

ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 6 NUMBER 4
JULY-AUGUST 2007

KIA TAKES OFF!

The new Kia Rondo rounds out an increasingly complete vehicle lineup. Accolades pour in for quality, safety, value and owner satisfaction. And www.kiamatch.com will put you in touch with the right Kia for you.



Plus...

- The new Ford Taurus and Taurus X • Buick Riviera concept from Shanghai
- Russo and Steele Monterey • Scottsdale auction land challenge
- GM stars in *Transformers* • Electronics and gadgets... and more

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kiamatch.com

DRIVE THE ONE YOU LOVE

The decisions start immediately, and they're not always easy: Which of these traits do you seek in a car mate?
 Appreciates the outdoors?
 Great with kids?
 Always in the know?

This is indeed a lot like dating—can't we have it all? One thing for sure, at www.kiamatch.com, you are likely to run through the options more than once. And it's likely you'll find yourself wanting to fill more than one bay of your garage with the matched results. After all, the choices are tailor-made to suit your particular wants and needs.

We start out by selecting "Always in the know," and it just gets more challenging.
 Elegant, well appointed, and appreciative of the finer things in life? Check!
 Hardworking and dedicated to making me a success? Check!
 Authentic, enthusiastic, and willing to go where the wind takes them? Check!
 Intelligent and frugal, but always up for a good time? Check!

But again, we can only select one, so we go with #2... a vehicle that'll do our heavy lifting and hand us the fruits of its labor? Not a bad option. Nonetheless, the full tantalizing array of possibilities (see pages 22-23) is flashing by on the screen the whole time.

So let's see... the enticing next click will get us down to serious business:

find my vehicular soulmate

Now, our electronic friend is doing some very serious thinking on our behalf...



computing compatibility



match found!

And the vehicle for us, based on those two criteria, is..... the Kia Optima!

DRIVE THE ONE YOU LOVE

KiaMatch.com offers you what other car dating sites can't: A real, heartfelt, honest relationship with a car you're guaranteed to love. You're just a few questions away from finding the love of your life.

Using our state-of-the-art compatibility program, answer some simple questions. Then sit back and relax, while we locate your perfect match.

Which of these traits do you seek in a car mate?

- Appreciates the outdoors
- Great with kids
- Always in the know

A car I could fall in love with would be:

- Elegant, well appointed, and appreciative of the finer things in life
- Hardworking and dedicated to making me a success
- Authentic, enthusiastic, and willing to go where the wind takes them
- Intelligent and frugal, but always up for a good time

Back to the home page...

Great with kids? Well...

"Well-rounded, family-minded, and practical" brings you the Sedona minivan (predictably enough after having checked "kids"), but "Sensible, with a passion for whatever's next" gives more of a surprise, pegging us as the target market for the new Rondo (see pages 22-23 and 24-25).



Hmmm. Is that right? But Kia doesn't tie you down to its first suggestion...

date an Optima

see other mates

So, let's try again.

Appreciates the outdoors... okay... it's not too big a stretch to anticipate being matched with an SUV or crossover... and the next options are just twofold:

Big, strong, and not afraid to get dirty? Sure... maybe... but does it have to be all three? The whole lineup probably qualifies as strong and unafraid, just not "big."

Full of adventure and style. And ready for any occasion? Again, we want to check both, but can only check one, so, we're compelled to try it twice:

Big, strong, and not afraid to get dirty? The Kia Sorento is the one for us.

Full of adventure and style. And ready for any occasion? The Kia Sportage.

However long you play the dating game, and whenever you decide you've found something of interest, clicking the "date" button brings you the kind of build-your-own interface common to pretty much all brands. But what a fun way to get to that... fun and actually useful and a bit thought-provoking.

It's all part of efforts by Kia Motors America, Inc., to get the word out about a wide-ranging lineup and that they have a lot of fun in mind for their owners, as they also make sure people learn about their strong and rapid advances in safety and quality, while if anything increasing their value proposition. Despite all their awards (see sidebar), proven quality and reliability, years in the market and ever-increasing sales, the phenomenal 10-year/10,000-mile warranty that was first used to comfort an unfamiliar US market about Korean vehicles remains in place.

Riding the crest of 13 straight years of record sales in the US, Kia is intent on getting its brand message more widely into the American psyche. Their philosophy is that brand perception equals what is delivered versus what has been promised. Knowing they hold a strong hand, their motto appropriately is "The Power to Surprise." Kia is intent on letting people know not only about its vehicles' value, but also their quality and safety ratings, and not least their fun-to-drive character. (Kia considers it offers a more



The Kia Kue concept, unveiled in Detroit, is a strong indicator of the company's design direction.

engaging drivers' vehicle lineup than that of its parent company, Hyundai.)

