

# POLISHED IRON

## 2013 FORD MUSTANG GT

MSRP: \$34,300-\$42,210

**M**ustang's last, major makeover was in 2005, followed by a full refresh in 2010. In 2011, Mustang news was mainly about motor matters. The car received a new, 3.7 liter V-6 and GT models got a new, 5.0 liter V-8.

Updates for 2013 are an interesting mix of show and go items. Starting with the former, the front fascia was redone, with a bolder grille, more prominent splitter and functional, hood-mounted heat extractors for the GT. Standard, HID headlights are accented by a pair of LED light bars — a visual tip of the cap to the slats on the 1970 Mustang models. The rear view was revamped too, and highlighted by LED tail lamps with smoked lenses. The profile shows body color rocker panels, framed by a fresh selection of rims. In sum, Mustang has a tough, muscular shape, worthy of a modern day muscle car.

Muscle cars are and always have been about power, and while the technology has advanced by leaps and bounds since the breed originated in the '60s, the goal is still the same. So are the results here — in spades. The 2013 edition of the GT Mustang motor has been upgraded to the tune of 420 horsepower and 390 lb. ft. of

torque. For those who are even more power hungry, Mustang can also be had in a 444 hp version (Boss 302) as well as a jaw-dropping, 662 hp, in the supercharged GT500.

For most mere mortals, the GT's 420 horses are plenty. The trip from 0-60 mph takes about 4.3 seconds, and the quarter mile is covered in 12.7 seconds. The 5.0 loves to wind out, though there is obviously more than enough torque on hand to cover your low end acceleration needs. And the power is accompanied by a great, muscle car sound track: not as menacing as the Boss or the GT500, but a fine blend of refined, rumbly noise coming from the pipes.



Shifting with the six-speed manual is fun, though not as much fun as the short and snappy gearbox fitted to the Boss 302.

New for 2013 is Hill Start Assist, which holds the car in

place momentarily when you lift off the brake, to allow the driver time to ease off the clutch without fear of rollback. The optional, six-speed automatic transmission picks up a SelectShift function; drivers choose between fully automatic or manumatic shifting. GT gas mileage is estimated by EPA to be 18 mpg's city and 25 highway. My mixed bag of 500 miles driving netted 22 mpg's overall.

The Mustang still rolls on a solid rear axle, which years of tuning by Ford Engineers have massaged into a nice blend of handling and ride. A bump in mid corner at speed will still make things lively, but the GT is otherwise easy to drive in a spirited fashion. Newly available for 2013 is a GT Track

Package. Offered only on GTs with a stick shift and 3.73 axle, this package includes an engine cooler, larger radiator, beefier, Brembo brakes, a Torsen differential, 19-inch alloy wheels and summer performance tires.

Another new addition to the option sheet is accessed on the inside, but keeps tabs on what's happening on the outside. Track Apps (\$2,495) is a software system that allows you to monitor performance metrics on a 4.2-inch LCD screen. Using steering wheel mounted controls, the driver can access his 0-60 times, ¼ mile runs, braking times and measure g-force.

With automatic and countdown start features, this package gives drivers all they need, to record the results of a day at the track.

Else-wise inside, 2013 changes include upgrades for a pair of optional, Shaker audio systems, and the availability of cloth or leather wrapped, Recaro

seats (\$1,595). The Recaros' good, lateral support comes in handy when you're getting after it. But, they're borderline when it comes to lumbar support, and their width at the top cuts into your ¾ rear visibility, which — as in many two door coupes — is already hindered by the shallow backlight. So, where you sit on the seats depends on where you stand. If you're able to get to a track with some frequency, you may favor the Recaro's for their superior racing support. But, for daily driving, the GT buckets (especially in Premium trim) are fine for support and comfort, and better for street visibility.

Like most two door coupes, Mustang's +2 size back seats are too tight for adult passenger use unless those planning on sitting there (and those in front of them) are of shorter stature. The trunk measures a usable, 13.4 cubic feet of cargo capacity.

An all-new Mustang is slated for the 2015 model year. Indications are that the next generation 'Stang will be a more progressive, less retro steed. Therefore, the clock is starting to tick for lovers of the current body style, to get one in your stable before the gates are closed for good.

The 2013 edition has much to recommend it. The Mustang GT puts a fine shine on a breed of car that is at its heart comfortably rough around the edges.

In the great, muscle car tradition, the GT looks "bad," sounds good and drives fast. Loaded up, it pushes past \$40,000. That will buy a lot of nice rides. But, comparing muscle cars to other cars really is an apples and oranges discussion.

A regular contributor to the Times Union for the past 20 years, Dan Lyons is the award-winning author of six books, and photographer of 135 calendars. Read Dan's recent reviews on line anytime at [www.timesunion.com/cars](http://www.timesunion.com/cars).

