



The Abarth provides a halo model for the Fiat 500 lineup. Starting at \$23,995, the Abarth looks and performs the part of a hot hatch, featuring chassis and powertrain technology once only available on premium-priced performance cars.

The Abarth is set to land in Canada

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LAS VEGAS: Small, but wicked!

That slogan about sums up the 2012 Fiat 500 Abarth, the latest model in the 500 lineup that is slated to begin arriving at Canadian dealerships in the next few weeks.

Since Chrysler decided to bring the Fiat brand back to Canada after a hiatus of several years, momentum has been growing month after month.

More than 5,300 Fiat 500s were sold through the 70 Canadian Fiat dealerships in 2011 and the numbers keep rising with strong sales in January and February to start this year. Volume has been especially strong in Quebec, where more than 45 per cent of all Fiats have been sold to date.

What has excited company executives the most is that 86 per cent of the Fiat buyers are new to the Chrysler brand, helping them achieve No. 1 manufacturer sales status in Canada during the first two months of the year.

The addition of the Abarth (pronounced ah-barth) model to the 500 lineup is seen as another impor-

tant step in growing the Fiat brand here in North America.

"We don't know what kind of volume we'll get (with the Abarth), but we'll sell every car we get," predicted Ed Broadbear, vice-president of marketing for Chrysler Canada.

While many people in North America may be unfamiliar with the Abarth name, it is a storied brand in Europe, with more than 10,000 racing victories, 10 world records and 133 international titles.

The company was founded more than 60 years ago by Karl Abarth and since then, Abarth and Fiat have a history of collaboration going back some 45 years with more than 900 racing victories to their credit.

It is this rich racing history that will draw driving purists to this new Abarth, a track-ready, subcompact that is at home on city streets, highways and at the track.

The Abarth logo with its scorpion artwork is well known to racing enthusiasts and is emblazoned on every Abarth model. Karl Abarth's astrological sign, Scorpio, inspired the logo. It was the sign he lived and ironically died under, and one that reflected his feisty and sometimes temperamental nature.

Starting at an affordable \$23,995, the Fiat 500 Abarth features state-of-the-art powertrain and chassis technology that at one time was only available on premium-priced performance cars. This is not just a cute little car like the base 500 — it can be a down and dirty driver's car when you let it loose on the track.

Power comes from a turbocharged 1.4-litre MultiAir engine four-cylinder engine that makes 160 hp and 170 lb/ft of torque (the base Fiat 500 has 101 hp). Mated with a heavy-duty five-speed manual transmission, the Abarth is powerful, yet still delivers a fuel economy rating of 7.1L/100 km (40 mpg) city and 5.7L/100 km (50 mpg) highway.

While the Abarth is unmistakable for a Fiat 500, numerous design cues set it apart from the base 500.

The front and rear fascias are unique as are the dual chrome exhaust tips, side skirts, rear spoiler and functional air intakes and diffusers. All add up to more than just a pretty face. They aid aerodynamics and improve the car's performance.

Inside the cabin, the Abarth model features in-

See **DESPITE**, pg. 4

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