Statistics establish a hearty foundation for objective criteria (quality, safety, even sales, as shown in the sidebar to the right). For the more subjective attributes of driving passion and pride of ownership, Kia has gotten quite creative. They seek to build what they call "tattoo quality" for the brand, and while they clearly have products for every demographic niche, they are specifically targeting younger buyers with a higher design interest.

If you've seen their current TV advertising, you know they're having a lot of fun... and being very effective. Kia's television ads have tested high with IAG as a motivator to "join the cool crowd," which is indeed a big step forward from the days of low price and competitive warranties. Kia's marketing department recognizes they are working with a very advertising-dependent brand.

The Kia website has tested #1 three times with J.D. Power and Associates, and statistics indicate that 60% of website visitors are "more likely to seriously consider" purchasing a Kia after their visit. What's more, Kia is working to gain more direct visitors seeking their specific site initially, as opposed to those who click through via the likes of KBB or Edmunds. The result? Kia has had 120 million site page visitors since December 30, 2006. One Kia ad run on MSN's site in early February saw daily traffic rise 386%, and also demonstrated that as many people came back and searched later as had initially clicked on the ad.

Kia's gender split is near-perfect: 52% female and 48% male. Metro Phoenix is one of their top markets, cracking Kia's

top ten in the US. (And Kia's US presence is significant: the biggest dealer in the world is in Tacoma, Washington; the second biggest is in Dallas. There are 640 Kia dealers in the US, of which 320, or half, are one-brand dealerships; and the one-brand dealerships are responsible for 75% of US sales.)

With a new design center in Irvine, California, and a new factory in Georgia, Kia has its finger on the pulse of American tastes and needs, and it shows. While seeking to cover a full range of demographic and utility needs, they make a point of not pigeonholing their prospective customers or their vehicles; this is apparent after spending some time at kiamatch.com. And yet they do not attempt to pursue a principle of all-things-to-all-people, which is a strategy, whether in marketing, politics or romance, generally destined to fail. Rather, they identify universal yet adaptable threads within a given product.

For example, the new Rondo has been interpreted as being ideal for people entering a new stage in life, whether that means a first vehicle, marriage, children, a career move or retirement; that's quite a range of customers, but a message that remains surprisingly focused. Kia also avoids getting too specific with some vehicles' "type," as crossovers, small SUVs, tall wagons and the like muddy the waters industrywide. Rather, they apply their typical sense of fun—and purpose—by identifying vehicles in their own way.

Take the new Rondo: a small SUV? a crossover? a tall hatchback? Call it what you will... Kia says its customers will know they are simply attracted to its high sense of "Rondoism." ■

2007 MILESTONES

Safety, Quality, Value Awards

With Sales to Match

SAFETY MILESTONES

Kia Sedona—Top Ratings by Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (see p23)

Kia Sedona—five-star NHTSA crash rating

Kia Sedona—first minivan to earn "Top Safety Pick" from IIHS in frontal, side and rear impact crash tests. IIHS calls it "the best minivan we've ever tested."

Optima is awarded top rating by IIHS in frontal and rear impact crash tests

QUALITY MILESTONES

Rio and Rio5—highest in Initial Quality in sub-compact car category (tie) by J.D. Power and Associates—Kia's first IQS segment winner.

Kia Rio and Rio5—Tops In Initial Quality Study by J.D. Power and Associates for second consecutive year

Kia Sorento and Sedona Top Strategic Vision Total Quality Index™

DESIGN MILESTONES

Kia Chief Design Officer Honored By Royal College of Art, just the third ever presented (see p25)

Kia Web Site is Highest in Usefulness —J.D. Power and Associates Study

CONSUMER-VALUE MILESTONES

Amanti and Spectra—"Most Delightful Vehicle" award from Strategic Vision

Spectra and Sportage—"Recommended Buys" by Consumer Guide

Sportage named one of the "Top 10 Coolest Cars Under \$18,000" by Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com

Sorento—"Best Midsize SUV" in Brand-mensions' Consumer Voice Awards

Sedona, Rio, Rio5, Spectra, Spectra5, Optima, Sportage, Sorento awarded prestigious "Best Bet"—The Car Book 2007

Kia Sedona "Best Minivan"—Motorweek

SALES MILESTONES

- 06/01/07 | Best May Sales Ever
- 04/04/07 | First Quarter Sales Record
- 03/01/07 | Record February Sales
- 02/01/07 | Record January Sales
- 01/03/07 | 13 Years Of Record Sales



