

Portland Observer Auto Review

News and reviews on
new motor vehicles

BY
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2007 KIA Rondo EX

The Kia Rondo is a new vehicle in this year's line up - the Kia version of a crossover vehicle. There is no match for seven-passenger transportation in a small, safe, low-cost, high-mileage package, and with today's gas prices it's looking like a good alternative.

The Rondo EX adds a higher-grade cloth interior with leather trim, 17-inch alloy wheels, chrome grille, door handles and molding, fog lamps, heated mirrors, windshield de-icer, leather-wrapped steering wheel and shift knob, lights for the vanity mirrors, and a CD/MP3 six-speaker sound system. Optional is a package with a

10-speaker Infinity sound system and a sunroof (\$1200).

The 2.4-liter inline four-cylinder that comes standard makes 162 horsepower and is paired with a four-speed automatic transmission with a manual mode called Sportmatic. The optional 2.7-liter dohc V6 produces 182-horsepower and comes with a five-speed Sportmatic.

The Rondo looks like a cross between a minivan and a five-door hatchback, and not like a small SUV. It has a clean design, with a nicely sloped hood, trapezoidal headlamps with four smooth corners and a tidy grille. The first impression would not



Specifications: 2.4 Liter Engine Fuel Injection 4 cylinders, catalyzt; 4 speed automatic transmission; 17-25 city mpg, 24-34 highway mpg, \$21,995 MSRP

have one believing that it can fit seven passengers.

It offers plenty of room for passengers to fit comfortably, with plenty of elbow room to spare. The doors open wide and close easily. It is a great alternative to the minivan for those who may have senior parents or children to haul around. The third row seat is a little tight in the leg room for a larger passenger. The seats fold down easily for plenty of cargo to fit.

The Rondo gives you the comfort, flexibility and spaciousness of an SUV, along with the precise handling and fuel efficiency of a sedan - all at an affordable price. This is the vehicle to test drive if you are looking for an alternative to the bigger crossover vehicles.

2007 Ford Fusion SEL V6 AWD

The 2007 Ford Fusion is an excellent choice among midsize sedans and should not be overlooked. The Fusion was introduced as an all-new vehicle for 2006 and it's a fantastic car. It handles well, it's comfortable, and it delivers good value. The SEL (\$19,250) adds automatic headlights, 17-inch wheels, and automatic temperature control, upgraded cloth interior, and upgraded wood or piano black interior trim, leather wrapped steering wheel and an analog clock. The SEL is also available with the V6 (\$21,975), and with the V6 and all-wheel drive (\$23,825).



Specifications: 3.0L 4V V6 Duratec Engine; 6-Speed Auto Transmission; 16-22 city mpg, 22-30 highway mpg; \$28,820 MSRP.

When the Fusion was first introduced, Ford executives said its three-bar horizontal grille would become the signature styling cue for Ford cars. Since then it has been seen on concept vehicles, as well

and the new Edge crossover vehicle and will show up on the new Focus. This distinctive grille catches your eye on the road, distinguishing the Fusion from other mid-size sedans. It is the vehicle between the focus

and the Five-hundred.

The Ford Fusion grille is not the only feature that sets it apart from other mid-size sedans in its class; the sides of the car are crisply separated from the hood, roof and rear deck. It has an aggressive angular body I find to be upscale and a success for Ford.

New for SE and SEL models for 2007 is a front passenger seatback that folds down, making it possible to haul extra-long items. And heated front seats are an option on SEL models with leather seating. Also a new option is All Wheel Drive on the Fusion.

Fusion shares its basic architecture with the Mercury Milan and the premium-midsize-class Lincoln MKZ. Fusion offers S, SE, and SEL models. The SEL come with the 4-cyl or a 221-hp V6. The 4-cyl uses a 5-speed manual transmission or optional 5-speed automatic. The

V6 has a 6-speed automatic. The V6 models are available with all-wheel drive, Four-wheel disc brakes are standard; ABS is optional. Traction control is standard on AWD models, optional on front-drive V6 Fusions. Front side airbags and curtain side airbags are now standard; they had been optional. A sunroof and leather upholstery is optional for SE and SEL.

The interior of the Fusion has a European influence with a soft touch interior found in luxury vehicles. The console offers straight forward controls that are easy to operate. A convenient storage bin on top of the dashboard features a large clamshell lid and it's big enough to hold a phone or small camera as well as maps and the like. The center console, door pockets and front seatback pockets provide additional storage. The trunk of the Fusion offers a large, flat, low

area with plenty of room for items like groceries, golf bag and the kids' athletic equipments.

