

# NEWS



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## **KIA BEARS ITS "SOUL" IN THE HEART OF THE U.S.**

### **Crossover Utility Concept Makes World Debut at 2006 North American International Auto Show**

DETROIT, January 9, 2006 – Kia Motors America (KMA) and Kia Motors Corporation (KMC) today unveiled the all-new Soul concept car during a press conference at the North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) in Detroit. The Kia Soul concept is a crossover utility vehicle (CUV) with a sporty, bold look that builds on design cues from the Kia Mesa concept vehicle introduced at the 2005 NAIAS.

“The Soul really was a collaborative effort between our design studio in California and our design studio in Korea,” said Tom Kearns, chief designer for KMA. “We went so far as to send one of our California designers to Korea for a month and half during the project.”

Even the concept vehicle’s name alludes to the collaboration between the two design studios. “We wanted to inject some living, breathing life into this car’s design – give it a soul, if you will, and the word ‘Soul’ is a homophone for the home city of Kia Motors Corporation headquarters, Seoul, South Korea,” said Kearns.

### **Exterior Design with Attitude**

The Soul has a stylish, compact SUV body that looks equally at home charging up a hill to a secluded mountain biking trail or deftly navigating traffic on narrow metropolitan streets. “It’s important to give the customer flexibility, function and utility but not lose the car’s distinct attitude and character,” Kearns noted.

The architecture of the Soul’s stance and wide track is reflective of its sporting, confident-handling character. A wrap-around windshield, muscular wheel flares, stylish front headlamps and a sloped roofline help convey Soul’s athletic appearance, which is geared toward satisfying customers with an active lifestyle. The Soul’s exterior exudes an athletic presence, while several design cues lend a svelte, edgy look indicative of urban attitude.

Atop the sloped roofline is an automatic panoramic sun/moon roof. The front section of the panoramic roof slides backward and fits over of the rear section allowing for open-air driving with unobstructed views for both front and rear passengers. Also up top are roof racks integrated into the Soul’s design with rails for sliding objects forward and backward.

### **Stylish Yet Functional Touches**

A symmetrical combination headlight design builds on previous touches from the Mesa concept and incorporates the headlamps and grille opening in a functional layout. The front brush guard with integrated fog lamps is functional and helps convey the Soul’s SUV toughness. Side vents add some character while helping to cool the engine compartment.

The Soul's side panel construction was designed with safety in mind and is strong enough to allow "freestyle" passenger doors (rear-hinged in back) that, when opened, reveal the lack of a B pillar, which makes for easier ingress and egress. High taillight placement lends to a contemporary look but also to better visibility and safety for occupants.

A rear brush guard smoothly envelopes the license plate underneath a power lift gate activated by the key fob. And the rear lift gate includes a unique backpack compartment that can be configured to accommodate an individual's active lifestyle needs; it folds out like a mail slot for wet or muddy items such as a wetsuit and hiking shoes, or even a skateboard depending on its configuration.

### **Looking Deep into the Soul**

The Soul's interior was inspired by high-quality audio equipment. In fact, "The dash area was designed around the front audio speakers rather than the other way around," said Kearns. Soul's premium audio system will please music lovers and the speakers are strategically located at the best positions to maximize audio performance and sound quality.

Furthering the multimedia entertainment system is a notebook computer with a multi-purpose video game monitor housed in the glove compartment area. The notebook sits on a tray that swings outward and becomes accessible to either the passenger or driver seating positions. The multimedia system includes Blue-tooth and MP3 technology as well as multiple USB ports, Wi-Fi and telematics. Video monitors that fold up and out airline style from the center console, which runs the length of the cabin, are available for rear seat passengers' entertainment.

Cabin ambiance is accentuated by upscale interior lighting. Instead of a typical dome light there is a lighting element surrounding each panoramic sun/moon roof. The same lighting technique is used in the door trim and is reminiscent of limousine interior lighting, adding to the Soul's urban, social feel.

Soul's shape promises lots of interior space relative to its footprint; though small on the outside, Soul is big inside with practical interior room and a reconfigurable cargo space. Two semi-bucket seats in front comfort the driver and front passenger, while flat-folding rear seats create even more storage space when desired.

"The Kia Soul proves that you don't have to sacrifice style to have an extremely flexible vehicle that can meet the demands of an active and engaged lifestyle," said Len Hunt, executive vice president and COO of KMA. "It's sporty but useful, exciting and enabling."

The front-drive Soul is powered by a 2.0-liter, inline four-cylinder gasoline engine. The powerplant is mated to a five-speed automatic transmission with manual shift capability and adaptive cruise control for active driver control and convenience.

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 sales, marketing and distribution arm of Kia Motors Corp. in Seoul, South Korea. For more information, including photography, visit [www.kiamedia.com](http://www.kiamedia.com).

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