

Kia Motors' design-led transformation has delivered eye-catching vehicles such as the Soul, Sorento and Sportage that bear strong resemblances to the concept cars that preceded them, and today at the 2011 North American International Auto Show the brand's U.S. design studio unveiled its latest design statement – the 'KV7' concept.

Conceived as a modern-day "activity MPV", the KV7 was designed by Kia's California design team to challenge the notion that MPVs are strictly for family transportation. KV7 reveals a vision for a vehicle with the functionality to transport a large number of people, and their belongings, while also serving as a connected social hub for groups of friends and adventure-seekers.

The KV7 concept's design stands in sharp contrast to the dramatically raked windshields and wedge-shaped noses found throughout the MPV segment, and builds on the philosophy of "embracing the box" established by Kia's funky Soul urban crossover to create a unique and alluring design language that brings SUV-like qualities to the segment.

"From the outset, we felt the category was in need of an honest reassessment due to the fact that everyone seems so desperate to attach the word 'sporty' to their MPV even though MPVs, at their very core, are simply a box," said Tom Kearns, Chief Designer, Kia Motors America.

"Rather than reject the box we chose to celebrate it, just like we did with the Soul, and the result is a straightforward yet sophisticated vehicle that retains the functionality MPVs are known for and meets the changing and diverse needs of today's consumers."

Modern, Confident Exterior

Inspiration for the KV7 concept was found in the simplicity of elegant box shapes such as sleek smart phones and classic pieces of luggage.

The lounge-like interior is accessed by a striking passenger-side gullwing door which, when opened with the pillar-less front passenger door, provides extraordinarily convenient access. It also allows the vehicle to open up to the outside world and become the sociable hub of an outdoor event.

Paired with an A-pillar and windshield design that is less vertical than traditional MPVs, KV7's wide stance and its smooth exterior skin and 20-inch wheels exude a modern appearance while projecting the confidence and strength of an SUV.

The KV7 concept's inviting face is highlighted by an interpretation of Kia's signature bold tabbed grille with vertical LED headlamps integrated within the design to create a clean, smooth look. The KV7 features several LED lighting elements that Kia's design team is evaluating for future production vehicles, including a continuous line of LED fog lights that span the entire front end of the vehicle and directional turn indicators on the outside mirrors and the rear of the vehicle that pulse in the direction being signalled.

Uninterrupted views of the passing scenery are provided by the concept's distinctive windshield, which follows the unique designs found on the new Sportage crossover and Optima saloon, and a series of near-continuous windows starting at the A-pillar.

Despite its non-traditional look, the KV7's exterior dimensions are consistent with the MPV segment and allow flexible seating configurations and a multitude of storage options.

Open, Relaxed Interior

Rather than being a predominantly functional vehicle to transport children and everyday paraphernalia the KV7's interior has been envisioned to meet the needs of an entirely new group of consumers. This

group are busy organizing road trips, social outings and new adventures for themselves and their friends to experience together.

As such, the KV7 concept's interior employs four custom-built swivelling seats, including the driver's seat, and a rear-corner mini-lounge with seating for three and integrated storage compartments to promote interaction in an open social environment.

The simple yet sophisticated theme is brought to life inside the KV7 concept through its modern colour palette featuring soft beige and green tones and the use of unique seat and surface materials. The KV7 utilizes a variety of unconventional textures, including reclaimed teak wood flooring and sustainable wool and felt materials help to foster a warm and inviting atmosphere.

When the KV7 concept's push button start is engaged, the entire front dash moves more than six inches toward the driver, bringing all controls within easy reach, including the large multi-use display which integrates infotainment, climate and navigation systems in one simple-to-use interface controlled by a trackball mouse mounted in the dash.

Rear passengers have their own, separate interface in the form of a floating tabletop touch-screen computer display. The KV7 is Wi-Fi enabled, providing both the front and rear displays with internet capabilities and the ability for multiple passengers to connect their smart phones to the vehicle at one time and sign on to social networking sites.

Building on the experimental use of LED lighting elements found on the exterior, the KV7's concept's interior also features multiple flush-to-the-floor accent illumination points and standout green LED lighting throughout the front dash, instrument panel and rear display area to compliment the vehicle's colour palette.

The final element that separates the KV7 concept from the rest of the MPV crowd can be found under the hood – the concept is powered by Kia's new Theta II 2.0-litre GDI turbocharged engine, as found in the new U.S. spec Optima saloon. Capable of delivering up to 285 hp and mated to a six-speed automatic transmission it delivers V6-type power and performance while enhancing fuel efficiency.

KV7 specification summary

Exterior Dimensions

Length:	191.85 in. (4873mm)
Width:	80.0 in. (2033mm)
Height:	68.1 in. (1729mm)
Wheelbase:	122.0 in. (3100mm)

Exterior Features

- Wide stance, smooth exterior skin and 20-inch wheels with 225/45 tyres
- A-pillar and windshield design that is less vertical than traditional minivans
- Passenger-side gullwing door which creates a massive point-of-entry to when opened in conjunction with the pillar-less front passenger door
- A continuous line of LED fog lights that span the entire front end of the vehicle
- LED Directional turn indicators on the outside mirrors and the rear of the vehicle that pulse in the direction being signalled
- Interpretation of Kia's signature bold tabbed grille with vertical LED headlamps integrated within the design
- A distinctive windshield and series of near-continuous windows starting at the A-pillar for

maximum visibility

Interior Features

- Four custom-built swivelling seats, including the driver's seat
- Rear-corner mini-lounge with seating for three
- Integrated storage compartments
- Modern colour palette featuring soft beige and green tones
- Unique seat and surface materials
- Variety of unconventional textures, including reclaimed teak wood flooring and sustainable wool and felt materials
- Front dash moves more than six inches toward the driver when push button start is engaged
- Large multi-use display which integrates infotainment, climate and navigation systems in one simple-to-use interface controlled by a trackball mouse mounted in the dash
- Rear floating tabletop touch-screen computer display
- Wi-Fi enabled cabin
- Ability for multiple passengers to connect their smart phones simultaneously
- Multiple flush-to-the-floor accent illumination points and standout green LED lighting throughout the front dash, instrument panel and rear display area

Driving Functions

- New Theta II 2.0-litre GDI turbocharged engine (as fitted to U.S. spec Optima)
- 285 horsepower
- Six-speed automatic transmission
- V6-type power and performance while maximising fuel efficiency