Chrysler interiors were upgraded last year, and the 300 is no exception. Abundant soft-touch materials, along with leather, chrome and wood (matte carbon on the 300S), give the cabin a premium look and feel.

New 300S has street presence

Continued from pg. 1

3.5-litre V6 (let's forget about the sad little 178-hp 2.7 litre), and the available 5.7-litre Hemi was inspiring. The SRT8 model's 6.1-litre Hemi (425 hp, 420 lb/ft) even more so.

Still, not everybody was a fan of this car's 'gangster' styling, and its cabin— like other Chrysler interior— was in need of a makeover.

So in 2011, with the company's across-the-board upgrade from cheap hard plastics to more soft-touch materials, leather, wood, chrome and other bling, came some refinement to the 300's overall look.

This starts at the front with a more elegant slotted grille with liquid chrome finish, flanked by 'key slot' headlamps (housing projector lamps and LED daytime running lights) with a scalloped lower edge.

On the new-for 2012 300S model— my tester for the week— the headlamp bezels are accented in black, and in the grille, black chrome replaces bright chrome in the horizontal blades.

The differences are subtle, but give it more street presence.

The high beltline has been preserved, which is an element I like about its predecessor, but thinner pillars provide more visibility from the smallish side windows.

The front windshield has been raked back three inches for improved aerodynamics.

Pronounced wheel arches rise into the sculpted hood and are echoed by bulging rear fenders that give the vehicle a firmly-planted look. Twenty-inch alloys, standard on the 300S, add to the effect.

In back, a deck-lid spoiler, LED taillamps and large-bore dual exhaust outlets hint at the sedan's performance.

Inside is where the 300 shows itself worthy of being labelled a world-class sedan. Fit and finish is as good as anything I've driven in the near-luxury segment, and the move towards more premium materials, like real wood appliqués (matte carbon on my tester), bright and satin chrome accents, sapphire blue gauge illumination and ambient lighting, and optional Nappa leather seating, create the kind of luxury accommodations that were missing in earlier models.

At $39,995, the 2012 300S V8 is number seven of ten 300 series models that top out at $48,995, and comes equipped with some high end features.

These include well-bolstered, 12-way power driver and passenger front seats with two-position driver memory. Seating is also heated both front and rear, and my vehicle included the optional Radar Red leather, giving it a very sporty look.

The leather-wrapped steering wheel is also heated (a nice touch as temperatures drop), with controls for the hands-free phone, audio system and cruise.

The 'S' also gets a power tilt/telescopic steering column, power adjustable pedals, power rear sunshade, auto-dimming side mirror (driver's side) that tilts in reverse, and heated/cooled cupholders that really do work.

The 300S is also available with a V6, but the eight-cylinder version gets some added perks like rain-sensing wipers, adaptive headlights, rear backup camera and a speedo that tops out at 260 km/h— a silly feature, but speaks to the car's ability.

Chrysler is not blowing smoke with its 'Imported from Detroit' commercials. The new 300 truly is world class, and although many of us haven't been believers until recently, cars like the 300 should go a long way in changing the hearts and minds of prospective buyers.

kia.ca

WINTERFEST KIA

EVERYBODY WINS $500 UP TO $25,000*

FINAL MONTH!

0% FINANCING AVAILABLE ON ALL 2012'S**

PAY UNTIL SPRING* ON SELECT MODELS

2012 FORTE SEDAN TOP SAFETY PICK 2012^ INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

Forte SX shown

HWY: 5.7L/100KM
CITY: 8.1L/100KM

PLUS AN ADDITIONAL $500 CASH BONUS[2] IF YOU OWN A CIVIC, COROLLA OR MAZDA 3

NEW! LOWER PRICE FROM $99††

FLEX CHOICE™ Finance with Option to Return

bi-weekly for 60 months. Offer includes delivery, destination and fees of $1,489.
BASED ON A PURCHASE PRICE OF $17,484.

$0 DOWN PAYMENT | AT 3.39% APR

The All-New FUEL EFFICIENT 2012 RIO 5-DOOR

Rio5 EX Luxury shown

HWY: 4.9L/100KM
CITY: 6.6L/100KM

OWN IT FROM $108††

FLEX CHOICE™ Finance with Option to Return

bi-weekly for 48 months. Offer includes delivery, destination and fees of $1,489.
BASED ON A PURCHASE PRICE OF $15,584.

