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The All-new 2008 Dodge Grand Caravan and Chrysler Town & Country Offer an Updated Recipe of New Powertrains that Gives Consumers an Inspired Driving Experience

- New six-speed transaxle is a minivan first
- New 4.0-liter, V-6 engine offers increased horsepower
- Aerodynamic improvements and new suspension architecture add up to a pleasant driving experience

January 6, 2007, Detroit - Proven powertrains like a 3.3-liter V-6 engine that can be fueled with E85 and new options like a 4.0 liter V-6 engine that produces 240 hp and 253 lb.-ft of torque give drivers plenty of choices in the new 2008 Chrysler Group minivans.

“Chrysler Group is the first to offer a six-speed transaxle in a minivan,” said Larry Lyons, Vice President – Front-wheel-drive Product Team, Chrysler Group. “With a new 4.0-liter, V-6 aluminum engine and new six-speed transaxle, the 2008 Chrysler and Dodge minivans offer added performance and a smoother driving experience.”

In North America, three powertrains offer performance and value for a variety of minivan uses. The 3.3-liter V-6 flex-fuel-capable engine is mated to a four-speed transaxle and produces 170 hp (127 kW) and 205 lb.-ft. (278 N•m) of torque. The 3.8-liter V-6 engine is mated to a new six-speed automatic transaxle that produces 198 hp (148 kW) and 230 lb.-ft. (312 N•m) of torque. The new 4.0-liter V-6 aluminum engine is mated to the new six-speed automatic transaxle that produces 240 hp (179 kW) and 253 lb.-ft. (343 N•m) of torque.

Sequential multi-port electronic fuel injection, electronic throttle control, platinum-tip spark plugs and a wide-band detonation sensor system in the 4.0-liter engine allow operation on regular or mid-grade fuels from 85 to 89 octane.

For most markets outside North America, the new Chrysler Grand Voyager will offer the 3.8-liter V-6 gasoline engine and 2.8-liter turbo diesel engine, both mated to a six-speed automatic transaxle.

The Dodge Grand Caravan and Chrysler Town & Country’s new six-speed automatic transaxle is derived from the Chrysler Group’s proven four-speed transaxle. Building on the capability of Chrysler’s four-speed automatic transaxle, the six-speed automatic transaxle adds two new primary gear ratios and a secondary ratio for optimized passing performance at highway speeds. The gear ratios of the six-speed transaxle allow the engine to work more efficiently at lower speeds, providing a pleasant driving experience.

Part and process commonization allowed Chrysler Group engineers to develop the six-speed transaxle in a shorter period of time and at a lower investment cost than previous transaxles without sacrificing durability or quality.

The six-speed transaxle’s higher numerical first gear launches the minivan more briskly than a four- or five-speed transaxle. It also provides smaller steps between ratios, which means the engine speed changes less with each shift and makes the shifts feel smoother. The six-speed transaxle also engages a more appropriate ratio for any driving situation. In particular, wide-open throttle kick-down shifts to fourth gear engage at a slightly higher ratio than do upshifts to provide needed acceleration with less engine flare.

“Increased horsepower and torque along with increased launch and passing responsiveness, make the 4.0-liter, V-6 engine a pleasure to drive,” said Lyons.

Noise, Vibration and Harshness Reductions

Aerodynamic improvements have reduced wind noise, while high-strength and hot-stamped steel and improved structural body stiffness have reduced Noise, Vibration and Harshness (NVH) on the new 2008 minivans. Additional acoustic treatments also have improved interior quietness.

A new front-suspension architecture, new rear twist-beam suspension with coil springs and larger wheels and wider tires give the 2008 minivans increased steering responsiveness for a fun-to-drive experience.

The new front-wheel-drive suspension architecture features MacPherson struts. The front cross member is isolated from the body, reducing road noise and NVH. Upper and lower urethane coil spring isolators have been optimized for overall ride quality, quietness and handling, and have been tuned directionally to handle loads. The new minivan's front stabilizer bar with double ball-joint stabilizer links helps maintain a level vehicle attitude during cornering for a more comfortable and controlled ride. Double shear brackets and pipe nuts attach the front suspension cross member to the body to prevent road noise and transmission harshness from entering the passenger compartment.

A new twist-beam rear axle with coil springs provides improved stability and ride comfort. This improves anti-lift as much as 45 percent for dive and provides improved levelness, especially on the highway. The track bar is isolated from the axle and the body for less NVH and improved handling. Self-leveling Nivomat™ shock absorbers are included with the minivan trailer tow package, which contributes to consistent ride and handling characteristics whether loaded or unloaded. Dodge Grand Caravan and Chrysler Town & Country are the only minivans to offer the Nivomat shock absorber option.

The MacPherson strut front suspension and twist-beam rear suspension are coupled with power rack-and-pinion steering for improved maneuverability.

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