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THE THRILL OF SOMETHING TOTALLY NEW!

Chrysler has a history of whipping up rides that defy categorization. Its 1983 minivan inspired the segment whose vehicles have risen to become the official mode of transportation for harried moms and their offspring. And its PT Cruiser, introduced as a 2001 model, blurred segment lines (hot rod? station wagon? small van? mini-SUV? a little bit of all of these, actually) to carve its own singular niche.

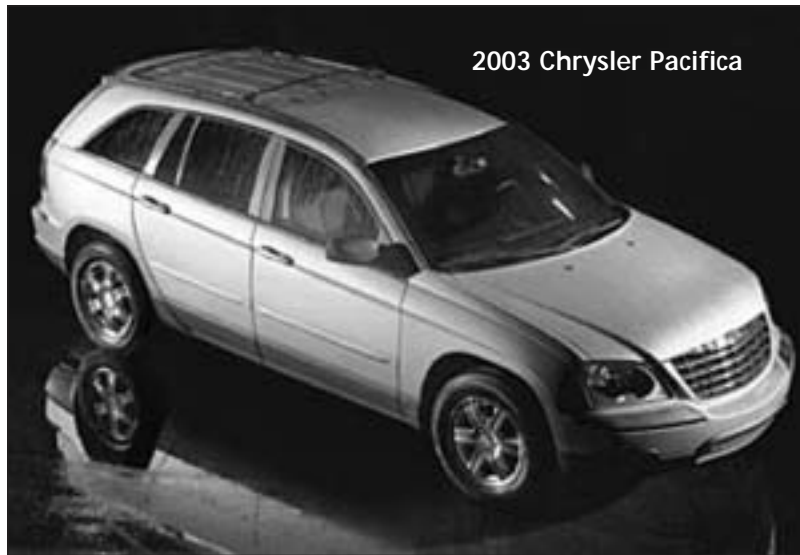
So it's hardly surprising that the manufacturer has concocted yet another vehicle whose individuality makes it difficult to label; Chrysler's Pacifica concept stirs in elements of sport wagons, minivans and SUVs to cook up a hauler that's truly in a class of its own. Egged on, no doubt, by the mammoth success of the nothing-if-not-original Cruiser, Chrysler recently announced plans to bring the Pacifica concept to production. The production version of the Pacifica will be nearly identical to the concept that was unveiled in January 2002 at the North American International Auto Show.

The Pacifica's sheet metal is solid looking and imposing. In front, the car's heritage is announced via a spanking-new rendition of Chrysler's chrome-winged badge gracing its grille (overall, the Pacifica's snout is a more muscular version than its sibling's, the

300M). Satin silver molding highlights its beltline. In back, the car boasts an integrated black spoiler that extends its roofline in a subtle, aerodynamic way. Nineteen-inch wheels dressed in meaty 255/50 Michelin tires add heft to the vehicle's stature.

Inside, a glass skylight spans the entire length of the Pacifica's roof. Wood and

The Pacifica's versatile layout features three rows of seats (naturally, they're leather-trimmed and, as an added bonus, both the front and second-row seats are heated); second- and third-row seats fold down to allow maximum room for cargo-hauling, should the need arise. All three rows of seats boast side-curtain airbags.



2003 Chrysler Pacifica

Powering the Pacifica is the 300M's 250-horsepower 3.5-liter V6; the vehicle comes outfitted with a four-speed automatic transmission that allows drivers to indulge in manual-style shifting. Buyers may choose between front- and all-wheel-drive configurations. Chrysler claims that the vehicle was created to feature a low center of gravity, which, it says, graces the Pacifica with car-like handling.

satin silver accents state unmistakably that yes, this is high-end transportation. An integrated navigation system is contained in the car's instrument cluster; rear-seat passengers benefit from a flip-down roof-mounted DVD screen. Other helpful features include power adjustable pedals, a tire-monitoring system, a hands-free cellular phone, a power lift gate, dual-zone automatic climate control with odor-particulate filtration, satellite radio and Infinity surround-sound audio.

