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2009 Dodge Challenger R/T

The Good : Great exhaust note. Lots of power. Large smooth concept car looks. Huge wheels. Nav, live traffic, easy ipod integration, hard drive for storage.

The Bad : Too large for sporty driving. Very low gas mileage of 14 mpg. Seats are not supportive for aggressive driving. Door hinges do not hold large doors open.



Engine	8Cyl 5.7 Liter
Output	376 hp / 420 lb-ft
Top Speed	150 mph
0-60 mph	5.9 sec (est.)
Weight	4,041 lbs
Price As Tested	\$29,320

Videos: A Video of this vehicle can be found at the bottom of this page. For higher quality click on the links below.



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The all new Dodge Challenger is a monster of a car that is much more beautiful in person than in photos. Our Silver Challenger R/T looks muscular and elegant at the same time, attracting a wide range of people from teenagers to 85 year olds. Many people told us that the Challenger was their first car and that they had great memories of this car back when it was first introduced. We had people driving large MAC trucks turn around while in motion, even some Harley-Davidson riders took a second look which is not a safe thing to do when on two-wheels. Both young and old came up and gawked at the car, took photos with their cell phones, and were just amazed so see a flashback from the past. We were happy to let everyone hear the exhaust growl which brought forth a stunned 'wow'. The Dodge Challenger is a special car in every sense of the word, there is power, good looks, and a great interior. From standing still in a parking lot to blasting down the highway, the car is in every-way what men have dreamed of.

The 2009 Challenger comes in three versions: SE with a 3.5L V6 engine, R/T with 5.7L V8 Hemi and a SRT8 with a 6.1L V8 Hemi. We recently tested the R/T model. While the standard R/T comes with 18 wheels, our car had the optional 20 inch performance wheel and tire package that has the same wheels as those found on the SRT8 which truly makes a huge difference in the appearance of the Challenger. Also optional on our car was the 6-speed manual transmission which is a option, with a 5 speed automatic being the standard equipment.

From the exterior the Challenger is just massive in every proportion. The front grill is large and wide and sits deeply reset from the front bumper and hood. The four round headlights look intimidating and give a powerful first impression. While one set are xenon HID lamps, the other are yellow halogens turn signals which give a nice contrast and an interesting look at night. On the bottom portion of the bumper are built in fogs lamps and also and air deflector in black plastic trim. The distinctive design of the front end is done very well, bringing the past into a modern day vehicle.

The front hood is just spectacular with a bulging center line that spreads into to two large vent

slots on each side. There are insignias of the word "HEMI" prominently displaced which tells everyone of the monster engine hiding behind the hood. The car is so wide that it has similar proportions so a large full-size SUV. The overall length is just huge, like the big cars of the 70's. The long side profile is smooth yet muscular as you go to the large rear end of the challenger. A rising rear end with a low slung roof line and small rear quarter windows looks just great. Trying to jump through these windows will be harder than in the original challenger. The massive 20 inch chrome wheels give the right amount of concept car looks and large 245/45 R20 tires keep on stuck to the pavement.

The tail end of the Challenger gets even more retro and true to the original car's heritage. A full length tail light bar reminds you of all the cars of the past. Dodge lettering in the white reverse lamp is also another great touch. A modern single piece wrap around rear valence with modern dual exhaust tips blends very nicely with the retro touches. A small wing looks just great on the Challenger as well. The overall body length is 198 inches with an overall width of 76 inches. The wheelbase is 116 inches. Dodge designers have done a great job in the exterior design of the Challenger and having a concept car that looks just like the street version is what people want and what here is actually delivered.

The interior of the Challenger is where you enter a modern day vehicle with the feel of the high horsepower muscle cars of the past. Most of the interior is smooth and modern with a soft leather look material used on the dash and doors. The Challenger is both large and wide which creates a very comfortable and spacious interior. The front passengers have a hip room of 55 inches, shoulder room of 54 inches, leg room at 42 inches and head room of 40 inches. While the rear hip room is also good at 51 inches, leg room is dramatically less at 33 inches. The instant you get in you will notice the large sport seats with a ribbed center portion. They are soft like your sofa at home and truly feel like a seat from the past on very comfortable springs. Having enough room for friends in back is also a benefit of the Challenger with large seats but little legroom. Also quite noticeable large gear shift lever, making the Challenger feel more like a arcade game. A smooth and large sunroof opens up the inside nicely and its high quality operation was just great.

