

Shifting Tides

ASTON MARTIN DBS TOUCHTRONIC 2

WITH A 510-BHP 5.9-LITER V-12 ENGINE, a new Touchtronic 2 6-speed automatic gearbox and a chassis constructed entirely of aluminum and carbon-fiber, all wrapped in Aston Martin's trademark sultry skin, it's no wonder that the British company's latest creation—the DBS—is the preferred mode of transportation for 007 in the latest installment of the James Bond film series.

The key difference between this DBS and the manual-equipped version we tested in the October 2008 issue is its ZF-sourced automatic gearbox with steering wheel-mounted paddle shifters. In short, it makes the DBS a tenth quicker to 60 mph, owing to its faster upshifts and a new 3.46:1 final drive ratio, which is better for acceleration than the previous automatic's 3.15:1 rear end. And during downshifts, the throttle blips make all drivers look (and sound) like a pro.

Around town, we found the chassis comfortably capable, the adaptive suspension soaking up pavement irregularities with aplomb, giving the DBS a luxury car ride.

At the test track, the Aston's wide track and large 20-in. Pirelli P Zero tires, working in concert with the adaptive suspension set in the aggressive "sport" mode (this really stiffens the suspension and makes free-way expansion joints a filling-loosener), allow the luxury GT to circle the skidpad at a heady 0.95g. Although good grip and a nimble, well-balanced chassis are its hallmarks, this Aston does feel heavy. Standard cross-drilled carbon ceramic brakes do reduce unsprung weight and work well; and the steering is fairly communicative, providing the driver with good feedback—especially when the front tires begin to

2009 ASTON MARTIN DBS TOUCHTRONIC 2

List price	\$273,000
Price as tested	\$276,140
Curb weight	3940 lb
Engine, transmission	5.9-liter V-12; 6-sp paddle-shift automatic
Horsepower, bhp @ rpm	510 @ 6500
Torque, lb-ft @ rpm	420 @ 5750
0-60 mph	4.1 sec
0-100 mph	9.2 sec
0-1320 ft (¼ mile)	12.4 sec @ 114.9 mph
Top speed	191 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	111 ft
Braking, 80-0 mph	193 ft
Lateral accel (200-ft skidpad)	0.95g
Speed thru 700-ft slalom	71.4 mph
Our mileage, EPA city/highway	na, 11/17 mpg

lose their bite with mild understeer.

For those who can afford such grand touring machines, the DBS is without a doubt the grandest sport/luxury coupe we've seen from Aston.—*Jim Hall*

INFINITI G37 S SPORT 6MT SEDAN

PLENTY OF ENTHUSIASTS WANT A SPORTS car for its performance, but many also need the practicality of a sedan. That's one reason why the sports-sedan class is such a hotly contested segment.

And now a sportier new Infiniti G37 sedan, the S Sport 6MT, has arrived, making the category even hotter. This variant features a 6-speed manual transmission (versus a 7-speed automatic) and a standard viscous limited-slip differential. Powering

»Pick your passion: James Bond's Aston DBS—now with a paddle-shift automatic—or Infiniti's sportiest sedan, the G37 S Sport. The exotic Aston is our choice, but the G37 is remarkably sporty and practical.

2009 INFINITI G37 S SPORT 6MT SEDAN

List price	\$34,250
Price as tested	est \$39,815
Curb weight	3670 lb
Engine, transmission	3.7-liter dohc V-6; 6-sp manual
Horsepower, bhp @ rpm	328 @ 7000
Torque, lb-ft @ rpm	269 @ 5200
0-60 mph	5.2 sec
0-100 mph	13.1 sec
0-1320 ft (¼ mile)	13.8 sec @ 103.0 mph
Top speed	155 mph*
Braking, 60-0 mph	118 ft
Braking, 80-0 mph	212 ft
Lateral accel (200-ft skidpad)	0.92g
Speed thru 700-ft slalom	69.1 mph
Our mileage, EPA city/highway	na, est 17/25 mpg

* Electronically limited.

it is the very same 24-valve all-aluminum 3.7-liter VQ37VHR engine from the Coupe that produces 328 bhp at 7000 rpm (up 22 bhp versus last year's G35 sedan's), thanks to its increased displacement and variable intake valve timing and lift. Torque is up slightly, to 269 lb.-ft. at 5200 rpm.

A revised chassis places the engine farther rearward, offering better weight distribution. Further defining the Sport 6MT model are a quicker steering rack and firmer rear dampers.

The interior remains unchanged, and that's just fine with us, as the clean textures and colors complement the organic exterior of the car. The heavier-effort steering and stiffer suspension do an excellent job of communicating and controlling chassis motions during fast transitions. And while we appreciate the new power, we don't like the labored way the engine sounds while under load. Apart from that, we came away impressed with Infiniti's latest effort to satisfy practical performance-lovers.

—*Calvin Kim*

