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All-new Kia Optima - redefining Design

The all-new Kia Optima, which has just gone on sale in New Zealand, is “perfectly tailored” according to its German-based chief designer Peter Schreyer.

“With the new Optima, we have created a product that people previously would not have expected from Kia and that’s exactly what we set out to achieve!” says Schreyer of the sleek, four-door, mid-large sedan.

And he continues: “Optima is a new strand in Kia’s evolving design DNA with a blend of simple and fluid lines and elegant but uncomplicated shapes, that draw the attention of the eye in much the same fashion as a perfectly-tailored fine Italian suit.”

The graceful lines of the new Optima have drawn praise from motoring critics around the world and Kia Motors is looking forward to a similar reception here in New Zealand.

“It is fair to say that there has been more international comment passed on the new Optima than any other Kia model in the past – all of it highly favourable,” says Todd McDonald, General Manager of Kia Motors New Zealand.

“In-line with international trends we are expecting a huge demand for the new Optima which may put pressure on our ability to deliver vehicles in New Zealand.”

If the coupe-like styling is the initial drawcard, then performance and driving pleasure are sure to come a very close second, as the new Optima boasts advanced GDI technology in the new 2.4-litre Theta II engine that delivers the power of a V6 with the economy of a four cylinder. The ‘Anzac’ suspension, tuned for the roads and conditions in our part of the world will also help to set Optima apart from its competition, creating a reputation for this model as a driver’s vehicle.

A completely fresh design from the ground up, the Optima continues the transformation of the Kia range that began with the new Cerato and has continued with the Sorento and Sportage. With each



new model comes another leap in sophistication and visual appeal and Optima takes Kia's design revolution to the next level.

The third-generation Optima is longer, lower and wider than the previous model and features a significantly longer wheelbase (up by 75 mm) that offers much more space for people and cargo – in fact, it rivals Commodore, Falcon and Camry for roominess. It's also more competitive on price, with the single Optima EX model retailing at just \$46,990 for a fully-loaded car with the new 6-speed sequential automatic transmission as standard, as well as a Sports Package that includes updated brakes, rear spoiler, subtle side skirts alloy pedals and unique 18" alloy wheels shod with low profile tyres that complement the suspension.

Apart from looking good, the design of the new Optima is more efficient, with an aerodynamic drag figure of Cd 0.29 (down from 0.32), which helps reduce wind noise, boosts open road performance and fuel economy.

"With fuel prices rising ever higher, the 2.4-litre GDI engine and 6-speed auto will be a winning combination in the new Optima," says Mr McDonald.

The new 11.3:1 high compression 2.4-litre Theta II GDI unit introduces gasoline direct injection for the first time under the bonnet of a Kia model, representing the biggest advance in fuel injection technology since the 1980s, allows Kia to achieve three previously incompatible goals – lowering emissions and improving fuel economy, while also increasing the power by 11.6% and torque by 8.2% to 148kW @ 6300rpm and 250Nm @ 4250rpm respectively.

The new Theta II engine features numerous design enhancements over its predecessor, with a two-stage variable induction system (VIS), Dual Continuously Variable Valve Timing (D-CVVT), upgraded electronics and low-friction components, while also featuring lighter construction.

The six-speed automatic transmission offers two operating modes; fully automatic for city driving and a 'Sport' sequential change via the gear lever or the new steering wheel-mounted shift paddles, which are standard on Optima.

In spite of the increased power and torque output, fuel economy and CO2 emissions are lowered to 7.9L/100km and 189g/km, assisted by an Eco meter on the dashboard. Those figures are significantly better than competitor sedans with similar size or larger engines.

Kia says GDI technology will become a feature of engines in all its new cars in the future.

A feature that sets all recently launched new Kia models apart from the rest is the locally-developed suspension and handling package under the Anzac suspension programme. New Zealand and

Australian engineers collaborated to fine tune the Optima suspension to ensure it would deliver a superior ride, handling and road-holding experience. They worked closely with Sachs, the supplier of Optima's High Performance Dampers, which is ideally suited to our roads and conditions.

And when it comes to safety, new Optima is expected to be a leader, too, boasting Electronic Stability Control as standard, along with Hill Start Ascent Control and enhanced front, side and curtain airbags.

Optima has been designed to score maximum ratings in the US and Euro NCAP crash tests programmes.

Among the life-saving features found in the Optima is the rear-view camera that displays objects behind the car in the reversing mirror when reverse gear is selected, plus audible warning sensors.

The extensive range of advanced high-tech features, stand-out styling and class-leading performance undoubtedly puts the Optima in the luxury class. Other distinctive equipment includes: full leather interior, convenient push button start, dual zone climate air control, front fog lights, rain-sensing wipers, auto defog system, recognizable LED running lights, user interface LCD screen trip computer , steering wheel-mounted audio controls and an Infinity sound system with a 530Watt, 12-channel , 6-CD unit, 8-speakers, MP3 & iPod compatibility and Bluetooth connectivity. A full-size alloy spare wheel is included.

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Photo caption: The all-new, perfectly formed Kia Optima.

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