The instrument cluster is wide with four large white oval gauges in a classic 60's style rectangular display. Mixed in with these traditional gauges are two digital displays which show everything from navigational directions to trip computer reading and car setup functions. Almost everything else is modern and just like those parts found in other Dodge cars, like the recently tested Dodge Avenger. There is a push-button start feature which works in conjunction with the remote key that you can keep in your pocket. The key however is needed to unlock the car and lock the car which makes you have to take it out of your pocket daily anyway, so having to put it back in your pocket before you start the car is pretty useless. The large steering wheel is leather wrapped and offers stereo and onboard computer adjustments. We have showed all the menu choices in our video so take a look at that. Control stalks are right out of a Mercedes S class from 2000 and thus feel quite good. Headlights are also automatic which is great to have which leaves one less thing to worry about.

The center console has a large 6.5 inch screen with the MYGIG system that has integrated touch screen navigation, a built-in hard drive so you can store music and pictures. It also offers satellite radio and real time traffic that updates your route when traffic jams block your path. A U-connect Bluetooth phone connection makes it very easy to connect any modern phone and talk through the car's speakers. There is also an auxiliary jack so you can plug in most MP3 players. This is an impressive system with every imaginable feature and its very intuitive to use. The system has everything you can think of and all in a compact and easy to use setup. You can enter navigation destinations by phone, or name, and see traffic information on the screen live. Just press a few buttons and you can go from one area to the next, perhaps BMW should learn something from this. There is also an IPOD wire that allows you to charge and connect fully to the MyGIG system so your songs will be displayed on the screen. This is a great feature and it shows us that Dodge didn't cut any corners when making the 2009 Challenger. There is hope for Chrysler.

Below the large MgGIG system are three dials for the climate control, one for the fan, and another for temperature and the third for air direction. There is no automatic climate control where you set a temperature and forget it. The system is very straightforward and relatively quiet. Finally below this are two buttons for heated seats and a button for emergency blinkers



and a switch to turn off the stability control so you can burn some rubber. The center arm rest has a deep storage area that can fit cell phones, cameras and or a small purse.

Ergonomics are typically good in the Challenger where getting in and out is fairly easy as long as you are in the front seat. The rear seats are functional and can seat two full size adults but it does cause the front passengers to sit closer to the dash than they would like. Having only the driver's seat be power operated was a mistake in a car that costs this much. The passenger side seat is also not height adjustable. Finally the large front doors are so big and heavy that if you happen to park on the hill, watch out that the door doesn't slam back into you and cut off your leg. The one major item lacking is that the door doesn't have a lever type hinge that keeps them open and in place that is commonly found in Mercedes vehicles. Dodge should have borrowed this as well when borrowing all the other parts from them. Even a VW Jetta comes with this. We had the door slam back on us a few times and we can tell you that is really, really painful. Watch our video for this demonstration.

What we could improve on would be grab handles in a ergonomic position on the door for the front passenger as well as a real leather covered interior. Rear quarter windows that go down as well would be great for a more open cruise. Moving the dash forward would open up the interior and allow for more legroom for rear seated passengers, we really did not need a trunk as large as the one in the challenger.