$0 DOWN PAYMENT | AT 2.9% APR

THE ALL-NEW OPTIMA

AUTO 2012 TOP SAFETY PICK 2011^ INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

Optima SX Turbo shown

HWY: 5.7L/100KM
CITY: 8.7L/100KM

AAC AUTOMOBILE JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

CASH PURCHASE PRICE FROM $22,584‡

Includes delivery, destination and fees of $1,589.
BEST NEW FAMILY CAR (OVER $30,000)[1] &
BEST NEW FAMILY CAR (UNDER $30,000)[2]

ALSO AVAILABLE: OPTIMA HYBRID

$1,000 ECO-CREDIT* PLUS UP TO $1,250 Loyalty bonus¥ or Competitive bonus‡

INTRODUCING THE NEW 2012 SORENTO

0% FINANCING APR** FOR UP TO 60 MONTHS

PLUS

NOW GET UP TO $1,250 IN LOAN SAVINGS‡

Includes $750 Loyalty Bonus¥ for existing Kia customers and $500 Loan Credit.

HEATED MIRRORS | HEATED FRONT SEATS | AVAILABLE ALL-WHEEL DRIVE

TOP SAFETY PICK 2012^ INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY

7 PASSENGER SEATING AVAILABLE

HWY: 6.2L/100KM
CITY: 9.5L/100KM

Sorento SX shown

KIA

5 Year Warranty* WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED
*5-year/100,000 km worry-free comprehensive warranty

Proud Partner madd Saving Lives, Supporting Victims

Like us on facebook to learn more. facebook.com/kiacanada

KIA Official Partner | EURO2012 POLAND-UKRAINE

Kia's new Customer Friendly Pricing includes delivery and destination fees and all mandatory government levies. Prices do not include dealer administration fees ($399 to $699), licensing, PPSA or applicable taxes.

