

# NEWS



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **KIA MOTORS AMERICA NAMES FIRST CHIEF DESIGNER IN THE U.S.**

### **Tom Kearns Now Heads Automaker's Irvine-Based Design Unit**

IRVINE, Calif., March 10, 2005 – Continuing its efforts to develop products that are designed and tuned specifically for North American consumers, Kia Motors America (KMA) recently announced that Tom Kearns, a former member of General Motors' Michigan-based design unit, has been appointed Kia chief designer at the Hyundai-Kia Design Studio in Irvine, Calif.. Kearns is the first chief designer in Kia's history in the U.S. marketplace.

In his role overseeing future Kia product design in Southern California newest studio, one of Kearns' primary responsibilities will be to support the differentiation of the Kia and Hyundai brands by embodying more distinctive, youthful and expressive design elements in future Kia product design proposals, with a special emphasis on products that are designed primarily for the North American market. Joel Piaskowski, who previously served as chief designer for both the Kia and Hyundai brands, will focus exclusively on Hyundai design proposals.

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“Tom’s appointment is a testament to Kia’s increasing emphasis on bringing bold, distinctive new vehicles to the U.S. market,” said Peter M. Butterfield, president and CEO of Kia Motors America. “Tom brings an exceptional track record from General Motors with a proven ability to establish a unique design vocabulary that can be applied to a broad product range. We are thrilled to have him as part of the Kia team and look forward to the positive impact he will have on Kia’s design direction in the years ahead.”

Prior to his appointment at KMA, Kearns contributed to a variety of brands at General Motors’ Michigan design studio, and played a significant role in the development of Cadillac’s dramatic new design direction. He was the chief designer of the Cadillac CTS exterior as well as chief designer for the Cadillac Vizon concept vehicle, and later served as the Cadillac brand’s chief designer. Kearns also spent a year on assignment at Opel AG in Russelsheim, Germany.

Kearns is a graduate of the Center for Creative Studies, Detroit, Mich., where he earned a bachelor’s degree in Industrial Design. A Detroit native, he now resides with his family in Coto de Caza, California.

Opened in early-2003, the Hyundai • Kia Motors Design & Technical Center is a 90,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility that houses more than 100 auto designers, engineers, model makers and technicians in Irvine, Calif.

Kia Motors America is the U.S. sales, marketing and service arm of Kia Motors Corp. in Seoul, Korea. The full line of Kia models including the Sorento midsize SUV, Sedona minivan, Amanti premium large sedan, Optima midsize sedan, Sportage compact SUV, Spectra compact sedan and Spectra5 hatchback as well as the Rio subcompact sedan and Rio Cinco five-door wagon are available at more than 600 retailers nationwide. For more information, visit [www.kiamedia.com](http://www.kiamedia.com).