While the Challenger's styling is beautiful and brings out lots of people with smiles on their faces, sitting behind the wheel and driving this beast is quite amazing in itself. The monster 5.7 liter V8 Hemi engine pumps out 370 horsepower and a hefty 390 ft-lbs of torque. Just the growl coming from the exhaust while the car is standing still is unbelievable. It immediately takes you back to the generation of American muscle cars. The experience is almost like being in a time machine. The sound and the feel of the car remind us of the good-ol-days of large engines, street drag races and the era of pure love affairs with men and their cars. It was a time when American cars were built tough and where companies like Dodge built their brand reputations. The 2009 Challenger truly takes you away from your everyday problems, atleast until you need to go to a gas station. It is definitely the sound of being in the Challenger that makes it fun; a deep growl as soon as you turn on the engine, deep exhaust notes as you press hard on the accelerator and even the fun of just revving the engine while standing still. Its all muscle; no turbos, no superchargers and no nitrous kits in this beast. The beauty of the Hemi is that it is a potent V8 made right without any gimmicks and mated to a exhaust system that brings out its fun character, the Challenger has done it all right.

During low speeds the Challenger is most pleasing. There is this constant deep grumble which is most notable when you are parking, reversing, and going slow with blips of the gas just to move heads. The Challenger is so comfortable inside that you fall back in love with just cruising. The visual and audio sensations are great, and the look on peoples faces as you drive makes you feel like you are in a much more expensive vehicle. When you really need to get going fast, just a slight tap of the gas pedal will quickly get you up to 60 mph. The 6-speed transmission provides quick smooth shifts while the clutch is well weighted, not too heavy and not to light. The speed at which the RPM approaches redline keeps you on your toes as you quickly as you shift from 1, 2, 3 and 4. It doesn't help that the RPM needle only goes to 5800, but on a good note you will hardly ever need to use 5th or 6th gear unless your pinching pennies on fuel expenses. Even in 6th there is ample exhaust sound, a deep grumble, and you are driving at low rpm saving gas. Also a nice feature is the hill start assist that automatically holds the brake for one second to prevent the car from rolling back when engaging the gear. Spirited driving will cause a dent in your wallet, we only averaged around 13 mpg during our days with the car in country driving. The Challenger is rated at 14 mpg in city and 20 on the highway. We were able to get around 21 on the highway when we were mindful to keep the RPM as low as possible.

While most people will look to buy the Challenger for its design and styling, some will no doubt look only at the performance accepts. While the Challenger is fast in the straight line, it doesn't do to well on curves or salmons. With a heavy curb weight of 4,041 lbs, the Challenger doesn't act like a nibble Porsche. However, the Challenger does extremely well in a straight-line. The combination of rear wheel drive with a potent HEMI engine and quick transmission make for quick 0-60 mph times but just don't try to make miracles happen on a race track; this is a street car and best suited for late night drag races.

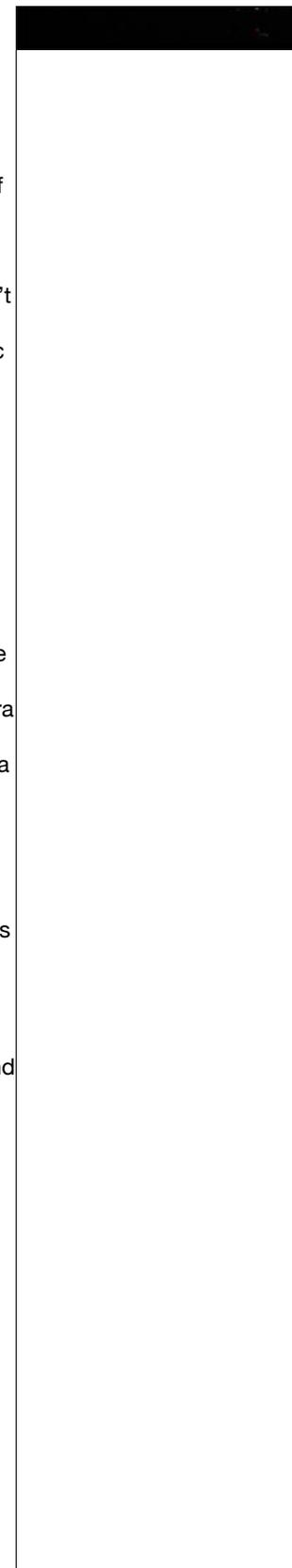


The Challengers suspension consists of an independent front suspension with a five link rear suspension setup. It's quite pleasant to drive and not very stiff. Many people will compare it to their fathers Cadillac. Perhaps this has to do with the large and comfortable seats rather than the stiffness of the suspension. The rack and pinion power steering setup is smooth and requires minimal effort to maneuver this large car, its not like the old days where there was no power steering. However, the challenger is so large that it does have a big turning diameter of 38.9 feet. Body sway could be lessened so as to make the vehicle not feel so big and heavy. But overall it's a great cruiser.