The Fusion delivers responsive handling, solid high-speed stability and a nice, smooth ride. Its nice combination of ride and handling are benefits of the rigid structure. The all-wheel-drive Fusion offers excellent handling stability and grip in adverse conditions. The rack-and-pinion steering is precise with just the right amount of weight to make the driver feel connected to the road without being edgy. The six-speed automatic transmission shifts smoothly.

The 2007 Ford Fusion delivers sporty handling with comfort and value. Its crisp lines, big headlamps and a bold, chrome grille give the Fusion a distinctive appearance. The all-wheel drive handles excellent in wet weather.

'Roots Festival'

continued ▲ from Front

and rock band Ozomatli last year, but managed a successful festival anyway.

"What we found out when Ozomatli fell through was that we didn't need them, because it's all about the local talent," says Makerusa Porotesano, a north Portlander who is president of the Pacific Islander Club and this year's Roots Festival coordinator.

Back again this week, the second annual celebration of diversity has expanded to two days of education and entertainment.

The keynote speaker, Renee Mitchell, columnist for the Oregonian, will serve as the keynote speaker at 7 p.m. on Thursday in the PSU Smith Center.

"We want everyone to join us in having fun while learning about the importance of diversity," said Porotesano. "I believe that bringing people together from all different cultural

backgrounds makes us a much stronger community."

Organizers from 16 of PSU's multicultural clubs hope to bring students and the community together to celebrate diversity by exploring the crossroads at which people of various racial, ethnic, sexual and political backgrounds find themselves.

"I am excited about the Roots Festival," said PSU President Daniel Bernstine, an African American who is departing PSU for a Pennsylvania law council. "It gives us all a chance to celebrate the diversity that is PSU."

Various media will be explored by artists and academics, including film, music and print publications.

This year's festival begins Thursday at 10 a.m. in the South Park Blocks. All events are free, except for a \$3 global dance party at the Native American Student and Community Center to conclude the festival late on Friday night.

