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2011 Infiniti M

An all-new lineup of Infiniti M luxury sedans goes on sale in late March 2010. The 2011 Infiniti M37 and Infiniti M56, revealed at a press function in Beverly Hills, will add considerable power, technology and style without a commensurate increase in weight.

Just half an inch longer than the outgoing model, the 2011 Infiniti M looks better because it is lower, two inches wider, and the roofline flows into a brief decklid with curved upper lip. Jaguar's XF profile comes to mind. However, the M's compact nose with sloping hood and mild fender bulges mixes Infiniti FX elements with wheel arches like Mazda and Mercedes sedans. The unique point is the door treatment with parallel rails running along the bottom Infiniti dubs wave-style, and in Infiniti fashion the car is aero sleek (cD of 0.27) and has zero lift for high-speed stability.

Beneath the hood are two new engine choices both connected to a seven-speed automatic. The new M37 gets a new 3.7-liter V6 rated at 330 horsepower, while the new M56 features a direct-injected 5.6-liter V8 sporting 420 hp, nearly 100 more than the old M45. The M37 and M56 are rear-wheel-drive cars.

All-wheel drive comes on the M37x and M56x. The system splits power between the front and rear wheels. The torque split varies from 50/50 to 100 percent to the rear wheels, depending on conditions.

A Sport package is available for the rear-wheel-drive models featuring a unique front bumper, dark trim, larger brakes, active rear steering, 20-inch wheels, sport seats, magnesium shift paddles.

The suspension architecture for the new M is similar to that of the previous generation, though recalibrated to provide a better ride without sacrificing the precision or grip that made the Infiniti M a viable alternative to the BMW 5 Series. Eighteen-inch wheels are standard, as are numerous electronic stability and safety aids.

Good finish and interesting materials characterize the cabin, including an ash wood grain oriented opposite the norm and a textured aluminum trim. Two types of leather and headliner trim are available. Touring models have quilted, piped upholstery. A 7-inch screen features controls at a 45-degree angle for easier operation. Two new features are added for 2011: active noise cancellation in the sound system and a feature called Forest Air, designed to make a better cabin environment.

Standard features will include leather, backup camera, moonroof, bi-Xenon headlights, power-folding heated mirrors, dual-zone climate control, Bluetooth, USB input, intelligent key, and driver memory (including audio and climate control settings). Options include adaptive headlamps and two audio system upgrades (top is 5.1-channel, 16-speaker surround with in-seat speakers framing each front headrest), and heated wheel and climate-controlled seats standard on M56 and M56x.

Joining Infiniti's lane departure warning system is a prevention system that uses individual brakes to urge the car back in its lane. A similar intervention has been added to the blind spot warning system. Collision warning with interlinked braking is also available.

A new M35 Hybrid is expect to debut in early 2011.

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