

WHEELS

SUPPLEMENT TO THE CANADIAN CHAMPION FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2009

Economical cars are Kia's 'Forte'

By Lorne Drury
Metroland Newspapers
Carguide Magazine

Building compact, economical cars has been Kia's forte over the years and for 2010 the Korean manufacturer has added a new Forte to its sales arsenal.

The 2010 Kia Forte replaces the Spectra in the Kia lineup and brings a touch of styling pizzazz that is gradually evolving for Kia, as it becomes more of a global player in the automotive marketplace.

Peter Schreyer, who earlier designed the Audi TT and Volkswagen New Beetle models, now heads the Kia world design team.

The recently-launched Soul, which was the first Korean vehicle to win a prestigious Red Dot award for design, gives an indication that Kia wants to be noticed on the world stage—a change from earlier offerings where bland might best describe most Kia products.

Today, Kia has an ambitious goal to be the "design choice brand without high product pricing" and the Forte is a great example of the current philosophy.

While not an in-your-face design, it is clean and attractive and a worthy challenger for the class leaders, Honda Civic, Toyota Corolla and Mazda3.

This is an extremely important vehicle for Kia in the most competitive class in the Canadian market. In fact, six of the top 10 cars sold in Canada compete directly with the Forte. And almost 50 per cent of all cars sold in this country are compact models, with the Civic, Corolla and Mazda3 accounting for about 40 per cent of that total.

Heavy competition indeed, but Kia



TOP: A front-engine, front-wheel drive compact, the Forte enters the most competitive segment in the Canadian market, accounting for nearly 50 per cent of all vehicles sold.

BOTTOM: The Forte comes well equipped, with a host of standard features including Bluetooth technology.

has high hopes for the Forte, a five-passenger sedan, starting at \$15,695.

"We'd like to be included amongst that elite group in the marketplace, said Brian Kim, National Manager Product Planning for Kia Canada.

The Hyundai Elantra and Chevrolet Cobalt/Pontiac G5 rounded out the top five on the Canadian sales charts in first quarter of 2009 and Kim said Kia hopes the Forte will break into that top-selling group. The current Spectra is not even in the top 10.

Available in three trim levels (LX, EX and SX), the Forte has one of the roomiest interiors in its class. Built on

an entirely new platform, the Forte has a longer wheelbase than the outgoing Spectra, which allowed engineers to increase the size of the interior package with room for five adults. The longer wheelbase also improves driving dynamics, while wider front and rear tracks increase stability on the road.

Trunk space is also up 17 per cent compared with the Spectra to 415 litres, the largest trunk capacity in its class. Comparatively, the 2009 Honda Civic has 340 litres, the 2010 Toyota Corolla 348 litres and the 2010 Mazda3

335 litres.

Built on a front-wheel drive unibody frame, Forte has an independent front suspension with MacPherson struts and a stabilizer bar and a torsion beam rear suspension with struts and coil springs.

Two brand new engines power the Forte. The LX and EX get a 2.0-litre DOHC in-line four-cylinder, producing 157 hp and 144 lb/ft of torque. The top-of-the-line SX has a 2.4-litre in-line four-

cylinder engine, with 174 hp and 169 lb/ft of torque. Standard on the LX and EX is a five-speed manual transmission or an optional four-speed automatic. The SX gets a standard six-speed manual or an optional five-speed automatic with Sportmatic sequential manual shift.

The mid-level EX (starting at \$17,995) is expected to be the "bread and butter" trim level in the Forte lineup, while the SX (\$20,995) is expected to make up 15-20 per cent of sales.

