

# NEWS



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Kia Unveils Concept SUV at North American International Auto Show**

### **KCD-II Mesa is the Second Concept from the Kia California Design Studio**

DETROIT, January 11, 2005 – Kia Motors America (KMA) today unveiled the KCD-II Mesa, the second Kia concept vehicle developed by the Kia's California Design Center in Irvine, Calif. The Mesa represents Kia's vision of an enabling and exciting new SUV designed with the North American market in mind.

Providing a North American vision on a potential new product segment for the company, the KCD-II is a modern, rugged body-on-frame SUV that features three rows of seats, dual full-length sunroofs and an expansive 116-inch wheelbase.

“The Mesa's highly usable interior design leans toward minimalism, while the exterior portrays the unique go-anywhere, do-anything attitude that Kia buyers have come to expect from the brand,” said Tom Kearns, chief designer for Kia Design at the Hyundai • Kia Motors Design & Technical Center in Irvine, Calif.

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## **Purposeful Exterior Design**

The Mesa's exterior styling is rugged, yet functional, and never compromises the practical utility offered in a large SUV. Designers pushed the imposing, custom-built 22-inch alloy wheels to the corners of the vehicle in an effort to maximize interior space while simultaneously creating stable, responsive handling characteristics.

"Designed to be rugged enough for play on the weekends yet sophisticated enough to take to the theater at night and the office on weekdays, the Mesa really brings everything you could ever want in a truck to the table," said Peter M. Butterfield, Kia president and chief executive officer. "Whether you work hard or play hard, Kia's Mesa concept SUV can provide the best of both worlds."

The Mesa's balanced stance is a result of its stretched wheelbase and extra-wide track. The location of the wheels also provides dynamic stability on or off the road. The vehicle's athletic appearance is further enhanced by sheet metal sculpted to appear lean and taut between muscular fenders, which -- stretched over the massive wheels -- help to project a rugged demeanor.

"Like Hummer and Jeep, Kia has a history of building military vehicles, and we drew on that legacy to bring utility to life in the Mesa," said Kearns.

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The turret-style wrap-around windshield reveals a passenger compartment that offers maximum visibility from inside the cabin. The Mesa's high beltline also offers a sense of security and protection. Thick rear pillars add to the vehicle's robust appearance, and outwardly they appear to support the entire roof structure. In fact, the A- and B-pillars help distribute that support and occupant protection, providing a solid structure, along with its fully boxed frame, more than capable of withstanding the extreme bending and twisting inherent in off-road operation. The three-dimensional sculpting of the rear lift-gate further reinforces the vehicle's image of strength and solidity.

## **More Than Meets the Eye**

Always ready for active duty, the Mesa's functional exterior features center-pivoting alligator-style roof rack clamps capable of adjusting to hold objects up to 2.0-inches thick, such as skis, snowboards, surfboards, or even building materials from the lumber yard. The adjustable clamps also provide a flush appearance when not in use, and they are capable of carrying larger or heavier objects on top.

Algonquin® retractable running boards provide easy access to the roof, and they provide a convenient step for vehicle ingress or egress. The running boards are electrically activated when a door is opened. Once the doors have been closed, the running boards automatically retract to prevent off-road damage and to avoid collecting snow or mud.

At the rear, an electrically controlled "drop" panel below the rear bumper opens to expose a trailer hitch. When opened, the panel also serves as a step, offering easier access to the rear of the roof.

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Rounding out the exterior highlights is one distinctly unique and very powerful addition: a large center-roof-mounted front LED searchlight that is perfect for lighting up the waves at a nighttime surfing session. The KCD-II also features LED fog lamps, headlights and taillights.

## **Racing-Inspired Interior**

Rugged meets racy as the Mesa's functional exterior design gives way to a racing-inspired "Sunset Orange" interior that draws on Kia's off-road-racing heritage. From Paris to Dakar to Baja California, Kia established an over-achiever reputation for its performance in legendary off-road events, and the KCD-II Mesa capitalizes on that heritage with its simple, straightforward interior design.

The Mesa's interior is bisected by a central tunnel console that separates six bucket seats in three rows, providing each passenger with a sense of individual space. The scalloped center tunnel also serves as an armrest and storage compartment that is accessible to every passenger.

Dual full-length panoramic glass sunroofs provide a high ceiling over each of the Mesa's six passenger seating positions, providing occupants with a sense of freedom and spaciousness uncommon in even the largest SUVs on the market.

The dual glass arrangement leaves the center portion of the ceiling available for storage, lighting, and a nine-inch video monitor that's part of the onboard DVD system.

Combining its advanced interior look with first class materials, all six seats are upholstered in leather, with brushed metal accents highlighting the instrument panel and door trim. Leather also covers the steering wheel.

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Conventional toggle switches and window controls in the console and doors are designed for ease of use, as is the massive gear selector of the five-speed automatic transmission, which provides a feel of positive engagement.

While the Mesa is powered by Kia's existing 3.5-liter DOHC naturally aspirated V-6 engine -- as found on the Sorento mid-size SUV -- the engine compartment is sized to accommodate KMC's next-generation power plants, and its aggressively tuned suspension delivers performance in either rear or four-wheel-drive configurations. 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 requirements of a high performance sport-utility vehicle.

The Mesa features full-time four-wheel-drive with low range for challenging off-road travel. The full-time four-wheel-drive (4WD) system with Active Torque Transfer shifts power to the front and rear wheels according to road conditions, from a maximum 100 percent rear-wheel drive to a 50/50 split. It is also equipped with a limited-slip rear differential to further enhance traction on low-grip surfaces.

A concept vehicle can be a canvas to explore new design directions, and the Mesa represents one potential direction for future Kia trucks.

"The Mesa represents Kia's commitment to the North American market," said Butterfield. "Our investment in the U.S. and around the world supports the steady expansion of sales and market share for Kia globally, and we can only continue that growth by showcasing new and inspirational designs like the Mesa for possible future production consideration. We'll be carefully gauging the reaction created by the Mesa among the automotive media and the public at the Detroit show."

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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, 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).

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