

Dodge Ignites Mid-size SUV Market with All-new Dodge Nitro

- Nitro is the first mid-size SUV from Dodge
- Offers distinctive style, sporty performance, safety and cargo flexibility
- Petrol and diesel powertrains available

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The Dodge brand, no stranger to creating innovative automotive products and features, spices up the mid-size sport-utility market with the all-new Dodge Nitro, featured at this year's "Mondial de l'Automobile" in Paris. The new Nitro comes to Europe and other international markets, in both left- and right-hand drive, starting in the spring of 2007.

"As the first mid-size SUV for the brand, Dodge Nitro personifies the bold, powerful and street-smart attitude of Dodge," said Thomas Hausch, Executive Director – International Sales and Marketing, Chrysler Group. "In a world of mostly bland competitors, the Dodge Nitro has the design, engineering and performance to inspire consumers and shake up the mid-size SUV market."

In markets outside North America, Dodge Nitro will be available in three models – SE, SXT and R/T – and will offer a choice of petrol and diesel engines. The portfolio includes a 3.7-litre V-6 petrol engine, a 4.0-litre V-6 petrol engine and an all-new 2.8-litre common-rail turbo diesel power unit.

Standard on all Dodge Nitro models destined for markets outside North America are a new performance-oriented suspension and wide, large-diameter wheels, providing drivers with responsive handling and a firm ride. The Nitro features a new coil-spring independent front suspension and an all-new five-link, coil-spring rear suspension. In addition, 4x4 capability is standard, through either a part-time system (with the 3.7-litre petrol and 2.8-litre diesel engines) or full-time system (with the 4.0-litre petrol engine).

The new mid-size SUV boasts excellent overall performance, as well as a variety of safety, security and convenience features. Standard safety features on Dodge Nitro include Electronic Stability Programme (ESP), anti-lock braking system (ABS), Brake Traction Control System, Electronic Roll Mitigation (ERM) and supplemental side-curtain air bags.

The Dodge Nitro will be built at the Toledo North Assembly Plant (Ohio, USA) alongside the Jeep® Cherokee. The Dodge brand is expanding into volume markets outside North America, and the Nitro is a critical component in this expansion.

Bold Design

The styling of the new Dodge Nitro gives the mid-size SUV market something it hasn't had in a long while: the bold, powerful, street-smart attitude of Dodge.

Dodge Nitro owes its masculine appearance to a number of elements: the signature Dodge crosshair grille with its three-dimensional ram's head, prominent fender flares, substantial body size and high beltline. Even the exterior mirrors and door handles support the theme. The wheels of the Nitro are pushed to the corners, reinforcing the performance and capability of the vehicle.

On the inside, Dodge Nitro has supportive, comfortable and attractive seats. The front passenger seat folds flat, while the reclining rear seats fold 60/40. Across from Nitro's four-spoke, leather-wrapped steering wheel is a three-pod, four-gauge instrument panel. The gauges are black with gray and white graphics and orange pointers, creating a look of technical precision.

Storage is plentiful. The centre console has room for hand-held electronic organisers, mobile phones or coins; there

are driver- and passenger-side door compartments; and a map pocket behind the driver's seat. The LOAD 'N GO™ floor is a new innovation. This panel slides 45.7cm (18 in.) rearward for easy, convenient loading and unloading of packages and other items, and can hold up to 182kg (400 lb.).

Powerful Engineering

The powertrain and chassis options on the all-new Dodge Nitro are tuned to provide customers with power, performance, controlled braking and handling, and a smooth ride.

The performance-oriented 4.0-litre, single-overhead-cam (SOHC) V-6 petrol engine is an enhanced version of the 3.5-litre engine used in prior Chrysler Group vehicles. The 4.0-litre petrol engine is standard on the Dodge Nitro R/T model. Maximum power is estimated at 194 kW (263 hp DIN), and peak torque is estimated at 359 Nm (265 lb.-ft.).

The 3.7-litre SOHC V-6 petrol engine provides the Dodge Nitro with a standard engine that is efficient, durable and smooth. The engine has been refined to enhance low-speed torque while providing a smooth idle and minimal engine noise. Plus, a new exhaust gas recirculation valve helps increase fuel economy. The 3.7-litre petrol engine is standard on the Nitro SE and SXT models and provides estimated performance of 157 kW (213 hp DIN) and 319 Nm (235 lb.-ft.) of torque.

Also available is an all-new 2.8-litre common-rail turbo diesel engine. Built by VM Motori, this engine is a 2766cc (169 cu. in.) four-cylinder, in-line engine, with belt-driven double overhead camshafts and four valves per cylinder.

The iron cylinder block is an open block design with a ladder frame bed plate and integral liners. The aluminium cylinder head features a side-entry swirl intake port and a directed intake port. A Bosch EDC 16 common-rail direct-injection fuel system is incorporated along with an electronically controlled EGR valve and variable geometry turbocharger.

The 2.8-litre diesel engine is available with a six-speed manual transmission or five-speed automatic transmission. Maximum power is estimated at 134 kW (182 hp DIN), and peak torque is estimated at 460 Nm (340 lb.-ft.) between 1800-2400 rpm.

The Dodge Nitro was designed and engineered under the Chrysler Development System (CDS), the comprehensive, coordinated and disciplined product creation process that improves quality and speed-to-market while reducing costs and encouraging practical innovation in new products.

Advanced Technology

Dodge Nitro is a rolling platform for some of the latest entertainment and communication technology available in the automotive industry.

The all-new Dodge Nitro features a cutting-edge information, entertainment and communication navigation audio system that raises the bar on in-vehicle communications. This next-generation navigation radio features a 16.5cm (6.5 in.) Thin Film Transistor (TFT) display with a touch-screen panel that can support 65,000 colours. The system provides a two- or three-dimensional appearance to graphics and animation, as well as multiple font sizes and styles. The system provides real-time traffic updates and incorporates many new features for music, sound, movies and personalised picture displays, including:

- A 20-gigabyte hard disc drive for storing map data for the navigation system and photos
- Universal Serial Bus (USB) port that allows for the transfer of photos onto the hard drive
- Voice memo recording, which allows a message up to three-minutes long to be recorded using the microphone integrated into the rearview mirror
- Display screen that can display movies when the vehicle is in park
- Capability to support three simultaneous audio output sources
- UConnect® Hands-free Communication System, available as an after-sales accessory, that uses Bluetooth® technology to provide voice-activated wireless communication between the occupants' compatible mobile phone and the vehicle's onboard receiver
- Functionality in six languages (Dutch, English, French, German, Italian and Spanish)

In addition, a Video Entertainment System (VES) enables rear passengers to enjoy movies, music and external audio/video devices. For example, the system will play DVDs, WMAs, MP3s and audio and video CDs.

Dodge Brand

Dodge sold more than 1.4 million vehicles worldwide in 2005. With a U.S. market share of 7 per cent, Dodge is the fifth-largest nameplate in the United States and the eighth-largest nameplate in the automotive industry. The Dodge global portfolio includes a range of cars, trucks, minivans and SUVs. In calendar year 2005, Dodge sold 10,772 units in limited markets outside North America, an increase of 19 per cent over 2004.

Dodge Caliber spearheaded the Dodge brand's expansion into volume markets outside North America in 2006, and it will be followed by the Dodge Nitro and the high-performance Dodge Caliber SRT4 in 2007. Strong Caliber sales continued in August as the vehicle marked its third full month of availability outside North America. A total of 6,900 Caliber units were sold in international markets through August, and the Caliber became the number two-selling model for the month of August (with 2,365 units).

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