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2010 Ford Mustang

Other than the roof panel, everything on the 2010 Ford Mustang will be new when it goes on sale this spring. Not just new, all of it will be improved in some way compared to the 2004-2009 version of America's favorite sporty car.

Ford points out that the Mustang has been in continuous production for 45 straight years, and that more than 9 million Mustangs have been built and sold so far. That makes the Mustang the most continuously produced single model in Ford's history.

For 2010, there will be three body styles, a coupe, a convertible, and a glass-roof coupe. All will be available in the V6 Deluxe model and the V8-powered GT versions, with Shelby and other versions to follow.

The 2010 Mustang exterior design is new from end to end. Among the highlights: integrated multi-element headlights replacing the twin round lamps of past Mustangs, a power-dome hood that droops over the grille at its leading edge, completely new side sculpting, and chamfered three-element taillights that house sequential turn signals, blinking from the inside lamp to the outside lamp (a technology first used on the 1964 Thunderbird, reprised 46 years later).

Ford says the new Mustang body yields 23 percent less aerodynamic lift at the front, and is 12 percent quieter in wind noise than the outgoing car, 15 percent in the case of the convertible. Ford also points to a 33 percent reduction in squeak and rattle performance, and a 10 percent improvement in speech intelligibility due to interior noise reductions, especially in the convertible.

The 2010 Mustang coupe and convertible will come standard with an upgraded 4.0-liter V6 engine rated at 210 horsepower and 240 foot-pounds of torque, with standard 17-inch tires and wheels and optional 18-inch tires and wheels. A rear stabilizer bar has been made standard on V6 versions, and the entire suspension system has been retuned for more performance feel.

The 2010 Mustang GT gets an upgraded 4.6-liter 3-valve V8 engine that will be rated at 315 horsepower and 325 foot-pounds of torque, slightly up from the current model. The redline has been raised 250 rpm to 6500 rpm. The engine has two built-in calibrations for regular or premium fuel.

Both engines will be available with a choice of a five-speed manual or five-speed automatic transmission.

The new V8 engine gets its cold intake air from a system built into the grille, not under the hood, the lowest-restriction air intake system ever on the Mustang, with an air induction sound pipe that goes right into the cockpit to make it more pleasing to the driver. On the exhaust side, the V8 version gets 3.5-inch exhaust pipes versus 3.0-inch pipes on the last Mustang, and the V6 version gets 3.0-inch exhaust pipes instead of 2.5-inch pipes. The standard axle ratio is 3.31:1, with two optional ratios, 3.55:1 or 3.73:1, which automatically comes with larger brakes.

The GT chassis has been upgraded and stiffened using parts and pieces from the 2009 Bullitt Mustang, which means it rides tauter, turns in quicker and has less pitch, dive and body roll than any previous Mustang. Indeed, we were very impressed with the fine-tuning done to the Bullitt.

The 2010 Mustang will ride on 235/50R18 tires, with 245/45R19 tires optional, on several different wheel designs. If the 19-inch tire and wheel option is ordered, the car will automatically be built with a strut tower brace under the hood to connect the two front struts for more strength and better, more accurate handling. Anti-lock brakes, traction control and AdvanceTrac yaw control are standard on all models.

An optional Track Package will include upgraded front brakes, a recalibrated AdvanceTrac system and the 3.73:1 axle ratio. Track Package II will include the Pirelli 19-inch tires and wheels, upgraded front and rear brakes and heavier springs, shock absorbers and brakes along with recalibrated traction and yaw control systems for weekend racing. That sounds like the hot setup for someone who wants a dual-purpose car for street and track. Buy one of these and you instantly have a hobby. At the start of production, Ford will offer a wide array of performance and appearance options for the new Mustang, up to and including a complete bolt-on supercharger kit.

Inside, the 2010 Mustang has a completely new approach to interior design, with throwback instrument design complemented by softer-feeling surfaces throughout. Interior and sill plate lighting colors can be changed through a range of 125 colors with the flip of a switch with the new MyColor system. New features for Mustang include a rear-facing video camera, the Sync hands-free system for the first time in a Mustang, featuring Sirius satellite radio and satellite navigation with Sirius Travel Link information.

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