

NISSAN PUTS THE "Z" IN ARIZONA

THE ALL-NEW NISSAN 370Z IS UNVEILED AT THE NISSAN Z NORTH AMERICAN RALLY IN GLENDALE, AS ARIZONA Z-CAR CLUBS AND ENTHUSIASTS CARRY DECADES OF HERITAGE INTO THE FUTURE



How better to introduce the all-new Nissan 370Z—smaller, lighter, faster than the 350Z, restyled and reengineered—than to bring it to Arizona, where club members and owners of Z-cars, 1600 and 2000 roadsters and a GT-R or two showed up for a close look.

In the first full redesign since its 2003 re-introduction, nearly every bit of the Z has been revisited. The 370Z has a shorter wheelbase, more use of lightweight body materials, a new engine with more power and improved fuel economy, two new transmissions, an upgraded interior and, of course, a raft of new technology features.

You will recognize the new Nissan 370Z immediately, from its wildly angular head-

lights and taillights, to the upswept line of the rear quarter window (the 350Z had a straight beltline), designed to recall the original 1970 240Z—a car that redefined the sports car by providing performance and value in a format that deviated from MG-B, Triumph and other open 2-seaters.

Nissan's goals for the 370Z are well-timed for today's economic challenges, with a base price expected around \$30,000. The 2009 Nissan 370Z Coupe is scheduled to go on sale in January, followed by a new 370Z Roadster for the 2010 model year.

The 370Z's wheelbase is nearly four inches shorter than the previous 350Z (100.4 vs. 104.3 inches), rear wheels are moved forward in the platform, and overall length is

reduced by 2.7 inches. Width increases 1.3 inches, and the rear track by 2.2 inches, while overall height is reduced by 0.3 for a more aggressive stance. Aluminum door panels, an all-aluminum hood and an aluminum hatch deliver reduced weight.

Front body rigidity improves 30 percent; a new front suspension cradle reduces front body lateral bending; the rear has structural reinforcements; and an underbody "V-bar" reduces rear lateral bending. The radiator housing is a carbon fiber composite. Rear body rigidity improves up to 22 percent, rear body vertical bending by 30 percent, and the rear fender and hatch areas are strengthened. The result is a more solid Z

KEEP RIGHT >>



with enhanced handling. Even with all of this reinforcing, the body-in-white is lighter than before. Beyond shaving body pounds, fuel tank weight was reduced by 13.9 pounds, the exhaust system by 3.8 pounds, the audio system by 3.5 pounds and the 19-inch wheels by about seven pounds each for the fronts and six pounds for the rears—about 225 pounds total.

The 370Z's new skin has 240Z styling cues, a more aerodynamic shape and a cantilevered roof reminiscent of the Nissan GT-R. The new Z maintains the previous car's zero front and rear lift when equipped with rear spoiler. Front bumper shape smooths the flow of air to the sides, while air flow is reduced from the roof to the rear hatch. Over 200 rear quarter panel patterns were built and wind-tunnel-tested to perfect aerodynamics for the shortened wheelbase. A Sport Package includes performance front chin spoiler and rear spoiler. The coefficient of drag is 0.30 (0.29 with Sport Package), matching the 350Z.

The Z picks up 26 hp in its new 3.7-liter V-6 with VVEL (Variable Valve Event and Lift)—rated 332 hp at 7,000 rpm with 270 lb-ft of torque at 5,200 rpm (up from a 3.5-liter at 306 hp and 268 lb-ft). The new close-ratio 6-speed manual includes an available SynchroRev Match system, the world's first, for professional-grade shifting. A new 7-speed automatic offers Downshift Rev Matching (DRM) and Adaptive Shift Control (ASC) for a manual mode with a target time of 0.5 seconds between shifts, via standard paddle shifters or the shift lever.

The traditional two-seat layout is built around a full-length center console, with an open rear cargo area. Gauges are attached to the steering column, and the upper steering wheel is open to see them better. Tach size is increased 15 percent, and gauge angle has been adjusted. The speedo and tach add an initial sweep when the Z is started. The interior is black cloth, or for Touring models a choice of gray, black or persimmon leather-appointed seating.

Smart key push-button start is standard, along with one-touch windows, auto-lock doors, two 12-volt outlets and more. Electronics include a hard drive nav with real-time traffic info for XM users, an on-board music hard drive, iPod interface, Bose audio with dual subwoofer, Bluetooth, HomeLink and more.

Estimated fuel economy is 18 mpg city / 26 mpg highway for either transmission, up 1 or 2 points over the prior Z. The 370Z comes in Pearl White, Monterey Blue, Brilliant Silver, Magnetic Black, Solid Red, Platinum Graphite and launch-year-only Chicane Yellow. ■