As would be expected, Chrysler is all but bursting with pride and high hopes regarding its latest progeny. "Chrysler Pacifica will be to the \$25,000-plus market what the PT Cruiser is the \$25,000-minus market? While PT Cruiser is too cool to classify, Chrysler Pacifica is simply cool and classy," opines Tom Marinelli, vice president, Chrysler/Jeep Global Brand Center. With its stylish looks and highly functional mixed-breed profile, the Pacifica could very well deliver on the manufacturer's expectations.

Did You Know?

May 23, 2003

SUV TAX BREAK TO HIT \$100,000

By Ruby L. Bailey
Knight Ridder Newspapers

WASHINGTON — A loophole that allows small-business owners to deduct \$25,000 for luxury sport-utility vehicles will grow to \$100,000 under the \$350 billion stimulus plan nearing passage in the Senate Thursday and expected to be signed by President Bush on Monday.

The tax break applies to small businesses — and to individuals who have set up minicorporations for tax purposes — when they purchase a vehicle weighing at least 6,000 pounds.

The provision was created in 1996 to prevent farmers and others from being penalized by the 10 percent luxury tax on vehicles costing over \$30,000 when they bought pickup trucks and tractors.

But the move toward bigger SUVs over the years has increased the number of those vehicles that qualify — whether they are used for work or not.

Thirty-eight SUV models — including the Cadillac Escalade, Lincoln Navigator, Chevrolet Suburban 2500, Dodge Durango and the Ford Expedition — qualify.

Bush wanted Congress to increase the existing deduction to \$75,000 to encourage immediate spending by small business. The House of Representatives upped the amount to \$100,000.

Some in the Senate, including Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., wanted to change the provision's wording to close the loophole.

If the bill is approved, the tax break will expire in 2005.

Experts are unsure how much of the SUV sales market can be attributed to those purchased because of the loophole.

But Taxpayers for Common Sense, based in Washington, estimates the SUV loophole could cost taxpayers between \$840 million and \$987 million for every 100,000 vehicles sold to businesses, according to the organization's Web site.

And some point out the irony of having such a large tax break for vehicles that increase U.S dependence on foreign oil and pollute the air.

"It's not restricted to people who use trucks in pursuit of their business," said David Nemtzow, president of the Alliance to Save Energy, a Washington-based bipartisan coalition of business, government and environmental leaders. "We should be having tax breaks for fuel-efficient cars to make them more attractive. We think it's just a rip-off of American taxpayers."

Nemtzow said he has heard of small-business owners saying, "Oh yeah, I went up another size because the salesman pointed out the tax loophole."

But Eron Shosteck, spokesman for the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, said most small-business owners purchase SUVs for business purposes. The organization supports rewriting the provision to include SUVs as well as trucks.

"Why should a contractor's vehicle be treated any differently than the power tools he hauls in the back of it?" asked Shosteck. "The way it is currently structured, it discriminates against small-business owners who use cars. You have to give business owners the benefit of the doubt that they are using SUVs for business purposes."

THE BUZZ ON LEASING

Buzz Doering knows everything you've wanted to know-but did not know you wanted to know-about leasing. In *The Buzz on Leasing*, he lets his readers in on all of it. If you have never leased a car, you will at the very least wonder whether you should have. And whether you will next time. If you are planning to lease a car, this is an indispensable guide. When you find the right car and the right leasing company, this book will guide you through the leasing process. You will be able to ask the right questions and recognize the right answers. And if you happen upon the answer, you will be able to spot a bad deal before your name goes on the dotted line. Buzz Doering teaches his reader the basic economics of leasing, including everything from tax advantages to manufactures' subsidies. And his simple and direct writing unravels complexities and clears up confusion.

If you would like a free copy of *The Buzz on Leasing*, please give us a call or e-mail at info@losaltosleasing.com.

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