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Chrysler 300C Concept Marks Chrysler Brand's Entry into Premium Rear-Drive Sedan Segment

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- Rear-Wheel-drive, HEMI® V-8 Powers Striking New Design
- Production Version to Benefit from German Technology

The Chrysler brand's first rear-wheel-drive sedan in more than a decade enabled designers to sculpt new proportions for their latest concept, the Chrysler 300C sedan. The result is a long hood and prominent grille and low roofline that provide the noble proportions of classic automobiles, but in a contemporary way.

"While the Chrysler 300C pays homage to the very first Chrysler C-300 and other "letter series" cars that followed, it does so in a thoroughly modern way," said Eric Ridenour, Executive Vice President, Product Development, DaimlerChrysler. "This is the car that will help set the stage for an entirely new generation of innovative and exciting vehicles from the Chrysler Group."

Despite significant advances in front-wheel-drive technology and performance, automobile enthusiasts have traditionally preferred rear-wheel-drive in larger, performance vehicles because of acceleration and handling advantages. A rear-wheel-drive layout enables all four wheels to share the work: the front wheels steer and rear wheels transfer the power, resulting in good handling and overall vehicle balance. Tire technology, electronic stability control, traction control, and anti-lock brake systems also have reached new levels of advancement to provide rear-wheel-drive cars excellent performance in a great variety of conditions.

In higher horsepower applications, rear-wheel-drive vehicles inherently have an improved transfer of power to the pavement. On acceleration and dynamic handling for example, rear-wheel-drive cars have excellent traction because of the weight shift to the rear. Front-wheel-drive cars have to manage "torque steer," or the tendency to steer the car during strong acceleration.

HEMI® Power is Back after More than 30 Years
The Chrysler 300C concept sedan portends the return of HEMI power to the Chrysler brand after more than 40 years.

One of the most powerful V-8s of all time, the HEMI quickly became legend in the 1950s and 1960s, stunning the racing world and propelling Chrysler to the top during the muscle car era. The last time HEMI powered a Chrysler-brand car was the 1958 300D and New Yorker. Dodge Challengers and Chargers continued to use the HEMI® until 1971, when concerns about emissions and fuel consumption led to major detuning of all high-performance engines.

"The '300' nameplate was originally derived from the 300-horsepower Chrysler HEMI® engine that powered the original 'letter series' cars," said Ridenour. "Just like its predecessor, this HEMI® is the trend-setter for a new era in engine technology. This is one of the most technologically advanced engines ever engineered by the Chrysler Group."

More than three decades later, the HEMI® makes a powerful comeback in the Chrysler 300C concept sedan. With a displacement of 5.7 liters, the HEMI® will generate well over 300 horsepower.

Chrysler 300C Built With World-Class German Technology
The production version of the Chrysler 300C slated to debut in 2004 will benefit from a wide range of German technology that is now part of the entire DaimlerChrysler enterprise, following the 1998 merger. Although the Chrysler Group had already decided before the merger that the next generation of large sedans would return to a rear-wheel-drive configuration, the merger with Daimler-Benz provided the Chrysler Group with an extensive portfolio of

technology and components. Spreading that technology across a higher volume will result in reduced per-unit costs and ensure higher quality at the same time.

Shared components and technologies that will appear on the production version of the Chrysler 300C include a five-speed automatic transmission, suspension components, steering system, seat structures, and electronic architecture.

“From a synergy standpoint, the Chrysler 300C concept is significant for the Chrysler Group in that it represents the first large-volume vehicle to adapt and incorporate select technology made available by our merger with Daimler-Benz,” said Ridenour. “The result will be a Chrysler 300C that combines classic design with great American power such as the HEMI, but also uses proven German technologies throughout a number of areas.”

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