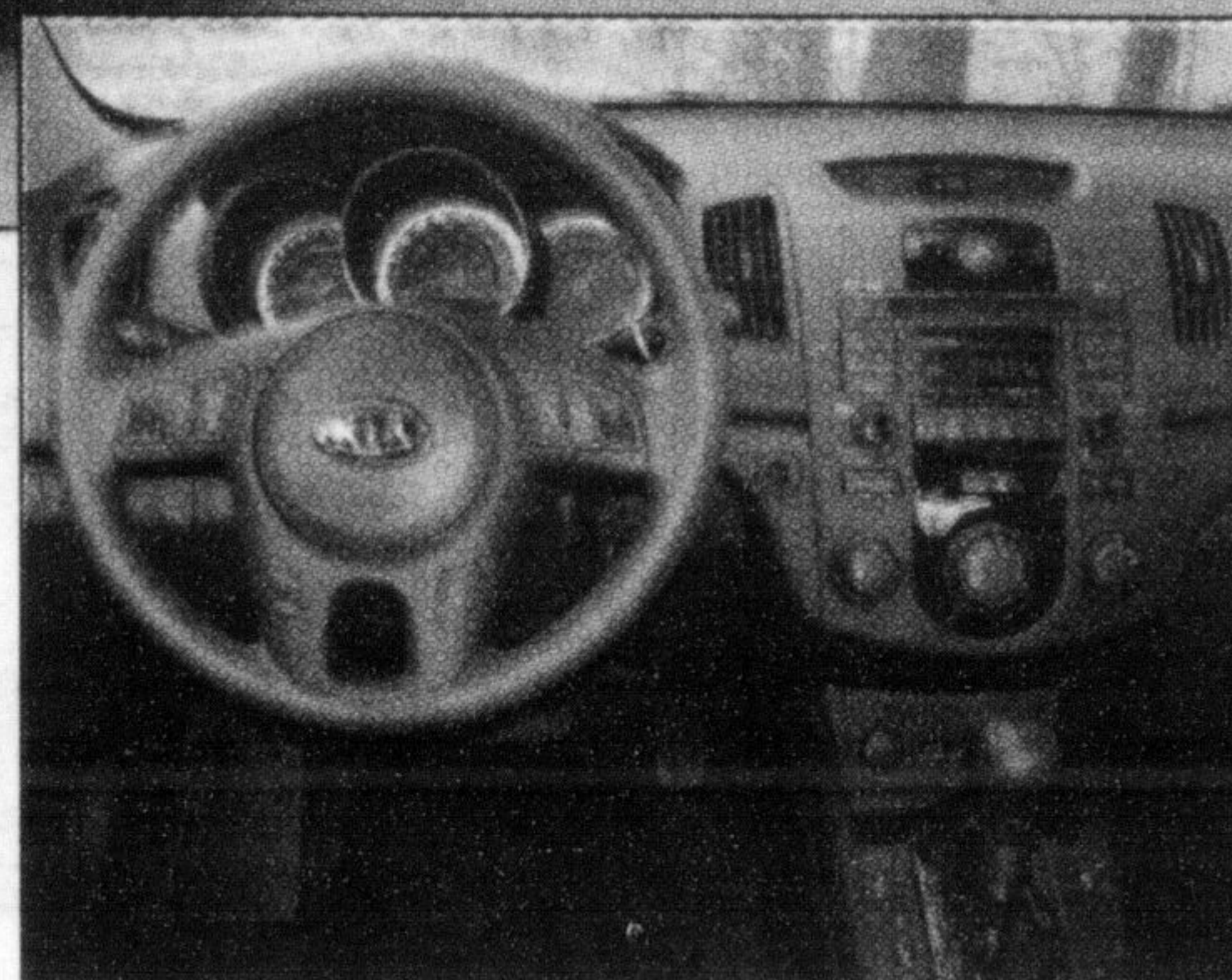
Even at the entry level, the Forte is well equipped with six airbags (dual front, dual front side and dual curtain), four-wheel disc brakes, ABS, power windows/locks/heated mirrors, steering wheel-mounted audio controls and a four-speaker AM/FM/CD/MP3 audio system with auxiliary and USB input ports. The four-speed automatic adds \$1,200 to the price, while automatic, manual air conditioning and keyless entry adds \$2,500 to the base price.

Move up to the EX and you get standard features such as keyless entry, electronic stability control, 16-inch alloy wheels, heated front seats, manual air conditioning, steering wheel mounted cruise control, telescopic, leather-wrapped steering wheel, exterior chrome door handles and windshield wiper de-icer.

The SX adds 17-inch alloy wheels, automatic climate control, metallic interior accents, leather seats, alloy sport pedals, Sirius satellite radio, power sunroof and trip computer.

At the launch, I was only able to sample an EX trim model with automatic during a drive up to cottage country north of Toronto. The 2.0-litre I-4 engine has plenty of zip with its 156 hp, tops among the main contenders in the compact class.

• see FORCE on page A38



MAZDA GENUINE
PARTS • SERVICE • ACCESSORIES

KEEPING THE
EMOTION IN MOTION

Promo code: 0708209CH

ZOOM-ZO
ZOOM-ZOOM
ZOOM-ZOOM

We have a special offer waiting just for you!
Simply bring in this ad & save 15% off your next
purchase of any Genuine Mazda Accessory!
Hurry in... this offer expires August 31 2009.

Achilles Mazda

Acton

519.853.0200

866.620.3248

www.achillesmazda.ca