

NEW SVT PERFORMANCE PACKAGE READIES 2011 FORD SHELBY GT500 FOR THE TRACK

- An optional SVT Performance Package highlights the new 2011 Ford Shelby GT500®, available on both coupe and convertible models, making it racetrack ready
- The optional package features the all-new next-generation Goodyear Eagle® F1 SuperCar G: 2 tires only available on the 2011 Shelby GT500, offering incredible dry traction and precise handling, complete with a race-inspired ultra-high-performance tread compound
- All-new lightweight 19-inch forged-aluminum wheels in the front complement all-new tires, with new 20-inch forged-aluminum wheels at the rear



2011 Ford Shelby GT500
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DEARBORN, Mich., Feb. 8, 2010 – The new 2011 Ford Shelby GT500 has a surprise in store for true performance enthusiasts – an optional SVT Performance Package. One lap around the racetrack, and drivers will feel the difference.

Data show the 2011 coupe with the SVT Performance Package is 3.0 seconds faster per lap than the 2010 Shelby GT500 on a 2.3-mile test track. Cars with the optional package will be able to pull 1.0 lateral *g*, with stopping distances improved by 7 percent versus the base 2011 Shelby.

“More and more enthusiasts are putting their cars on the track to have some fun,” said Carroll Shelby, founder of Shelby American. “It’s a great way to enjoy the performance of your car in a safe environment. No one likes to run at the back of the field, so a track-oriented package is a smart option for the serious Shelby GT500 owner.”

Tires make the difference

The SVT Performance Package features the first application of the all-new Goodyear Eagle F1 SuperCar G: 2, a tire that offers superb dry traction and precise handling, complete with a high-performance tread compound with more grip. SVT engineers worked directly with Goodyear to develop the new compound, and it’s only available on the 2011 Shelby GT500. The tire is unidirectional, corner-specific – meaning the directional tread must match its specific location.

“We wanted to couple the improved weight distribution and the improved handling of the vehicle with the new tire, and with that offer the customer one of the most advanced summer tires from a manufacturer,” said Jamal Hameedi, SVT chief nameplate engineer. “That led us down a road to the new tire. It’s instantly recognizable with an all-new tread pattern and construction.”

The new ultra-high-performance compound is made of a proprietary blend of race-derived carbon black and high-stiffness polymers and resins that help deliver enhanced wet and dry handling performance on both the road and track. Asymmetrical, directional tread designs with massive tread blocks on the outboard side of the tire help enhance dry cornering grip. Sweeping Aquachannel™ grooves on the inboard side of the tread help move water. An innovative multi-radius mold shape offers precise handling and smooth, even wear.

“These tires are as close as you can get to a race car tire,” said Eric Zinkosky, SVT technical specialist. “We have a tire that’s way more capable, with better grip, is firmer and more race-oriented. From there, we tuned the chassis around it. The tires told us what we had to do.

“We took some lessons from the Shelby KR program and applied them to these tires,” he added. “That was our first attempt at a similar compound, and we learned a lot and rolled those lessons into the new Shelby to provide an even better tire.”

Nineteen-inch forged-aluminum wheels in the front, which are 4.7 pounds lighter than the base Shelby GT500's, complement the all-new wider 265/40R-19 front tires. New 20-inch forged-aluminum wheels at the rear are 2.8 pounds lighter than the standard 19-inch wheel, and the new 3.73 rear axle ratio takes advantage of the new larger rear wheels and tires.

Little things add up

As a result of the increased tire performance, the chassis was tuned to respond more like a race car. The front and rear shocks were also tuned, adding control to work better with the chassis and tire. The front springs are 20.5 percent stiffer than the base, and the rear springs are 9.5 percent stiffer, continuing an SVT performance tuning direction of adding more stiffness in the front and keeping the rear softer to aid acceleration traction. Roll stiffness also helps control cornering while on the track.

A lowered ride height of 11 millimeters in front and 8 millimeters at the rear improves handling and gives the car an even sportier attitude. High-temperature dry shaft center bearing bushing and shifter bushings – which are also on the base Shelby – ensure that no matter how hot the conditions get, the car will still perform at its best.

“This car is track-ready. We really took the Shelby GT500 to the next level and went through every detail,” said Kerry Baldori, SVT global performance vehicle chief functional engineer. “It offers great cornering and racetrack performance and proven durability, and that’s something we want our customers to appreciate.”

A unique rear spoiler Gurney Flap was developed for increased rear downforce and improves handling balance in high-speed corners. Introduced by racing legend Dan Gurney nearly 40 years ago, the flap is essentially a tunable element on a low-drag spoiler. Front downforce has been increased 25 percent through improved cooling pack sealing and a new front underbody closeout panel. Grippy bushing stabilizer bars provide improved roll stiffness.

Even with the stiffer springs, lower ride heights and increased damping, the ride remains very compliant, and the car can be easily driven on everyday roads due to SVT's chassis tuning philosophy.

Design cues are added to set the package apart from the base Shelby GT500. The over-the-top stripes are narrower, and the stripes on the shift knob were removed. The performance shocks also are painted red to further differentiate the package. “This car has great handling and dramatically improved performance, and that should come out in better lap times and improved braking,” said Zinkosky.

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