Sorento



Sportage



Rondo



Sedona



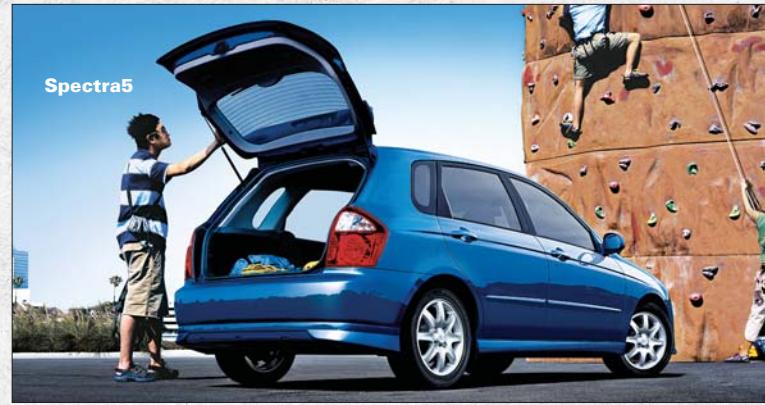
Amanti



Optima



Spectra



Spectra5



Rio



Rio5

NEW VEHICLES : 2007 KIA LINEUP

Kia product planners have been very busy indeed

We've been test-driving and reporting on Kia vehicles for about five years now, and we've always had good things to say about their product niches, their functionality, and their fit and finish. It's probably fair to say we would receive the original test vehicles with fairly routine expectations, but as time has gone by, our enthusiasm has grown considerably.

The Kia product line has expanded to cover a full range of sedans, plus hatchbacks, one near-luxury car, one, then two, now three SUV or SUV-like crossover vehicles, and a solid minivan. Suspension and ergonomic improvements have arrived consistently, and at a surprisingly fast rate. Fit and finish demonstrate a commitment to quality (also reflected in 10-year/10,000-mile warranties). And their safety rankings

are impressive.

What's also been impressing us is their rapid advance in competitive styling. It seems apparent that the Koreans have developed a definite talent for mimicking the best, and they are clearly eager to keep topping themselves in the US marketplace. Their progress in styling is validated by a recent award from the Royal College of Art (see page 25).

We'd be hard-pressed to find any reason not to shop the Koreans with the same enthusiasm and expectations as Japanese, domestic or European brands. The commitment is big, and as a wave of anticipated growth hits, this is a great time to buy in at solid value.

And what's next? Concept vehicles shown by Kia at this year's auto shows have been knockouts. Stay tuned! ■

KIA SAFETY RATINGS

2007 Kia Sedona and Sorento Earn Top IIHS Ratings

The Kia Sedona minivan and Sorento SUV have both received "Good" ratings from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) for rear impact collisions. "Good" is the highest possible rating given by IIHS, representing the best protection for people of all sizes in a typical rear-end crash. IIHS bases their ratings of Good, Acceptable, Marginal or Poor on geometric measurements of head restraints and simulated crashes that, when combined, assess how well people of different sizes would be protected in an average rear crash. According to IIHS, injuries to the neck are the most commonly reported by victims of car crashes. The Sedona and Sorento's standard active head restraints offer optimum and essential passenger neck and back support and protection.

The Sedona received Kia's first five-star crash safety rating for each seating position from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) when it debuted in 2002, as well as the "Top Safety Pick" from the IIHS for the past two consecutive years. The current Sedona, both Long and Short Wheel Bases, includes six standard airbags (dual advanced front and front seat-mounted side air bags, and full-length side curtain air bags for all three seating rows), a four-channel, four-sensor, antilock brake system (ABS), and a tire pressure monitoring system (TPMS).

Building off of a five-star crash safety rating from NHTSA for both front and rear side impact crash tests in 2006, the 2007 Sorento now boasts even more standard safety features across all trim lines including advanced two-stage airbags, full-length side curtain airbags, four-wheel disc brakes with ABS, electronic stability control (ESC) and traction control (TCS), tire pressure monitoring system (TPMS), driver knee airbag, and three-point seat belts for all seating positions with adjustable anchors and pretensioners with force limiters in front. ■



2009 Kia Soul

KIA PLANS TO ADD SOUL IN 2008

Kia has the youth market in mind with its new Soul Crossover that debuts in 2008 as a 2009 model. From its wraparound windshield, that appears to extend back to the wide "C" pillar, to its rear-hinged rear passenger doors, the Soul is designed to fit an active, trendy lifestyle. The Soul measures about two inches shorter than the Volkswagen New Beetle. The front-wheel-drive Soul is powered by a 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine with a five-speed automatic transmission. Seating includes bucket seats in the front with a folding bench seat in the rear to expand the cargo area. Feature highlights include premium audio systems and adaptive cruise control. ■

DEFYING CATEGORIZATION AND EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

By Barbara & Bill Schaffer



It seems like we spend an inordinate amount of time trying to categorize some of the latest vehicle offerings. Our most recent labeling exercise was for the Rondo, which Kia officials labeled a crossover and we agree. (We've also heard it called a small minivan, wagon and five-door hatchback.)