$500 Grad Rebate

Offer(s) available on all new 2011 and 2012 models through participating dealers to qualified customers who take delivery by January 3, 2012. Dealers may sell for less. Some conditions apply. Retailer order/trade may be necessary. Offers are subject to change and may be extended without notice. See dealer for complete details. Vehicle images shown may include optional accessories and upgrades. All offers exclude licensing, registration, insurance, PPSA, applicable taxes and variable dealer administration fees (up to $699). **0% purchase financing is available on all 2011 and 2012 Kia models on approved credit (OAC). Terms vary by model and trim, see dealer for details. Financing example based on 2012 Kia Sorento (SR75K) with a selling price of $28,379, financed at 0% APR for 60 months. Monthly payments equal $472.88 with a down payment/equivalent trade of $0. Cost of borrowing is $0 for a total obligation of $28,379. Delivery and destination fees ($1,650), other fees ($34), OMVIC fee. Environmental Fee and A/C tax (where applicable) are included. Licence, insurance, applicable taxes, variable dealer administration fees (up to $699), PPSA and registration fees are extra. Financing example includes a $1,250 loan credit (includes $500 loan credit and $750 loyalty bonus¥). Retailer may sell for less. See dealer for full details. ♦"Don't Pay Until Spring" on select models (120-day payment deferral), applies to purchase financing offers on select 2011 and 2012 models on approved credit (OAC) (Sportage/Sorento/Sedona/Borrego excluded). No interest will accrue during the first 90 days of the finance contract. After this period, interest starts to accrue and the purchaser will repay the principal interest monthly over the term of the contract. ♦ Every eligible contestant automatically wins a prize of $500 up to $10,000 towards the purchase or lease of any new 2011 or 2012 Kia vehicle, plus one lucky winner will be randomly selected to win $25,000 at the conclusion of the contest. Contest ends January 3, 2012. No purchase necessary to enter. Contest open to Canadian residents with a valid driver's licence, who have reached the age of majority in the province of their residence. Odds of winning vary per prize. Potential prize recipients must correctly answer a skill-testing question. Other restrictions apply, please see your participating Kia dealer for complete contest rules. ††Flex Choice Financing for 36-, 48- and 60-month terms on approved credit through TD Financing Services is available at participating dealerships to qualified retail customers on select new 2011 and 2012 Kia vehicles. Taxes on the full negotiated purchase price are payable at the beginning of the contract term, resulting in higher payments than payments taxed on a periodic basis, and are not reflected in advertised payments. The following terms apply to TD Financing Services contracts. Vehicles are financed over a 36- 48- or 60-month term with payments amortized over a term of up to 96 months, and the pre-determined residual balance payable at the end of the contract. At contract's end, customers have the choice of: (i) returning their vehicle through a Kia dealership with no further obligations (except payment of a $199 return fee and excess wear and tear, mileage and similar charges if exceeding 24,000 km per year allowance); (ii) financing the remaining balance for the rest of the amortization period at then-current standard rates; or (iii) paying the residual balance indicated on the bill of sale in full. Some conditions apply. Flex Choice Financing offered by TD in Quebec is subject to different terms and conditions. All advertised Flex Choice Financing offers are TD offers, Delivery and destination fees (up to $1,650), other fees ($34), OMVIC fee. Environmental Fee and A/C tax (where applicable) are included, Taxes, licence, insurance, registration, excess mileage, wear and tear charges, any retailer administration fees and other applicable fees and charges are not included. Flex Choice Financing is provided on approved credit through TD Financing Services. Your Option Date is set out on your TD Financing Services Payment Advantage Loan Certificate the "certificate", which contains the terms and conditions governing your Return Value Option. If you exercise your Return Value Option, a return fee of $199 must be paid by you (not applicable in the province of Quebec) and you will be responsible for excess kilometre charges, excess wear and tear, and any other amounts as specified in your Certificate. The remaining loan balance will be subject to then-applicable TD Financing Services rates and fees. Retailers may sell for less. See participating retailers for complete details. Representative example based on 2012 Forte Sedan base model (FE54DC) 2012 Rio5 (RP55JC) with a purchase price of $17,484 ($15,584 financed at 3.39% / 2.9% APR over 60/48 months with $0 down, bi-weekly payments of $99/$108 for a cost of borrowing of $1,811/$1,181 and a total obligation of $17,795/$16,765. Includes delivery and destination fees of $1,455, other fees, OMVIC fee ($34), Environmental Fee and A/C tax (where applicable). 2012 Forte (FE54DC) includes $500 dealer contribution, $500 Flex Choice credit and $500 WINterfest Everybody Wins credit. Rio5 (RP55JC) includes $500 WINterfest Everybody Wins credit. Certain restrictions apply. Taxes, PPSA, licence, insurance, registration, excess mileage, wear and tear charges, any administration or other applicable fees or charges are not included. Dealer may sell for less. See dealer for details. ◄Cash purchase price for 2011 Optima (OP54JB) is $22,584 and includes a cash credit of $1,000 based on an MSRP of $23,584. Delivery and destination fees of $1,455, other fees of $34, OMVIC fee. Environmental Fee and A/C tax ($100, where applicable) are included. Licence, insurance, applicable taxes, PPSA, dealer administration fees of up to $699 and registration fees are extra. Retailer may sell for less. See dealer for full details. Available at participating dealers. ‡Loan credit (cash savings) for 2012 Kia Sorento LX AT (SR75K) is $1,250 (includes $500 loan credit and $750 loyalty bonus¥) and is available on purchase financing only on approved credit (OAC). Loan credit varies by model and trim. ¥Loyalty Bonus offer available on 2012 Kia Sorento/2011 Optima Hybrid at a value of $750/$1,250 for any current Kia owners towards the purchase or lease of a new 2012MY Sorento/2011MY Optima Hybrid. Loyalty Bonus offer applicable to cash purchase, lease and purchase financing only before January 3, 2012. Offer is transferrable within same household only (must provide proof of address. Limit of one bonus per customer or household. Certain restrictions apply. See dealer for details. ‡‡CO-Credit to 2011 Optima Hybrid is $1,000 and is applicable to the purchase or lease of a new 2011 Kia Optima Hybrid. Available at participating dealers. Certain restrictions apply. See dealer for details. ^2012 Kia Sorento/2012 Kia Forte/2012 Kia Optima awarded the Top Safety Pick by The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. Visit www.iihs.org for full details. *"Highway (city) fuel consumption of Kia Motors Corporation's Everybody's Fuel Consumption Guide. Some conditions apply to the $500 Grad Rebate Program and $750 Kia Mobility Program. See dealer for details. Information in this advertisement is believed to be accurate at the time of print. For more information on our 5-year warranty coverage, visit kia.ca or call us at 1-877-542-2086. Kia Canada is the official automotive sponsor of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD Canada). KIA and Flex Choice are trademarks of Kia Motors Corporation.