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2001 PT Cruiser Exterior Combines Modern-Day Efficiency with Twist of Rebellion

The segment-busting 2001 Chrysler PT Cruiser's road presence was created with the goal of combining a hot-rod attitude with contemporary flare. This blend of nostalgic yet contemporary design has created a shock wave that continues to rip through traditional vehicle segments.

"Chrysler PT Cruiser embodies a design that evokes emotion in people all around the world," said Tom Gale, Executive Vice President, DaimlerChrysler Product Strategy and Design, General Manager -- Passenger Car Operations. "Its distinct appearance is unmatched by any vehicle on the road today."

The design imperative, "form follows function," establishes a new standard, combining emotional and rational consumer needs. The unique proportions of the fenders, roofline and high beltline, accented by three side windows, create the distinctive side profile of PT Cruiser.

"Chrysler PT Cruiser is a celebration of automotive heritage coupled with innovation, efficiency and a twist of rebellion," said Bryan Nesbitt, Chrysler PT Cruiser exterior designer.

The large fenders provide one of the key nostalgic elements of the vehicle, bringing back positive memories of classic designs from the 1930s and 1940s. This is further emphasized through the flared sills, evocative of running boards seen on cars from that era.

"During exterior development, we quickly gave the project a code name - 'Street Smart,'" said Nesbitt. "The code summarizes the look and feel of PT Cruiser. The vehicle has a bold presence, coupled with an intelligent use of space, to provide an unparalleled degree of fashion and function."

The roof rises toward the rear for both aesthetic and functional reasons. The slant of the roofline gives the vehicle its "hot rod" posture, or attitude. The practical benefit result of this design is more head room for rear passengers as well as increased cargo space.

The proportions of body-side sheet metal and side glass communicate a visual strength and lower overall appearance. The blacked out B- and C-pillars blend with the window graphics, enhancing the visual proportion of the vehicle.

"The vehicle stance promotes confidence and durability based on its stance," said Nesbitt. "However, there is a level of refinement through the Chrysler brand design signature of ornamentation such as chrome door handles, winged badges and chrome wheels, the PT Cruiser reveals inspired refinement."

The body is inset from the wheels and fenders, giving the PT Cruiser a "wheels to the corner" stance and proportion. This enhances stability and encourages superb handling characteristics, while creating a confident visual stance.

The front fenders are wrapped tightly around the wheels and draw away from the hood, causing the wheels to appear larger, while the fenders appear lower and wider. The head lamps were designed as close to the front wheels as possible, making the vehicle appear smaller by reducing the front overhang. The headlamp design and pronounced grille gives the vehicle a face of reliance and strength.

Although Chrysler has become known for its 'cab-forward' sedan designs, the position of the windshield of the PT Cruiser is more upright, giving the vehicle an appearance that's more similar to rear-wheel drive vehicles and trucks. The truck-like, accented front and rear bumpers bestow a sturdy, protective feeling to the vehicle.

In the rear, PT Cruiser has an aggressive slant to the hatchback profile, giving the entire vehicle a look of motion and direction. Bullet-shaped tail lamps complete the reflection of unbridled American design, past and present. The Chrysler winged medallion is featured prominently on the front, and is incorporated into the rear door latch, as a final exclamation to the unconventional soul of the Chrysler brand.

The accented front and rear bumpers give the vehicle a sturdy, protective feeling. Bullet- shaped tail lamps were developed to reflect the design cues of the 1930s and 1940s design, with a contemporary flare.

"PT Cruiser has a distinct personality that envelops a variety of eras," Gale said. "I may see one era, someone may see something else, but one thing is certain -- everyone who sees it has an extremely emotional response to PT Cruiser."

A broad palette of exterior colors include:

Aztec Yellow (2001 normal model year); Bright Silver Metallic; Black; Inferno Red; Patriot Blue; Aquamarine Metallic; Taupe Frost Metallic; Stone White; Deep Cranberry; and, Shale Green Metallic.

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