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New 2012 Fiat 500 - SUCCESSFULLY TAILORED FOR THE U.S. MARKET

February 22, 2011, Auburn Hills, Mich. - Every detail of the new 2012 Fiat 500 has been thoroughly examined and improved to successfully adapt the vehicle for North American customers and roads.

"The Fiat 500 is an icon of efficient personal transportation, and for its U.S. premiere, we adapted the entire vehicle while retaining its Italian essence," said Doug Betts, Senior Vice President - Quality, Chrysler Group LLC. "The Fiat 500 is an excellent package to start with. As we enhanced it to match North American driving conditions and consumer expectations, we also made sure to preserve the world-class fit-and-finish standards achieved by Fiat's development team."

The new Fiat 500 adds refinement for American drivers and maintains world-class dynamics

Taking lessons learned from the European-produced model, the new 2012 Fiat 500 starts with a redesigned body structure to meet North American regulatory requirements for exceptional strength, crashworthiness and performance.

A specially engineered suspension delivers tailored performance for the U.S. market. A redesigned twist-beam rear suspension features retuned bushings with more built-in roll stiffness, delivering ride comfort and handling suited for American drivers. Revised front-suspension geometry reduces dive during braking and features an increased front-stabilizer bar rate for reduced body roll and added driver confidence. In addition, retuned twin-tube shock absorbers and springs, all-new structural sub-frame brace, upgraded upper-strut mounts and retuned control-arm bushings make the U.S. market Fiat 500 as nimble as its European cousin while delivering a more comfortable and quiet interior cabin.

The new Fiat 500 also features a quiet cabin, thanks to a newly designed acoustics package. New floor, tunnel, trunk and instrument panel sound-deadening materials reduce road noise. New body and door seals, along with foam-in-place carpet, provide an additional level of interior quietness. An all-new 1.4-liter MultiAir[®] engine cover with an acoustic-dampening design further minimizes engine noise into the cabin. New 15-inch and 16-inch tires reduce road noise, and premium hydraulic powertrain mounts minimize engine vibrations into the cabin.

The Fiat 500's new four-wheel anti-lock disc brake system (ABS) features redesigned front calipers for the best in brake performance, while new organic brake linings reduce brake dust and noise. New brake rotors feature an anti-corrosion coating for enhanced durability and smoother operation. A revised electronic stability control (ESC) system is tuned for the Fiat 500's new all-season tires.

With its new efficient 1.4-liter MultiAir engine capable up to 38 highway mpg, Fiat engineers designed the 2012 model with a larger 10.5-gallon fuel tank for extended driving range. An enhanced heating and cooling system was designed to be environmentally friendly with lower CO2 emissions while providing the performance needed for North American climate extremes.

As new Fiat 500 owners will want to keep their car shining, new wheels are designed to avoid unsightly curb rash from car wash tire guides. In addition, a new rear wiper is designed to protect against car wash damage while providing a wider swept area. At the front, new windshield wipers feature a flexible silicone uni-blade design for improved all-season functionality.

Inside the 2012 Fiat 500, redesigned driver and front-passenger seats feature a new armrest and seat cushion design for improved comfort on long journeys. Getting in and out for rear-seat passengers is now easier thanks to an easy-entry system designed into the new front seats. New heated seat controls have been relocated to the lower instrument panel for added convenience, while larger heated seat elements provide front-passenger comfort in colder

weather. Delivering improved durability, resistance to scratches and a better aesthetic, metal seat backs have been replaced with carpet.

For easier operation and to keep the driver's eyes on the road ahead, the Fiat 500's steering wheel features new cruise control and steering-wheel-mounted audio controls. In addition, revised steering effort calibration makes parking easier while increasing stability at highway speeds (against crosswinds).

For high-performance sound, a new BOSE® Energy Efficient Series (EES) premium audio system features six premium speakers and a subwoofer. For the best music, entertainment and information from coast to coast, SIRIUS Satellite Radio with more than 130 channels is now available on the 2012 Fiat 500.

Putting the Fiat 500 to the test

Fiat 500 engineers tested the new 2012 model for more than 4 million miles during its reliability and durability evaluations at the Chrysler Group's scientific labs, proving grounds and on public roads in various climates.

Public road reliability testing, initially done by Fiat prior to the 500's European launch, is being conducted again in North America to validate the recent engineering changes as well as to collect feedback from American drivers. The fleet of early production Fiat 500s is being tested day and night on various road surfaces in different North American climates to identify any potential reliability issues. The drivers also scrutinize functional aspects of each vehicle, such as heating and ventilation systems, storage compartments and window operation.

While this testing is overseen by the Engineering team the test drivers are not part of the Fiat 500 development team, and most do not have engineering experience. The test drivers were intentionally selected to reflect the diversity of American customers of different ages, sizes and ethnicities. The development team reviews the test results each day and makes any necessary adjustments to ensure the quality of customer vehicles.

"The new 2012 Fiat 500 has been intelligently adapted for the North American market," Betts added. "Our customers may not know the research and validation we've done, but they will love the one-of-a-kind driving and ownership experience - and that's our real goal."

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