

All-New, 7-Seat Ford C-Max to Join North American Lineup in 2011, Building Small Car Range

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DEARBORN -- Ford Motor Company has confirmed that the new 7-seat C-MAX introduced today at the Frankfurt Motor Show will arrive in North America beginning late 2011.

In North America, the “whitespace” vehicle will be one of up to 10 unique models the company will create from an all-new global C-car platform developed under its One Ford strategy.

The all-new, next-generation Ford Focus sedan and five-door hatchback models are scheduled to launch late in calendar year 2010 in the United States.

With the market introduction of the 7-seat C-MAX in late 2011, Ford will offer customers in North America three distinct models in the important compact segment, which is expected to show continued growth in the coming years.

According to Ford analysts, small cars in the B- and C-segments accounted for less than 15 percent of the U.S. market in 2004. In year-to-date sales through August 2009 however, the small car segment has reached nearly 22 percent of total industry sales – and further gains are expected.

“Consumers are seeking uncompromised vehicles offering value for the money, and C-MAX squarely hits those targets,” said Derrick Kuzak, group vice president, Ford Global Product Development. “The Focus C-MAX will be great to look at, great to sit in and great to drive, bringing Ford DNA to a new market segment in the form of an aspirational, fuel-efficient people carrier.”

Exterior design elevates segment

The new Ford Focus C-MAX demonstrates that compact, 7-seat vehicles can be stylish and desirable while still delivering outstanding space and functionality.

“The C-MAX brings more emotive, dynamic design to the segment, along with a great driving experience,” said Mark Fields, Ford’s president of The Americas. “People will gravitate toward C-MAX for the way it looks and drives, and not just because it’s practical and versatile – and that’s going to help us reach a whole new group of customers.”

Bold exterior and interior designs have been created using the latest evolution of Ford’s “kinetic design” form language, building on the themes established in recent product introductions like the hugely successful European-developed Fiesta, Kuga and Mondeo ranges.

Kinetic design elements applied to the new C-MAX include the dynamic, rising beltline, full sculpted surfaces, bold wheel lips, strong athletic shoulders supported by a prominent undercut line and the distinctive kick-up of the window graphic at the C-pillar.

The front end design also features Ford’s signature trapezoidal lower grille – with a special “piano black” finish on the Frankfurt Show vehicle.

Offering seating for up to seven, the C-MAX destined for North America features a high roofline and thin pillars to emphasize the generous room and visibility in the cabin. Twin sliding doors are neatly integrated, with the rail concealed by the undercut line on the shoulder of the vehicle.

Stylish, modern interior

The new C-MAX interior mirrors the dynamic and modern character of the exterior, complete with muscular, expressive shapes and bold graphics.

Key design features include the taut, wing-like form of the upper instrument panel (IP), which reaches out to the sides of the interior. A dramatic sweeping form connects the IP with the center console.

The cockpit provides a commanding, raised driving position with high-mounted shifter and center console inspired by the acclaimed layout in the new Fiesta. Carefully designed storage areas are located throughout the cabin, including generous door pockets, a large glove box and additional compartments and cup holders in the center console.

Ingenious 7-seat layout

To maximize the versatility of the 7-seat layout, Ford engineers developed a new seat-folding mechanism for the three second-row seats. This mechanism allows the center seat to fold quickly and easily under one of the two outboard seats, creating a handy walk-through space between them.

This walk-through space allows passengers to access the third row without having to disturb the two outer seats, which is particularly helpful when those positions are occupied by child safety seats. Owners have the option of using the convenient 2+2+2 seating layout or switching to a full 7-seater when required.

The second- and third-row seats also have been cleverly engineered so they can be folded to create a flat load floor, regardless of how many seats remain in use. All of the folding mechanisms are designed so they operate with just one hand.

New generation of global Ford C-segment cars

The C-MAX is the first of a new generation of global C-segment cars scheduled for introduction by Ford over the next several years. This series of new models will include the launch globally of the next-generation Ford Focus beginning late 2010.

The new C-car family is the result of an unprecedented global development program and is loaded with an array of advanced vehicle technologies that will enhance safety, convenience, comfort and driver satisfaction. Up to 10 models and more than 2 million vehicles per year based on this platform will be sold by Ford around the world when the entire launch is complete.

“By concentrating resources and making big commitments to the small car segments in North America, Ford is proving it’s doing business differently,” Fields said. “Following the launch of the Fiesta and the next-generation Focus in 2010, and the launch of the BEV Focus and a 7-seat model in 2011, Ford will offer customers at least six small cars, and they’re going to be truly exciting designs packed with the latest vehicle technologies.”