The 2009 Challenger also comes with every imaginable safety option. The retro design doesn't mean that you will have to do without all the modern day electronic safety items. Multistage front air bags and side curtain front and rear airbags as well as anti-lock brakes and electronic stability program and a tire pressure monitoring system are included. We found that inflating tires to 5 psi above the recommended ratings will give you better fuel economy. The warranty on the Challenger is only for 3 years or 36,000 miles.

The pricing on the 2009 Challenger models is very aggressive. With a car styled to well and built as strong as a rock, the Challenger seems like a bargain when you compare it to other performance cars. The SE model with V6 engine starts at only \$21,995. Most people out of college can pick one up as their first cars. The more powerful R/T with 5.7L HEMI starts at \$29,995. This is a bargain considering you are getting a 370 horsepower monster engine that brings both power and beautiful music to your hears. Opting for the ultimate Challenger, the SRT8 will set you back another 12 grand with a starting price of \$41,695. Considering that the power difference is not that much, the R/T is the best bargain for the money. Optional items on our test car brought our total to \$38,570 but most driver's will leave out many of these extra items. Some of the extra items in our car included the HID headlamps at \$695, a Power Sunroof at \$950, the MyGIG Multimedia system at \$1390, a Electronics Group at \$1060, and a six speed manual transmission at \$995. There is also \$675 in destination charges. Hopefully good discounts will enable you to have these necessary options and still have a low cost vehicle.

Dodge has brought back some excitement to the car market, and with that, hopefully an improvement in their fortunes. The 2009 Dodge Challenger will be a super hit for sure. Let this be clear to all the other car manufacturers: Design a car that is fun to drive and that looks unique. Put some emotion in your design and sales and profits will follow. People don't want boring cars anymore. They want cars like the Challenger that are a sense of pride and joy for the buyer, a feeling that is unique and that defines a generation of young boys and men. People who talked to us about the Challenger remembered the days when they owned one and how it made them feel. Talk to someone about a Ford Taurus and see if you get the same result.



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Base Pricing	\$27,168	\$29,320
Quick Order Package 27J	\$2,879	\$3,130
Quick Order Package 28J	\$1,964	\$2,135
MyGIG Multimedia System w/Navigation	\$1,279	\$1,390
20" X 8.0" Chrome Clad Aluminum Wheels	\$1,242	\$1,350
Power Sunroof	\$874	\$950
High Intensity Discharge Headlamp	\$635	\$695



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COMPARISONS	2009 Dodge Challenger	2009 Ford Mustang GT Premium	2009 Mazda RX-8	2009 MINI Cooper Clubman	2009 Volkswagen R32
	R/T 2dr Coupe (5.7L 8cyl 5A)	2dr Coupe (4.6L 8cyl 5M)	40th Anniversary 4dr Coupe (1.3L 2rtr 6A)	S 3dr Hatchback (1.6L 4cyl Turbo 6M)	2dr Hatchback AWD (3.2L 6cyl 6AM)
MSRP	\$29,320	\$28,725	\$32,070	\$23,450	\$32,990
Invoice	\$27,168	\$26,333	\$29,658	\$21,105	\$31,283
Destination Charge	\$675	\$795	\$635	\$650	\$650
Basic	3 yr. / 36000 mi.	3 yr. / 36000 mi.	3 yr. / 36000 mi.	4 yr. / 50000 mi.	4 yr. / 50000 mi.
Drivetrain	3 yr. / 36000 mi.	5 yr. / 60000 mi.	5 yr. / 60000 mi. Rotary Engine Core 8 years/100,000 miles.	4 yr. / 50000 mi.	5 yr. / 60000 mi.
Roadside	3 yr. / 36000 mi.	5 yr. / 60000 mi.	3 yr. / 36000 mi.	4 yr. / 50000 mi.	4 yr. / 50000 mi.
Rust	5 yr. / 100000 mi.	5 yr. / Unlimited mi.	5 yr. / Unlimited mi.	12 yr. / Unlimited mi.	12 yr. / Unlimited mi.
Base Engine Type & Cylinders	V8	V8	Rotary	inline 4	V6
Base Engine Displacement	5.7 liters	4.6 liters	1.3 liters	1.6 liters	3.2 liters
Valvetrain	16 Valves overhead valves (OHV)	24 Valves single overhead cam (SOHC)		16 Valves double overhead cam (DOHC)	24 Valves double overhead cam (DOHC)
	370 hn @	300 hn @	212 hn @	172 hn @	250 hn @



