

Nissan GT-R vs. Mercedes C63 AMG Black Series, the \$100,000 showdown: Motoramic TV

By Ezra Dyer | [Motoramic](#) – Fri, Jan 25, 2013 2:01 PM EST



If you've got \$100,000 to spend on a brawny four-seat performance coupe, you face an interesting (and wonderful) dilemma: Do you want the ultimate version of something relatively normal, or a normal version of something that's pretty ultimate in the first place? Representing the two camps, we corralled a \$107,600 [Nissan GT-R Black Edition](#) and a \$129,725 [Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black Series](#). The Nissan's only option was a \$280 set of floor mats. In the case of the Benz, Mercedes throws in the floor mats for free. Which is nice, because the rest of the options cost \$65,720.

Yes, the C63 Black Series is the rare car that carries options worth more than the underlying vehicle itself, in this case the mighty C63 AMG coupe. With the full Black Series treatment, the Benz is a about a roll cage and gutted interior away from the starting grid at a Pirelli World Challenge race. Adjustable coil-over suspension on a street car? Yep. And a 510-hp naturally aspirated V8, flared fenders (the rear track is 3.1 inches wider than a stock C63), bigger brakes, an active differential with cooler — the Black Series equipment list is long. The result is a cost-no-object C-class, a bellowing 186-mph coupe that evokes German DTM cars.

Put it this way: very few cars can get away with an adjustable carbon fiber wing bolted to the trunk. This is one of them. Mercedes isn't saying how many C63 Blacks they're building, but they do say they're all sold out. Better keep an eye on the classifieds.

The Nissan, on the other hand, was built from scratch as an all-conquering speed monster. Nissan tweaks its halo car a little bit each year, and the 2013 GT-R now sports 545 hp from its hand-built, twin-turbo V6. That power deploys through a dual clutch transmission and a torque-vectoring all-wheel-drive system that enables retina-crushing launches and physics-bending corner exits. Essentially, if there's a piece of technology that makes a car go faster, the GT-R has it. You wouldn't call a GT-R pretty, but it's gorgeous in its purposefulness.

The GT-R and C63 Black approach the muscle-coupe question from completely different angles. Rear-wheel-drive versus all-wheel-drive. Automatic transmission versus dual-clutch sequential. Honkin' huge naturally aspirated V-8 versus turbo V-6. Analog versus digital, really. The GT-R is clearly faster, but is it more fun?



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To seek wisdom on this existential question, I recruited my friend Jason Wenig, proprietor of The Creative Workshop in Dania Beach, Fla. Wenig's company executes high-end restorations and he regularly gets wheel time in cars that most of us have never seen in person. So I'm interested to see what he thinks of the latest, greatest \$100,000 efforts from modern Mercedes-Benz and Nissan.

To ensure we have room to fully exercise this two-car herd of 1,055 horsepower, we head to an abandoned airstrip. There, we learn a few things. The GT-R, despite its all-wheel-drive, will do whatever you want it to do — tail-out, tire-smoking drifts included. At full throttle, the Benz hurls thunder while the Nissan soundtrack is all intake, a symphony of shredded atmosphere. Both these cars have brakes that dig in hard enough to rip loose pebbles from the pavement at 130 mph. Oh, and you might be aware that many Benzes won't let you fully deactivate the stability control system. This one definitely will.

By the end of the day, we'd reached some conclusions. One of us preferred the lurid slides, high-rpm V-8 and in-your-face style of the widebody Benz. The other picked the Nissan and its all-out performance, its high-tech devotion to making its driver look good. Which would you choose? It's a great question.

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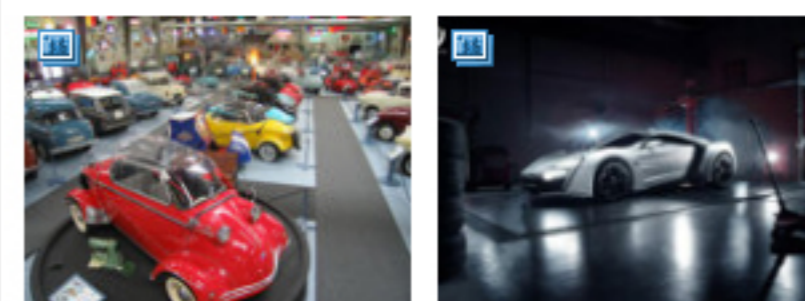
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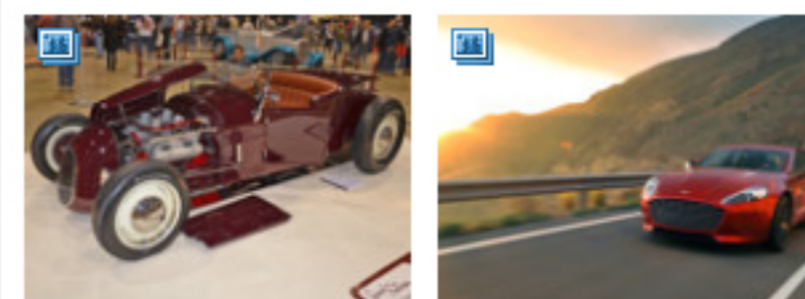
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