

# Portland Observer Auto Review

News and reviews on new motor vehicles

## 2007 Kia Rio5 SX The Bold Sporty Hatchback

BY KATHLEEN CARR

Being practical doesn't mean you have to take the joy out of life. That's the thinking behind the Rio5. With a host of standard features, and class-leading roominess, Rio5 likes a good time as much as you do.

Once the cheapest car in America, the Kia Rio is a subcompact sedan and hatchback designed for budget drivers. Its small size makes good use of its 4-cylinder engine and the sporty hatch come standard with enough features to make you forget this is an economy car. With the new Rio, Kia's engineers and designers produced a small car that's pleasant to drive as well as loaded with features, especially those of the safety nature.

For 2007, the Kia Rio family grows with the addition of the Rio5 SX five-door (a four-door hatchback). In terms of style, the Rio5, with its European-flavored looks, has it hands down over the more mainstream sedan and offers the additional cargo-carrying versatility of its roomy hatchback body.

The five-door Rio5 add a bit of styling



Specifications: 1.6-Liter 16-Valve, 4-Cylinder, 110-hp @ 107 lb-ft torque engine; 4-Speed Automatic transmission; 29-City 38-Highway MPG; \$16,260 MSRP

flair to the compact car segment. The front end features a black mesh grille, black air dam insert, and more pronounced hood lines. The side flanks add sporty wheel flares, and the rear end has been reshaped for a cleaner appearance. The hatchback features fog lamps, a rear spoiler, 15-inch alloy wheels and power steering. For 2007, 16-inch alloy wheels are optional. Regardless of which Rio you choose, the car comes with Kia's 10-year/100,000-mile powertrain warranty.

A 1.6-liter inline-4 with 110 horsepower and 107 pound-feet of torque powers every 2007 Kia Rio. All trims come standard with a five-speed manual transmission, while a four-speed automatic is optional on all but the base sedan. Although the Rio is more powerful than most of its competitors, its acceleration with the automatic is slightly sub par. A Rio5 SX we tested took 11.5 seconds to run to 60 mph. However, the automatic does provide swift, well-timed shifts.

The 1.6-liter provides decent low-end pull, although the engine gets noisy at higher rpm. The Rio's ride is smooth and stable, and even at 75 mph, the cabin is hushed. The suspension isn't as composed as we'd like, though, as large impacts tend to shudder through the cabin. Pushed through corners, the Rio responds with predictable body roll and unexpectedly crisp steering. The Rio5 has an independent front suspension and a semi-independent rear suspension.

The 2007 Kia Rio comes standard with front-seat side airbags, full-length side curtain airbags and three-point belts in all seating positions. The LX and SX trims also come with adjustable rear headrests. Antilock disc brakes are optional on those higher trim levels as well. In NHTSA frontal-impact crash testing, the Rio scored four stars (out of five) for driver protection and five stars for passenger protection. In the side-impact test, the Rio earned four stars for front-occupant protection and three stars for the rear.

The interior of the 2007 Kia Rio represents a big improvement over the older, pre-2006 models. This latest Rio has a nicely contoured dashboard with a generous binnacle over the instrument panel, which includes a tachometer even on the base model. The radio is well positioned in the center stack with large buttons and

knobs for changing stations or volume. Three big knobs for the climate control are mounted on a bulge in the center that brings them closer to the driver's hands. A chrome Kia logo, added to the steering wheel center for '07, brightens what as a bit of a dull spot in last year's model.

Up to five people can fit inside the Rio5. Standard equipment includes an eight-way manually adjustable driver's seat, variable intermittent wipers and a rear-window defroster. Additional features include air conditioning, a CD stereo with four speakers, a tilt steering column, and a 60/40-split, folding rear seat. For 2007, all Rio5s gain upgraded seat fabric, dashboard chrome accents and red stitching on the steering wheel, shift knob and door panels. An optional Power Package includes remote keyless entry and power windows, locks and mirrors.