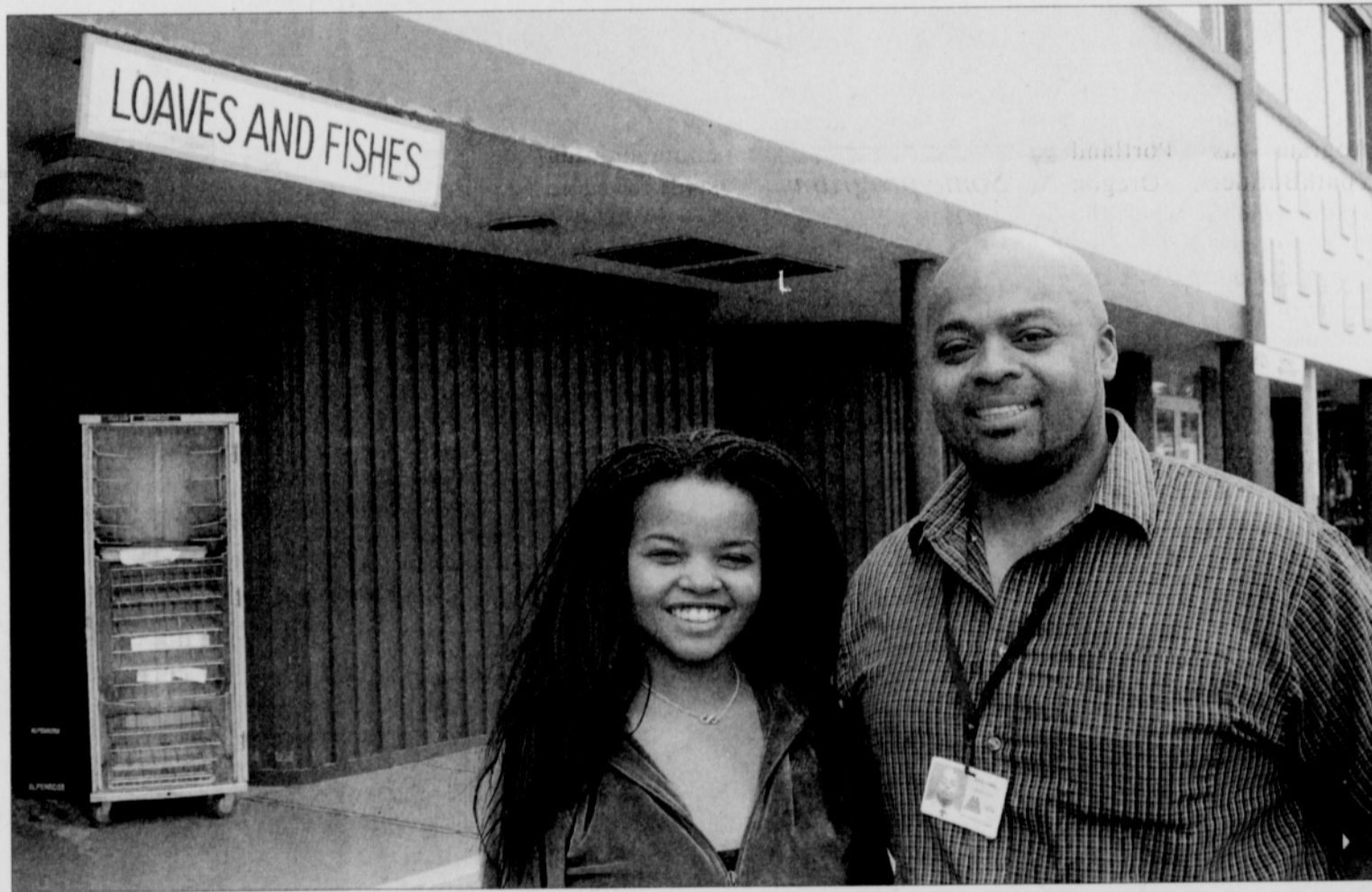


PHOTO BY SARAH BLOUNT/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Monique Hedmann joins Martin Luther King Jr. Loaves and Fishes Center Manager David Lomax just before a Friday delivery. The hot and cold food delivery program helps feed more than 200 seniors throughout north and northeast Portland.

Meals on Wheels Keeps Rolling

continued ▲ from Front

seniors is only going to increase, with a huge effect on society unless we do something now," she said.

The MLK Meals on Wheels is looking for more volunteers for 12 delivery routes. Volunteers gather meals at the center and then follow a mapped-out route with 12 to 15 seniors that takes about an hour to complete.

MLK center manager David Lomax said volunteers must only have a vehicle, a valid driver's license and insurance.

Lomax said the two years he has been with the center has made him familiar with nearly every senior who receives meals.

In contrast, he said that as an engineering student at Portland Community College he wasn't aware there was such a large senior community.

Now Lomax and staff are brainstorming ideas for upcoming programs that will educate people about Loaves and Fishes. They're

planning a Hawaiian luau and several summer barbecues, and will partner with the Urban League of Portland for a jambalaya fundraiser in August.

But when it comes to the simple, daily act of delivering meals to seniors, the rewards can sometimes mean saving a life.

That's because Meals on

Hedmann said. "We can see what's going on and do something about it."

As former artists, bankers, bookkeepers and caretakers themselves, these seniors benefit from the program in many ways.

Take Manye Main for example. Almost 90, Main receives her meals in her apartment near PCC, where

began receiving her meals, her health improved and she began to go to the center for lunch. Eventually Overton became head of the Loaves and Fishes steering committee, a group that comes up with ideas and plans for fundraisers.

"She's just a firecracker," Hedmann said. "She's always looking out for everyone else, making sure other seniors are taken care of."

Meals on Wheels is also looking for senior volunteers for their steering committee that meets once a month, as well as volunteers of all ages at the center's kitchen.

Hedmann noted that the senior population will double and triple in certain parts of the country over the next 20 years.

"It's so important right now for our generation to get used to interacting with seniors," she said. "Right now there is a generational divide, but we've got to meet in the middle and learn from each other."

To find out more about Meals on Wheels, call 503-988-5211 or visit loavesandfishesonline.org.

The number of homebound seniors is only going to increase, with a huge effect on society unless we do something now.

— Monique Hedmann, Meals on Wheels coordinator

Wheels volunteers also act as watchdogs. Drivers are encouraged to keep tabs on living conditions and the health of recipients. If something is wrong or conditions are unsanitary, Meals on Wheels can refer seniors to a network of social agencies.

"That is another very valuable thing about Meals on Wheels,"

she has two parakeets to keep her company. She said she seldom has visitors and looks forward to volunteers, who have always treated her kindly.

"Usually they're like a breath of sunshine that comes in," Main said.

And sometimes a nutritious meal is all it takes to revive a person's health. When senior Lyda Overton

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