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Kia Unveils Dynamic GT Muscle Car

Kia has unveiled a powerful, rear-wheel-drive concept that is reminiscent of the muscle car era of the 1960s and 1970s.

The Kia GT presented to the September 2011 Frankfurt Motor Show is yet more evidence of the company's distinctive new design direction that is winning praise around the world and pointing to the next generation of cars to come from the Korean manufacturer.

The four-door sports sedan draws inspiration from the Kia Kee concept car, shown at the same event in 2007.

"At the onset of this project," says Gregory Guillaume, Kia's European Design Chief, "the design team was inspired by the spirit of iconic 1970s GT cars: sumptuous and elegant vehicles capable of whisking passengers from Paris to the South of France in effortless style and at high speed. We wanted to create something similarly graceful, athletic and confident, but not aggressive or overbearing."

The 4.690 mm long and 1.890 mm wide concept car has a classic front-engine, with a rear-wheel drive layout of a high performance sedan. This design concept creates very different proportions compared to a front-wheel drive car, giving the Kia GT distinct appeal.

The new concept allowed Kia to explore exciting new visual paths, with its extended bonnet and the front wheels pushed to the very front of the car. The cab-rearward stance features powerful rear shoulders and a truncated rear end.

The front doors and rear-hinged back doors open at a slight upward angle ensuring easy access to the spacious and airy interior which provides generous, uncluttered cabin accommodation for four –

thanks in part to Kia GT's unusually long wheelbase (2.860 mm) and despite its low stance, the overall height is just 1.380 mm.

Rather than going with the widely expected V8, the GT concept is powered by a 3.3L T-GDI turbocharged, direct injection engine that delivers 295kW (395hp) of peak power and 535Nm of torque, matched to an all-new 8-speed automatic transmission.

With a focus on dynamism and pace, the Kia GT makes use of aeronautical themes in its design, including the multi-piece propeller-style alloy and carbon-fibre wheels, the jet-themed rear-view cameras and the low-slung front air intake. Not to mention the aerodynamically efficient rear diffuser and the winglets that curve in from the front flanks and flow into the headlamps.

In spite of its low stance, fast roofline and shallow glasshouse, the Kia GT's clean and uncluttered cabin architecture has created a spacious and airy interior with generous accommodation for the driver and three passengers. The single-piece seats that float on arched supports, further accentuate the cabin's spacious dimensions.

The Kia design team deliberately chose to emphasise the proportions of the transmission tunnel to reinforce the power and performance of the saloon, but then balanced this muscularity by moving away from a button-laden centre console and creating a strongly driver-centric layout.

The glass instrument panel – similar to that first seen on last year's *Pop* concept car – features three layers of organic LEDs, giving a three-dimensional depth, as well as a wealth of information for the driver.

Kia Motors Chief Design Officer Peter Schreyer believes this concept is less about design specifics and more about a general feeling of stance, proportion and balance – elements that will influence and guide his design team's approach to their next project.

"One of the great things about working on this project was that this is a very real car," says Schreyer.

“It felt good to be working on a car that could roll down the road tomorrow. Yes, it would be a dream to put this into production – it has a logical layout, with four seats, and good luggage space and it’s also engaging and dynamic and makes a strong statement. It’s exactly the kind of car Kia should be making.”

Todd McDonald, General Manager of Kia Motors New Zealand says the GT concept will further lift the image and profile of the Kia brand, establishing it as a leader in automotive design and technology. He also believes the interesting choice of a smaller size V6 engine is entirely in keeping with the strong environmental approach of Kia Motors, underlined by its *EcoDynamics* green brand initiatives.

“We’ve seen Kia make a strong case for improved sustainability through *EcoDynamics* by developing smaller, cleaner and more fuel efficient engines that deliver strong performance and the Kia GT is entirely consistent with that approach – it says a lot about the Kia brand going forward,” says Mr McDonald.

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Photo caption: The Kia GT harks back to the muscle cars of the 1970s, but with 21 century design and performance cues.

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