Unlike subcompacts of the past, the 2007 Kia Rio is a car you can be happy living with. We found the Rio5 SX the most enjoyable with its combination of hatchback versatility and sporty/luxury touches, great fuel efficiency -- and it includes the generous five-year/60,000 mile warranty coupled with a 10-year/100,000 mile powertrain warranty; all wrapped up in a bold sporty package for under \$20,000. The 2007 Kia Rio5 SX is an exceptional value in this segment.

# SPORTS

## Rockies, Red Sox in World Series

### Boston to open series at home

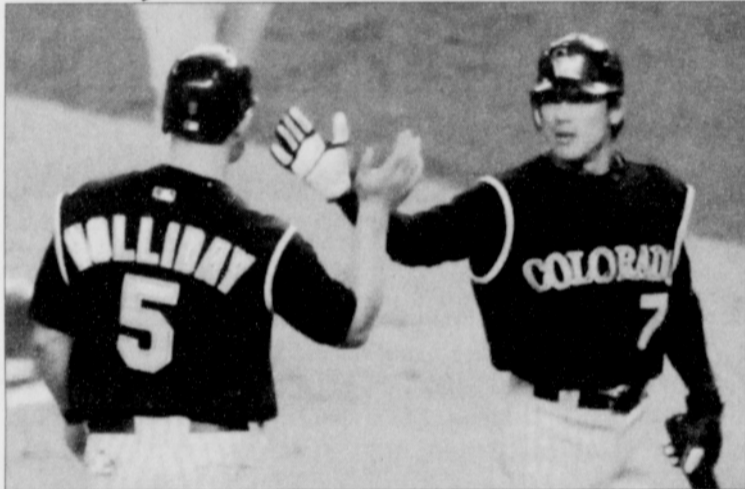
(AP) — Don't expect Matt Holliday and the Colorado Rockies to be intimidated by the Green Monster.

Back in June, long before their historic surge to an unlikely National League pennant, the baby-faced Rockies roared into Fenway Park and took two of three from the Red Sox — outscoring them 20-5.

Colorado handed Josh Beckett his first loss, got a grand slam from Garrett Atkins and a nice outing from Jeff Francis. So the Rockies already know they can play with the big boys from the American League.

Now, they get another chance to show their stuff — on baseball's biggest stage — when the World Series opens Wednesday night in Boston. (It'll be on TV in Portland at 5 p.m. on Fox, KPTV Channel 12.)

Fenway franks and Rocky Mountains. Ski slopes and baked beans. Not a bad act in October.



Colorado Rockies' Kazuo Matsui and Matt Holliday celebrate scoring against the Arizona Diamondbacks before winning the National League Championship. (AP photo)

There might even be some snowballs mixed in with the fastballs and curves that Curt Schilling, Manny Corpas & Co. are throwing.

"I played street hockey in Canada," Francis said. "Do you think some snow is going to bother me?"

The Rockies wanted to work out Sunday at Coors Field, but a snowstorm forced their hitters inside.

The forecast was for mild weather the rest of the week in Denver, with the Series shifting to Colorado for Game 3 on Saturday.

"It could be 80 degrees in a week, so I'm not concerned about that," Rockies star Todd Helton said.

But hey, Boston can be awfully chilly this time of year, too.

For the wild-card Rockies, it's their first World Series. For Manny



Boston Red Sox's Manny Ramirez (left) and Julian Tavarez congratulate Dustin Pedroia (15) after his two-run homer in Game 7 of the American League Championship against the Cleveland Indians. (AP Photo)

Ramirez, David Ortiz and the hardened Red Sox, they're looking for their second championship in four seasons after ending an 86-year title drought in 2004.

Coors Field and its now-famous humidifier get a first look at the series next weekend. Pushed back by a made-for-TV schedule, Game 7 is set for Nov. 1 in Boston.

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