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KIA KCD-1 SLICE
OFFERS A NEW TWIST ON THE CROSSOVER CONCEPT

DETROIT, (Jan. 7, 2002) – Designed for the driver seeking passenger- and cargo-hauling versatility without sacrificing driving enjoyment, the Kia KCD-1 Slice concept is a fresh interpretation of the “crossover vehicle.” The new design, which was unveiled today at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, was conceived as an alternative to useful but dynamically clunky SUVs.

“This vehicle is designed to pick up lumber from the home center one day and to have fun on twisty roads the next,” said Eric Stoddard, the Hyundai-Kia Design Center designer responsible for the vehicle’s exterior. “We gave it all the cargo-carrying versatility of an SUV without the handling and fuel consumption penalties.”

While some early crossover designs sacrificed either attractive styling or load-carrying ability, the KCD-1 Slice does neither. Instead the vehicle is as stylish as an international sport sedan, while seating up to six adults. In addition the flexible seats fold to offer cargo space or recline to give superior comfort, offering a number of variations for hauling people and stuff.

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At the same time, the vehicle's V-6 powertrain and aggressively tuned suspension will deliver the kind of performance in either front-wheel-drive or all-wheel-drive configurations that most SUV buyers can only dream about.

With its distinctive silver-gray exterior accented with orange, the KCD-1 Slice presents the world with an optimistic face. The widespread, faired headlights and narrow grille flanking a tasteful badge give the vehicle an appealing visage. Viewed from the side, the Slice features a character line that extends from the front wheel arch to the rear wheel arch. At the same time the very fast windshield angle continues in one arc to form the roofline. A slight kick in the roof over the rear hatch opening gives the vehicle a sporty look. Other distinctive elements include a subtle, tapered indentation above the rocker panels and the bold dish-type wheels that emphasize the "big wheel" look that helps give the design substance.

"The goal was to create a smooth, clean, sporty exterior highlighted by precise details that seem to be sliced from the materials they are made of," Stoddard said. "The Slice name, which implies getting to the core by stripping away the extraneous, was a design theme from the beginning in the studio."

The KCD-1's elegantly simple rear end features high-mounted taillights, orange-accented bumpers and nerfs and curved rear glass. The hatch opens well out of the way so as to provide easy access to the handsome yet versatile interior.

One of the key design elements in the KCD-1 Slice concept is its wide, pillar-less door openings. All doors are solenoid-operated, allowing for small, well-detailed pushbutton door openers in the window frames. The front doors are conventionally hinged, while the rear doors are hinged at the rear to provide a huge entryway into the vehicle.

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“The door openings are very inviting,” said Dragan Vukadinovic, Hyundai-Kia Design Center senior designer, who was responsible for the vehicle’s interior. “Getting into and out of a vehicle easily is of paramount importance to any designer, so the unique door design was a good solution.”

At 112 inches, the KCD-1 Slice’s wheelbase is almost six inches longer than the Kia Optima chassis on which it is based, but its overall length, at 177 inches, is more than eight inches shorter. With its big wheels pulled out to the corners aggressively, the concept gives the visual impression of being smaller than it is. Actually, with an overall width of 72 inches and an overall height of 63 inches, the vehicle is very commodious inside.

Excellent interior ergonomics were part of the KCD-1 design parameters from the beginning. The car is a full six-passenger vehicle that doesn’t sacrifice even third-row accommodations to styling considerations. Each seat can comfortably hold an adult, and to enhance comfort and convenience, all seat belts are integral to the seats, which makes them more convenient to use than pillar-mounted belts. The thin, furniture-inspired seatbacks feature rear “friction pads” that line up with one another when the seats are folded, so the KCD-1 can hold a wide variety of cargo, including long items like 2 x 4s and skis.

The dashboard, topped with orange as part of the optimistic Slice theme, features its essential instrumentation in a sleek, hooded nacelle. The center of the dash is dominated by a bold control interface that offers big pushbuttons for the most frequently used controls, and is topped by a pop-up LCD screen for navigation, information or entertainment displays. The instrument panel design, low cowl and high hip-point seating give driver and front-seat passenger a “command-of-the-road” position. The smoothly contoured center console, which resembles a motorcycle fuel tank, is one of the vehicle’s many convenient storage areas. Others are in the doors and over the rear wheels. - more -

On the safety front, the KCD-1 offers dual front and side airbags, an array of side and side curtain airbags and an electronic airbag deployment system with in-seat sensors. The rigid body encases all passengers in a solid, crush-resistant safety area.

The KCD-1 is powered by a state-of-the-art, aluminum block 2.7-liter DOHC V-6 engine. Equipped with multi-port electronic fuel injection and dual-mode intake system, the 24-valve engine delivers the kind of low-end torque and high-end horsepower that fits the broad performance requirements of a sporty vehicle, enhanced by Kia's Sportmatic transmission that provides the driver a choice of fully automatic or manual control gear selection.

The vehicle's all-independent suspension has been tuned for responsive handling, while retaining good ride comfort. The front suspension uses double wishbones, coil springs and tubular shocks, while the rear suspension is a multi-link design with coil springs and tubular shocks. Stabilizer bars are fitted both front and rear. Aiding handling is a precise rack-and-pinion steering system that is equipped with an engine-speed-sensitive power assist. The final piece of the handling equation is an aggressive tire and wheel package: 235/45R19 sport tires on 19-inch alloy wheels.

No production plans have been announced for the Slice, but it will travel to a number of North American and international auto shows in the months ahead to test public reaction to its innovative design and wide array of useful features.

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