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2006 Dodge Rampage Concept Vehicle — The Only Things It Can't Load More of Are Style and Versatility

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Bold, powerful and supremely versatile, the new Dodge Rampage concept vehicle is a fresh look at how many families actually use the popular pickup trucks.

"It's the truck for the non-traditional buyer," said Scott Krugger, principal exterior designer. "This is a truck for the person who wants the functional aspects of a truck yet doesn't want a traditional vehicle. The Rampage has the capability of a pickup without sacrificing occupant space."

Combining the width of a Dodge Ram with the overall length of a Dodge Dakota, the Rampage features a host of people and cargo-carrying innovations made possible by a combination of unitized body construction, front-wheel drive, and unique independent rear wheel suspension. And, as with any Dodge concept, the appearance is striking.

In order to achieve their twin objectives of a family-size passenger cabin and exceptional pickup utility, the designers dramatically reconfigured the proportions of the truck. The largest portion of the Rampage is devoted to the spacious passenger cabin, followed by the five-foot cargo box, and last, the engine compartment (which still accommodates a 5.7-liter MDS HEMI® under the abbreviated hood). To visually reinforce the fact that the majority of the vehicle is dedicated to passengers and cargo, a slim appliqué of brushed aluminum runs along the cowl, up and over the roof rails and around the top of the cargo box, a shimmering silver ribbon that contrasts dramatically with the Liquid Carbon exterior.

Up front, the Rampage exhibits a fresh interpretation of the Dodge truck style architecture — a new look for a new truck. The signature Dodge six-sided crossbar grille is set flush within a curving plane that encompasses rectangular wraparound headlamps. Featuring LED lighting, all exterior lamps rely on light-piping and both clear and frosted acrylic to achieve a cleaner look.

The body side is dominated by "double-muscle" flared fenders with the widest part of the body centered over the 22-inch brushed aluminum wheels. The framed doors feature a continuous fore-aft glass plane while the reverse-angle "pillar" on the rear door and distinctive triangular window give a sporty coupe-like profile.

To draw attention to the generous occupant space, a U-shaped chamfered element runs above the sill and travels up the body along the leading and trailing edges of the door sets. Accented with brushed aluminum, this detail is subtly repeated on the exterior door handles.

Access to the interior is exceptional. When either door is opened, the sill pivots down to expose a handy step assist. While the front door is hinged conventionally, the rear door slides open to reveal an imaginative and supremely practical interior, entry to which is enhanced by the absence of the customary B-pillar.

"The interior of the Rampage is durable, functional and efficient," said Irina Zavatski, Principal Interior Designer. "Everything is there for a reason."

Structural elements are exposed. The contoured center stack, for example, "floats" above the surface of the instrument panel. Composed of satin silver finished "framing," the center stack can be pulled rearward and rotated toward either driver or passenger to access the navigation, HVAC and entertainment functions. The free-standing instrument cluster has a similar look and moves with the adjustable steering column while the steering wheel spokes harmonize with both cluster and center stack.

Overhead a "ladder-type" front-to-rear console with storage and entertainment units incorporates distinctive mood

lighting along its edges. Flanking the console are fore-aft "skylights," bringing welcoming daylight to rear seat passengers as well as those up front.

"The seating is designed to be athletic, comfortable, yet rugged," said Chris Welch, designer of the seats, which are contoured around specially-fabricated folding framing finished in satin silver. To facilitate ingress/egress to the rear compartment, milled silver handles are integrated into the outboard sides of the front seat backs. The dark charcoal seats are trimmed in a smooth polyurethane-coated material and a three-dimensional open texture "spacer knit" fabric which is also used as a non-glare covering on the instrument panel. Contrasting red-orange fabric on the seat inserts echoes similar accents on the instrument panel, steering wheel and door armrests.

With all seats in use, the Rampage is able to carry five passengers, but that's just the beginning of its functionality. The right front seat and the 60/40 rear seats can be folded into the floor, marking the first use of Dodge's popular and innovative Stow 'n Go™ Seating and Storage System in a pickup truck and the first Stow 'n Go front passenger seat ever.

The stowing process is facilitated by headrests that flip down into the seat backs, a solution that also allows taller-than-normal seat backs for greater support. To enhance the available interior volume with seats dropped into the floor, the armrests on the front and rear passenger doors also fold out of the way, maximizing the cabin's cargo-carrying capacity. As with all Stow 'n Go seating, with the seats upright, the bins beneath become handy storage areas for sundry items.

Since the interior is designed to accommodate both people and cargo, a durable marine-type rubberized material is used for the cabin flooring.

Behind the rear seats the backlite retracts into a midgate which in turn folds down into the forward part of the cargo bed. With the both midgate and one or more of the passenger seats in a stored position, lengthier items can be carried without having to lower the tailgate.

After the midgate, the five-foot box offers many utility options, including retractable cargo hooks and built-in formations arranged to secure 2"x4" boards. The three-position tailgate can be deployed upright, folded down 98 degrees, or dropped further to an angle of 117 degrees. In this position a stored-in-the-tailgate slide-out ramp can be extended to the ground to permit easy loading of wheeled cargo like motocross bikes, ATVs, etc.

And the unexpected features don't stop there. Rampage delivers exceptional cargo carrying capacity above and below the dual-bed floor. Acting as a second tailgate, the rear bumper fascia also drops down to reveal an enclosed storage space extending (with the seats up) far enough forward to provide room enough to accommodate a stack of 4'x8' plywood sheets.

"This is 'clean storage,'" says Krugger, "something most pickups today don't have."

Combined with the Stow 'n Go seating in the cabin, these cargo box features give the owner — and his or her family — unrivaled flexibility sure to be appreciated, whether going to the store to buy materials for a weekend project or taking the family off on an outdoors outing. Another thoughtful touch: In order to keep the rear of the vehicle free of bothersome heat and fumes when accessing the dual cargo beds, the engine exhaust exits via specially-trimmed vents forward of the rear wheels.

"Bold, powerful and superbly capable in creative new ways, the Dodge Rampage concept vehicle offers a new vision for the American pickup truck and the active lifestyle people who drive them," said Trevor Creed, Senior Vice President – Design, Chrysler Group.

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