It doesn't matter what it's called. The Kia Rondo is an excellent example of the passion and pride Kia is building into its vehicles. Rondo heritage dates back through two generations of the European Caren as it enters the North America market for the first time. The European design influence is obvious with the smooth exterior lines, high stance, sloped back "D" pillar and wagon styling.

Available in five- or seven-passenger configurations, we were amazed at the roomy interior, wide door openings, headroom and legroom (especially in the first two rows; the third row is more for an occasional adult or smaller children).

The inside has an abundance of convenient storage compartments and drink holders. Seats in both the five- and seven-passenger versions are split (60/40 in the second row and 50/50 in the third row) to easily tailor cargo capacity and shape to various flat surfaces.

Cargo space is limited to 6.5 cubic feet when all three rows are in place, but with the third row flat, there are 31.7 cubic feet of space for cargo. There is a compartment in the cargo area for the jack and tools. If those are removed, the compartment can be used to ice a few beverages.

Rondo comes in two trim levels and with two front-wheel-drive engine choices. A 2.4-liter, 162-horsepower four-

cylinder provides a comfortable level of performance to both the LX and EX models through a four-speed automatic transmission. An optional 2.7-liter, 182-hp V-6 engine with five-speed automatic transmission is available in both models.

Rondo pricing starts at \$16,995, including destination charge for the four-cylinder LX and goes to \$20,795 for the V-6 EX. Leather, convenience and premium packages add nearly \$4,000.

Ian Beavis, Kia Vice President of Marketing, said the Rondo is not being marketed to a particular demographic group; rather it is for a mindset, which he described as "Rondoism."

Price and target audience aside, Kia planners have taken no shortcuts on this vehicle. The Rondo uses quality materials in a well-designed and executed application to create the feeling of a much more substantial vehicle than we would normally expect at this price point.

On the road, the Rondo is exceptionally quiet and solid with little road noise. The ride is smooth and controlled with the feeling of a larger vehicle. Both engines provide spirited performance with respectable acceleration and passing power. The extra 20 horsepower of the V-6 makes a notable difference in power for a small fuel economy penalty. The four-cylinder engine gets a 21 mpg city EPA fuel economy rating and 29 mpg on the highway, while the V-6 gets a 20/27 mpg rating.

As the twelfth vehicle in the Kia North American portfolio, the Rondo is not only attracting the attention of a growing number of satisfied Kia buyers, but has to be raising some concerns for other automakers—foreign and domestic. ■

KIA DESIGN AWARD

Kia Chief Design Officer Honored by Royal College of Art Joins Pininfarina and Giugiaro

Kia Motors Chief Design Officer Peter Schreyer has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the Royal College of Art (RCA) in recognition of his contribution to automotive design. Schreyer, who most recently debuted the Kia ex_cee'd cabrio concept car at the Geneva Motor Show earlier this year and has been charged with establishing Kia's future design direction, is only the third automotive designer to be honored by the RCA since their establishment in 1967, joining fellow automotive designers Sergio Pininfarina and Giorgetto Giugiaro.

"(Kia has) given me the opportunity to shape its whole brand design and character, and seldom does a designer have such a clean sheet to work with," stated Schreyer. We have (shown) just where we might go, and I think we will surprise the entire automotive world with what we are planning for Kia's future."

Schreyer, 53, studied Industrial Design at the Fachhochschule (University of Applied Science) in Munich. He studied at the Royal College of Art in 1979-1980 under an Audi scholarship, then worked at Audi and Volkswagen, producing designs for vehicles such as the Audi TT and the VW New Beetle. He joined Kia as Chief Design Officer in 2006. ■

WHEN ONE IS EXPERIENCING
GIDDYUPIDNESS
ONE MUST BE AWARE OF THE COP
HIDING BEHIND THE BILLBOARD.

If one loves to put the pedal to the metal, one must be aware of the responsive nature of the highly enlightened Kia Rondo. A new kind of crossover vehicle that combines the spaciousness and flexibility of an SUV with the handling and fuel efficiency of a car. With class-leading safety,[†] 29 MPG Hwy,^{**} available 3rd-row seating and a powerful V6 engine.[†] Starting at \$16,995.[‡] kia.com. The all-new Kia Rondo. Welcome to Rondoism.

10
YEAR
100,000 MILE
WARRANTY^{*}

KIA MOTORS
The Power to Surprise[™]

^{*}Warranty is a limited powertrain warranty. For details, see retailer or go to kia.com. [†]Based on comparison of 2006 and available 2007 models. ^{**}2007 EPA fuel-efficiency estimates are 21 MPG/city and 29 MPG/hwy for 4-cylinder. Actual mileage may vary. [‡]Available. [†]MSRP includes freight; excludes taxes, title, license, options and retailer charges. EX model shown with optional features, which cost extra. Actual prices set by retailer.