

Design Ins and Outs Of The 2009 Toyota Venza

08/11/2008 Torrance, CA

August 11, 2008 - Torrance, CA - The 2009 Toyota Venza, scheduled to go on sale later this year, is the first example of Toyota's new direction in passenger car design combining elegance, innovation, comfort and utility.

"We wanted to create something entirely different," said Kevin Hunter, president of Toyota's Calty Design Research in Newport Beach, Calif., and Ann Arbor, Mich. "Not an SUV, not a wagon, not a coupe and not a sedan. We aimed for a more road-focused vehicle and sporty direction."

Venza is based on the FT-SX concept vehicle that debuted at the 2005 Detroit Auto Show. With an overwhelmingly positive response to the show vehicle, Toyota decided to develop Venza with a distinctly American plan.

Toyota's U.S. design and engineering teams worked together to bring this bold design to production. It was one of the first times an American styling group created an overall design concept that engineers would follow for development. Venza will be assembled at Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Ky., home of the Camry, Solara and Avalon. More than 70 percent of its components will come from North American suppliers.

A new genre in personal transportation, Venza incorporates SUV utility and roominess, while maintaining passenger car essentials, such as ease of ingress/egress, performance, a lower, sleek side profile with aerodynamic lines, and unrivaled interior features to deliver optimal comfort.

"We used Toyota's design philosophy, 'Vibrant Clarity' to create a more exciting drive for the customer while still maintaining its high functionality," explained Hunter.

Exterior Design Features

The exterior styling was directed by Calty Project Chief Designer, Ian Cartabiano, in Newport Beach. From a design perspective, Venza achieves aerodynamic sculpted lines that not only look elegant, but help to increase fuel economy by reducing wind resistance. Freeform geometrics define the integration of fluid surfaces defined by smooth lines, which promote even airflow and reduce turbulence. Venza's 20-inch wheels, stylish backlight and integrated aero spoiler make a bold, sporty statement.

"The overall stance of the vehicle is very strong, with the wheels placed out to make it look sure-footed and glued to the ground," said Cartabiano.

Interior Design Features

Venza's impressive "look-at-me" exterior styling leads to a thoughtful interior with surprising roominess, comfort and utility. Integral to the vehicle's design was the idea to make the journey as rewarding as the destination. Interior features make the cabin seem spacious and comfortable with plenty of storage. Calty Ann Arbor's Project Chief Designer, Ben Jimenez, integrated key design features such as a floating concept of the instrument cluster to create a 60/60 center dashboard.

"Most car interiors are like dual cockpits, where both driver and front passengers feel as if they only have access to 40 percent of the available space," Jimenez said.

"The flow of Venza's center console is a bit of an optical illusion," he continued. "Both driver and passenger will feel as if 60 percent of the space is in their personal zone."

Available in front-and all-wheel drive, Venza will be powered by a choice of engines – a V6 or an all-new four-cylinder. Both engines will be mated to a six-speed automatic transmission. Twenty-inch wheels will only be available on V6 models.

With an innovative design direction and impressive driving features, Venza represents the future of Toyota design.

"We need to continue to develop products that are smart and practical," explains Hunter. "But, given the competitive landscape of today's marketplace, they must also evoke an emotional response."

Check out a time-lapsed Toyota Venza design sketch video at: <http://youtube.com/toyotausa>

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