

VW's 'small' minivan is anything but

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The 4.0-litre has a lot of poke and the six speeds mesh so nicely that there is always the right amount of power for conditions. When it came time to merge onto the super highway amid double pup tankers and 53-footers all hurtling along at 130 km/h, I was thankful for the power of the engine to join in the fray.

Canada will get four trim levels: the base Trendline starting at \$28,075; the Comfortline starting at \$34,375; the Highline (as tested) starting at \$40,575 and the Excline starting at \$50,575. Each model has a large number of standard and optional features that cover five printed pages in the brochure. Probably the best way to get a deeper look is to go to www.vw.ca and build one for yourself.

FYI, the model tested here included just two options, the 17-inch alloy wheels at \$700 and the infotainment system at \$2,425. Not including the \$100 air conditioning tax and the \$1,580 shipping tax, (which seems like a lot from Windsor to Toronto) the as-tested price was \$43,700.

While this is classified as a 'small' minivan, it is anything but and will fill any standard-size garage. But when it comes to picking a seat, there won't be any quibbling because there is room for all in the Routan.

With all three rows of seats up, there is 930 litres of cargo space behind the third row. Total cargo area is an astounding four square meters.

Fold the third row seat beneath the cargo floor and there is 2,400 litres. The third row, by the way, has three positions including tipping it over backwards to have a tailgate party seating. The second row seats either fold or can be taken out completely for even more cargo space. The Stow-n-Go feature in the Chrysler is not available on the Routan. Instead, the cavity below the floor where the Stow-n-Go seats would go are purely two extra large stowage bins.

Standard features in the all-new 2010 Routan include three-zone climate control, CD player with six speakers, dual sliding side doors, front and side curtain airbags, Tire Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS), and Electronic Stabilization Program (ESP).

My time with the Routan came at one of those watersheds in life with my son moving off to college residence.

It was not a move to be taken lightly with clothes, computer, printer, George Foreman Grille, cereal, milk, cheese, coats, and that all makes up to a sizeable amount of 'stuff' to transport.

During the move, I kept thinking about what VW Canada president John White had said about certain times when seven-seat utility could not be beat. I later learned that at the same time I was moving my son, White was using a Routan to move his daughter into university residence.

At the same time I note Honda is bringing its next generation Odyssey to market and Nissan is about to re-bow with the full-size Quest minivan.

So while the pundits say the minivan is dead, from what I saw on college move-in day with my son, at least a third of the vehicles were vans.

So when I asked at the top, what must Volkswagen have been thinking with the Routan; it looks to me like they were thinking ahead.

VOLKSWAGEN ROUTAN 2010 (AT A GLANCE)

BODY STYLE: Seven-seat minivan.

DRIVE METHOD: front-engine, front-wheel-drive.

ENGINE: 4.0-litre SOHC V6 (251 hp, 259 lb/ft).

FUEL ECONOMY: 12.2L/100L/100 km city, 7.9L/100 km highway.

PRICE: Base, \$40,575 not including \$100 air conditioning tax and \$1,580 shipping fee.

WEB: www.vw.ca



The third row seat folds below the cargo floor for unrestricted loading. Cargo volume behind the second row seats is 2.4 sq m with the third row seats folded or a full 4.0 sq m with all seats folded and/or removed.

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2010 KIA FORTE LX AT

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\$1,250*

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+0%
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CITY: 8.3L/100KM (34 MPG)

STEERING WHEEL AUDIO CONTROLS

AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION

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SOUL 4U SHOWN

2010 KIA SOUL

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FINANCE APR FOR UP TO 60 MOS.**

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2011 KIA SORENTO

LEASE FROM
\$379*

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LEASE APR

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HWY: 7.4L/100KM (38 MPG)
CITY: 10.6L/100KM (27 MPG)

HEATED FRONT SEATS

STEERING WHEEL AUDIO CONTROLS

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*0% purchase financing available on all 2010 Kia models for up to 60 months on approved credit. Cash back varies by model and trim. **3 Payments on Us* is available on all 2010M purchase financing offers on approved credit. The payment amount is calculated based on the monthly payment (excluding applicable taxes) of a 5-year 0% purchase financing contract, each payment amounting to (MSRP + D&D + A/C Tax + Colour Charge)/60. This amount will be offered in the form of a cheque or may be applied to reduce the selling price of the vehicle. It is the responsibility of the customer to make all payments in accordance with the financing contract; this promotion does not in any way change its terms or void any due payments. * Finance credit for 2010 Forte (F0740A) is \$1,250 based on the Manufacturer Suggested Retail Price (MSRP). Cash back varies by model and trim. * Monthly lease payment for 2011 Sorento (SR540B) is \$379 for 48 months at 3.9% lease APR with a \$0 down payment. Total lease obligation is \$18,197 with the option to purchase at end of term for \$10,401. Lease has 20,000 km/year allowance (other packages available) and \$0.10/km for excess. Delivery and Destination fees (\$1,650), OMVIC fee, Environmental Fee and Air Tax (where applicable) included. All offers exclude licensing, registration, insurance, PPSA, applicable taxes and variable dealer administration fees (up to \$699). + Highway/city fuel consumption for 2010 Forte LX (F0540A) is 5.8 L/100KM (49 MPG)/8.3 L (34 MPG); 2011 Sorento 2.4L MT (SR540B) is 7.4 L (38 MPG)/10.6 L (27 MPG); 2010 Soul L6L MT (S0550A) is 6.3 L (45 MPG)/7.7 L (37 MPG). The actual fuel consumption of these vehicles may vary. These estimates are based on the Government of Canada's approved criteria and testing methods. Refer to the Government of Canada publication EnerGuide Fuel Consumption Guide. *2011 Kia Sorento/2010 Soul awarded the Top Safety Pick by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. The award is applicable on all 2011 Sorento models manufactured after March 2010. Visit www.iihs.org for full details. † The 2010 Kia Forte was awarded Car of the Year by NADAguides.com. To learn more please visit www.NADAguides.com. *The Bluetooth® word mark and logo are registered trademarks and are owned by Bluetooth SIG, Inc. Some vehicles advertised may include optional accessories or after-sale equipment and may not be exactly as shown. Information in this advertisement is believed to be accurate at the time of print. Offer ends September 30th, 2010. KIA is a trademark of Kia Motors Corporation.