous model's average.

► **What's the drivetrain?** 3.7-liter V-6 rated 330 horsepower at 7,000 rpm, 280 pounds-feet of torque at 5,200 rpm, five-speed automatic transmission with manual-shift mode and downshift rev matching. Sport model comes with six-speed manual. Traction control is standard on all.

► **What's the safety gear?** Front- and side-impact bags for front occupants; head-curtain bags front and rear; anti-lock brakes; stability control.

► **What the rest?** Standard features on all models include

automatic temperature control; AM/FM/CD with MP3 playback and auxiliary input jack; XM satellite radio; power steering, brakes, locks, windows, mirrors, seats; leather upholstery; cruise control; remote-control locks, trunk and windows; fold-down rear seat; trip computer.

► **How big?** 183.1 inches long, 71.8 inches wide, 54.4 inches tall on a 112.2-inch wheelbase.

Passenger space is listed as 85 cubic feet (82.7 with sunroof). Trunk is 7.4 cubic feet.

Weight is listed as 3,616 pounds for base model, 3,624 for Journey, 3,668 for Sport.

Turning circle diameter is 36.1 feet, curb to curb.

Rated to carry 988 pounds to 1,040 pounds of people and cargo, depending on model.

► **How thirsty?** Automatic transmission models are rated 18 miles per gallon in town, 24 mpg on the highway, 20 in combined driving. Manual is 17/26/20.

Trip computer in automatic transmission test car recorded 16 mpg in suburban driving.

Tank holds 20 gallons. Premium fuel (91 octane) is specified.

► **Overall:** Extraordinary.

throttle and the engine growls, then shrieks with primal joy.

We dare not allow the excitement and satisfaction behind the wheel blind us to other matters, however.

In some ways, you could argue, the G37 steps backward from its G35 forebear:

► The G37 is a little bigger — an inch longer, fraction of an inch wider — but loses space inside to keep the look sleek. Passengers get about 2% less room than in the '07, according to Infiniti, mainly shaved from front and rear hip room and rear seat legroom, and the trunk is 5% smaller.

► Prices got bigger, too. The base version is \$800 more than the 2007 base G35, and the high-end model is \$1,500 more. Helps cover the cost of bigger brakes and better engine, much nicer interior, more standard features, Infiniti says.

► And aerodynamic fanatics will be disheartened to learn that the G37 is marginally less slippery through the air, an apparent consequence of the slight increase in width.

All unsettling philosophically, but perhaps of minor consequence in light of other matters. Such as:

► The new car gets better mileage, even though it has a bigger-displacement engine that's much more powerful (330 horsepower vs. 280 hp) and is toting a car that's

at least 111 pounds heavier. The stick-shift G37 is a match for the 3.5-liter V-6 in town and combined driving, and gets a hefty 13% better mileage on the highway. The automatic version is a gem, its 13% improvement in town shining especially bright because that's where most people drive most.

► The new engine will rev higher than the old one — 7,600 rpm vs. 6,600 — which makes it more fun for the heavy-footed driver.

► G37 has a wider track to give the car a broader stance for better stability, as well as bigger wheels and tires. Yet the new car has a shorter turning-circle diameter.

The test car was a G37 Journey, the fanciest version of the automatic transmission model. It was priced at \$44,665 and included \$8,950 in options. In addition to the general items of note, above, these stuck out on the test machine:

► Handiest backup camera to date. Not only a pretty crisp look at what's behind, but two sets of outlines. One showed where you'd go if you went straight back. The other swiveled in response to the steering wheel to show where you actually were backing, and how that deviated from straight back. So intuitive you thought it was coming from your brain, not the car.

► The passenger seat had a set of fore-aft controls on the inboard edge in easy reach of the driver. No need to sprawl across the passenger seat to reach the power controls to aid someone struggling to enter or exit the confines of the back seat.

Another back-forth control button was on top on the outboard edge, so a person needn't stoop to move the power seat for access to the back.

► Controls were handy and good-looking. Interior design and materials seemed a big improvement. Optional paddle shifters on the steering column let you whip up and down through the gears with little hand movement. (But it was more fun to yank the console lever to the left and snick-snick manually though the cogs.)

► Premium is still the fuel of choice. Would have been icing on the improvement cake with an 87-octane diet instead, but maybe that's asking too much.

When you think back to how the Infiniti brand was born in 1989, trying to differentiate itself from Lexus by using mysterious "rocks and trees" ads that didn't even show cars, then you have to shout a few huzzahs that Infiniti axed the Zen and decided to kick asphalt instead. It's hard to imagine a finer blend of price, performance and pleasure than the G37.