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Kia Powers Up Naimo Electric CUV

It's hip to be square and that's certainly reflected in the shape and name of Kia's latest innovative concept vehicle, the Naimo.

Unveiled at the Seoul Motor Show, the Kia Naimo name is taken from the Korean word 'Ne-mo', which translates to "square shape". Kia Motors says the name and the simple, yet muscular lines of the Naimo CUV (crossover utility vehicle) are meant to represent Korean heritage, blended with innovative, modern features. The juxtaposition of simple and complex is a common trait of many traditional Korean arts and crafts.

The innovation is evident in the all electric drive train in the Naimo that features a PMSM (Permanent Magnet Synchronous Motor) electric motor powered by advanced Lithium Polymer batteries hidden under the car's boot to give a driving range of around 200km on a single charge.

Naimo is the third electric concept to be unveiled by Kia Motors in little more than six months – last year it showed off the cute POP electric city car at the Paris show and at the recent Geneva show came the Venga EV.

The appearance of these three concepts is a strong indication of the serious research being undertaken by Kia Motors into zero-emission electric power as an alternative to the fossil fuel-driven vehicles of today. All three are actual working models and, immediately following the Seoul show, the Naimo joined the POP and Venga EV on the Kia Motors test fleet for further evaluation.

"We are starting to see a clear direction of the way cars of the future are heading and Kia is very much at the forefront of the development of new technology that is non-polluting and yet very usable – an

electric car with a range of 200 kilometres would be very practical,” says Todd McDonald, General Manager of Kia Motors New Zealand.

“And, being a Kia, the Naimo obviously features cutting-edge design, following the trend set with production models, such as the Optima and Cerato.”

Kia Motors’ Chief Design Officer Peter Schreyer describes the Naimo as a “perfect balance of innovation, high-tech and Korean tradition – heavily inspired by the purity and grace of traditional Korean arts and crafts”.

The purpose of the Naimo concept, says Kia Motors, is to explore the practicalities of a zero-emission, five-door, four-seater city car. Measuring 3,890mm in length, the Naimo’s generous wheelbase, width and height (2,647, 1,844 and 1,589mm respectively) – plus the short overhangs placing wheels at each corner – ensure the cabin provides exceptional head, leg and shoulder room for the occupants.

There are no B-pillars, as the rear-hinged rear doors and front-hinged front doors open out like butterfly wings to provide easy access to the cabin. A three-way split opening boot allows versatile access to the load bay for varying luggage sizes.

Other innovative features include a TOLED (transparent organic light emitting diode) storming display instrument panel and full online connectivity. Conventional door mirrors have also been replaced with miniature cameras installed in the A-pillars.

The PMSM electric motor boasts 80kW output and maximum torque of 280Nm, propelling Naimo to a top speed of 150 km/h. The twin-pack 27kWh LiPoly batteries offer numerous advantages over other battery types, such as the 200km range on a full charge, as well as a quick recharging cycle that delivers 80% capacity within 25 minutes.

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Photo caption: The Kia Naimo concept vehicle.

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