



American Standout

The 2011 Chevrolet Corvette ZR1 is a true supercar

BY ERIC TEGLER

IF AMERICAN AUTOMAKERS are to compete in the 21st century, they'll have to produce cars that people want, like the Corvette ZR1. Chevy's most powerful production car ever, the ZR1 is a piece of engineering that shows what the company, and by extension, the American auto industry, can do.

The ZR1 is on par with, and frequently outperforms, supercars costing as much as half a million dollars. In fact, its \$100,000-plus price tag looks like a bargain. What do you get for your money? Power. The Vette's 6.2-liter V8 delivers an astounding 638 horsepower and 604 pound-feet of torque — more than most racing cars. You needn't be intimidated, though. On the street, the ZR1 can be as docile as a lamb. Anyone who can drive a car with manual transmission can drive this Corvette, and that's impressive.

But the ZR1 is truly a rocket: from a stop it can hit 60 mph in about 3.4 seconds, and it will reach 200 mph if you're so inclined. As impressive as its acceleration is,

WEB EXCLUSIVE

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Check out the 2011
Chevrolet Corvette ZR1
from multiple angles in
our virtual showroom
tour. Visit continental.com/magazine.



INNOVATIONS

Corsa Performance Exhaust

The sound of a supercar is as important as its looks. Corsa makes the best aftermarket exhausts for Corvettes, including the ZR1. The company's patented Reflective Sound Cancellation technology provides an appealing exhaust note without the drone often associated with performance exhaust. You get an aggressive sound that cleans up at highway speed without impeding airflow or sacrificing horsepower. \$2,099.99, corsaperf.com



— E.T.

the ZR1's carbon ceramic brakes are truly fabulous, stopping the vehicle from 70 mph in little more than 140 feet. Wide Michelin tires and a well-sorted suspension ensure that it hangs on to corners like a lemur clinging to a tree trunk.

There are a few downsides to the ZR1. The interior is not much better than that of lesser Corvette siblings costing half as much, the seats don't hold the driver well enough on a race-track, and the car is tricky to drive near its performance limit. But as anyone who understands performance will tell you, the Corvette ZR1 is a standout.



SAFETY FAST

The Corvette ZR1 is a seriously fast beast, and Chevy believes buyers should know how to safely enjoy it. That's why a two-day driver training course is included with the purchase. Held at the Ron Fellows Performance Driving School at Spring Mountain Motorsports Ranch in Pahrump, Nev. (45 minutes west of Las Vegas), the course teaches ZR1 owners of all skill levels how to get the most from the vehicle, from heel-and-toe downshifting to hot-lapping around a road course. The course is run by Le Mans-winning driver Ron Fellows and his staff. springmountainmotorsports.com

THE SPECS

2011 Chevrolet Corvette ZR1

Price as Tested: \$124,345

Engine: 638 hp, 6.2-liter V8

Weight: 3,333 pounds

Fuel Economy: 14 city/20 highway

Comparison Shopping

There may be a silver lining to the economic downturn and the auto manufacturer bailouts. After near extinction, America's automakers have a renewed emphasis on product, technology, and style.



2011 FORD FIESTA SE FIVE DOOR HATCHBACK

Ford's Fiesta has been on sale in Europe for years, but now the stylish compact, offered as a sedan and hatchback, is available in the U.S. The Fiesta's looks, interior, SYNC infotainment system, and hatchback cargo capacity (26 cubic feet) convey the high-quality approach to small cars that is prevalent in Europe. The U.S.-spec Fiesta has a bit less driving verve than the Euro model, but it's a smart, compact choice.

Price as Tested: \$16,955

Engine: 120 hp, 1.6-liter I4

Weight: 2,537 pounds

Fuel Economy: 28 city/37 highway



2011 FORD MUSTANG GT

This is the best Mustang yet. Ford is to be commended for gradually stepping up its Pony car's game over the past decade. The 2011 Mustang GT offers more power (412 hp) and better handling, refinement, and build quality than ever. Its free-revving 5.0-liter V8 feels wonderful, and the premium-package interior is comfortably smart. On the highway or back roads, the Mustang is a care-free hoot.

Price as Tested: \$38,760

Engine: 412 hp, 5.0-liter V8

Weight: 3,580 pounds

Fuel Economy: 17 city/26 highway