Horsepower	5800 rpm	5750 rpm	7500 rpm	5500 rpm	6300 rpm
Torque	398 ft-lbs. @ 4200 rpm	320 ft-lbs. @ 4500 rpm	159 ft-lbs. @ 5500 rpm	177 ft-lbs. @ 1600 rpm	236 ft-lbs. @ 2500 rpm
Tires	P235/55R18 99V all season	P235/55ZR17 all season	225/45ZR18 91W performance	195/55R16 87V run flat	225/40ZR18 92Y performance speed sensitive and rain sensing
Front Wipers	variable intermittent	variable intermittent	variable intermittent	variable intermittent	variable intermittent
One-Touch Power Windows	2	2	1	2	2
Power Steering	speed-proportional power steering	power steering	electric power steering	electric speed-proportional power steering	electric speed-proportional power steering
Premium Steering Wheel Trim	leather-wrapped	leather-wrapped	leather-wrapped	leather-wrapped	leather-wrapped
Xenon Headlights	Optional	Optional	Standard	Optional	Standard
Watts	368 - Optional	500	300	235 - Optional	Being Researched
Turning Circle	38.9 ft.	37.7 ft.	34.8 ft.	36.1 ft.	35.7 ft.
Max. Towing Capacity	1000 lbs.	1000 lbs.			
City	16 mpg.	15 mpg.	16 mpg.	26 mpg.	
Highway	23 mpg.	23 mpg.	23 mpg.	34 mpg.	
City	304 mi.	240 mi.	254 mi.	343 mi.	
Highway	437 mi.	368 mi.	366 mi.	449 mi.	
Length	197.7 in.	187.6 in.	174.3 in.	155.8 in.	167.2 in.
Width	75.7 in.	74 in.	69.7 in.	66.3 in.	69.2 in.
Height	57.1 in.	54.5 in.	52.8 in.	56.4 in.	57.7 in.
Weight	4041 lbs.	3356 lbs.	3084 lbs.	2855 lbs.	3547 lbs.
Wheel Base	116 in.	107.1 in.	106.4 in.	100.3 in.	101.5 in.
Front Headroom	39.3 in.	38.6 in.	36.7 in.	39 in.	
Rear Headroom	37.4 in.	35 in.	36.5 in.	37.7 in.	
Front Shoulder Room	58.2 in.	55.4 in.	54.8 in.	50.3 in.	57 in.
Rear Shoulder Room	53.9 in.	53.3 in.	54.9 in.	45.9 in.	58.2 in.
Front Hip Room	54.6 in.	53.6 in.	53.3 in.		
Rear Hip Room	48.6 in.	46.8 in.	48.1 in.		

Front Leg Room	42 in.	42.7 in.	42.7 in.	41.4 in.
Rear Leg Room	32.6 in.	31 in.	32.2 in.	32.3 in.
Maximum Luggage Capacity	16.2 cu. ft.	13 cu. ft.	7.6 cu. ft.	9.2 cu. ft. 9.7 cu. ft.

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