

Portland Observer Auto Review

News and reviews on new motor vehicles

2009 Dodge Journey SXT AWD

A curious, but satisfying, Journey

BY KATHLEEN CARR

They say that a journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step. For the newly independent Chrysler Corporation, that first step on a long road back to profitability comes in the form of the all-new 2009 Dodge Journey.

While the Journey is an all-new design, the strong family resemblance to other Dodge products is unmistakable. That said, we think the Journey's long angled beltline, steeply slanted rear glass, and available 19-inch alloy wheels give it a noticeably sleeker look than its siblings. The designers have managed to achieve a nice balance between sophisticated and sporty.

Not to be outdone, the engineering team added several useful details including rear doors that open a full 90 degrees to make it easier to get kids and car seats in and out of the back seat. A rear liftgate made out of a lightweight composite that makes opening and closing the back hatch less of a struggle.

While the Journey's exterior is appealing, it's inside where you'll find the many small differences that we think give it an edge on the competition. For starters, an available built-in child booster seats here mean parents and grandparents can avoid the hassle of swapping the kids' seats from one car to another.

The Journey's interior is also an example of just how many useful storage bins can be crammed into one vehicle. There are open trays and covered bins nearly everywhere you look, including underneath a front passenger seat cushion that flips forward to reveal a perfect hiding place for a purse or radar detector. There's a handy under-floor storage compartment back here too, plus a slick reversible cargo floor with plush carpeting on one side and a tough easy-to-clean plastic surface on the other.

Finally, some of the Journey's innovative details include a beverage cooler in the glovebox, lighted front cupholders in the center console and the recharge-

able LED flashlight built into the cargo area.

The Dodge Journey is available with a V6 engine that delivers adequate power but is far from the best in the class. The V6, which is standard in all but the base model, offers plenty of power for around town, a 3500-

economy, until sensors detect a loss of traction. When that happens, the electronically-controlled system automatically shifts power to the rear wheels to keep the vehicle moving.

Chrysler has been upgrading the list of standard safety features on its vehicles in recent years and the Journey is no exception. To help keep you out of trouble, the Journey gets four-wheel ABS brakes with a "brake

harm's way, the Journey has a full complement of airbags to help soften the blow. In addition to multi-stage front airbags, all Journey models feature side-impact airbags and head-protecting side-curtain airbags that cover all three rows of seats.

Most significant is the rear-view camera that's included with either one of the available MyGig hard disk-based audio systems. There are also two

ing experience than their truck-based SUV ancestors, and the Journey delivers on this promise very nicely. The Dodge Journey features serious bang-for-the-buck compared to the competition, countless smart innovations to make everyday life easier, attractive styling inside and out with cargo capability and storage galore. Overall, a curious but satisfying journey.



Specifications: 3.5-Liter, 24-valve, V-6, 235-hp @ 232 lb-ft. torque engine; AWD, 6-speed automatic transmission, . 15-City 22-Highway MPG; \$27,685. MSRP

ound towing capacity, and decent passing punch.

The SXT uses Chrysler's 3.5-liter V6. It makes 235 horsepower in the Journey and it puts its power to the wheels through a six-speed automatic transmission with Dodge's AutoStick manual shiftgate. Properly equipped, a V-6-powered Journey will tow up to 3,500 pounds.

The SXT is offered with an optional all-wheel-drive system. The power is routed to just the front wheels for better fuel

assist", a sophisticated electronic stability control system, which recognizes an impending skid or potential rollover situation and automatically takes corrective action, is also standard. A relatively new feature here is the system's ability to minimize the trailer sway that can occur when towing in heavy crosswinds. Last but not least is the government mandated tire pressure monitoring system.

If the above technology isn't sufficient to keep you out of

audio versions available, one with and one without a GPS navigation system. Both feature a 30-gigabyte hard disk that can hold up to 2,400 songs. The Journey has an optional iPod, interface. Bluetooth hands-free cell phone connectivity and a 115-volt household type power outlet, a rear-seat DVD video system are also available.

The whole idea behind cross-overs is that they're supposed to provide a more pleasant driv-



The Red Cross is here. When disaster struck a little boy and his family, someone was there, providing shelter, a hot meal, a teddy bear, and a hug. But this Red Cross volunteer is not the only hero in this picture. Behind her are Oregonians just like you, who generously donate to their local chapter of the American Red Cross. You can't always be there for a child or family in need. But you can guarantee that someone will. To protect. To care. To donate, visit www.oregonredcross.org.



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Head Start Kids at Pumpkin Patch



Students from Albina Head Start attend a Pumpkin Patch Party sponsored by the Bungalow Rose Floral & Gift Shop, 7545 N.E. Sandy Blvd.

Albina Head Start students, their teachers and parents enjoyed some Halloween fun during a recent Pumpkin Patch Party at the Bungalow Rose Floral & Gift Shop at 7545 N.E. Sandy Blvd.

Also in attendance was family advocate for Albina Head Start, Inc., Craig Vaughn and some of his family and friends.

The children played games, made hand-crafted pumpkins with construction paper and tissue, made autumn leaf refrigerator magnets with glitter, sang songs, and received candy, snack treats, caramel corn, apple cider, a balloon and a pumpkin.

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