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## **MAZDA MPV: THE MINIVAN FOR DRIVERS**

IRVINE, Calif., – Minivans are great for carrying lots of people and lots of cargo, but few owners look forward to driving them. After all, they're not stylish and are seldom fun to drive. The 2006 MPV is the exception. It looks great, with all the style you'd expect from the Zoom-Zoom company.

The front is similar to the MAZDA6 sports sedan. A deep front fascia and side skirts add to the aggressive styling as do 16- or 17-inch alloy wheels. And, the MPV drives more like a sports sedan than a minivan because it's built by one of the world's renowned sports car makers. Under its taut sheet metal is an all-aluminum V6 engine, four-wheel disc brakes, and rack & pinion steering, five-speed automatic transmission, and sports car-influenced front and rear stabilizer bars.

But it wouldn't be a great minivan if it weren't spacious and versatile. The seven-seat Mazda MPV is functional and stacked with clever stowage and packaging details. The big sliding doors on both sides open wide (power assistance on both doors is optional), giving excellent access to the two rows of rear seats. The sliding doors have power up-and-down windows, unusual for this type of door and highly popular with middle-seat passengers. The rearmost seats are spring loaded, so they're light and easy to fold flat and erect. Even when up, there is still plenty of luggage-carrying space in the rear.

"The MPV has all the practicality, space and comfort you'd expect from a premium minivan, but all the style and driving quality you'd expect from a Mazda," says Jim Felix, MPV vehicle line manager. "It handles like a car, but has the versatility of a van. It's a winning combination that has made the Mazda MPV such a success over the years."

The MPV received major styling and mechanical upgrades for 2004, so only the color palette was changed for 2006. This year, four new colors are available: Brilliant Black, Bronze Metal, Strato Blue and Galaxy Gray. Three trim levels are available: LX-SV, LX and top-of-the-range ES.

### **WHY IT'S GREAT TO DRIVE...**

A great engine is at the heart of every great car and there are few six-cylinder engines smoother, lighter or more efficient than Mazda's powerful 3.0-liter V6. It has twin camshafts per bank and four-valves per cylinder (24 valves in all). This improves engine breathing and the car's willingness to rev. The all-aluminum construction reduces weight and improves handling, performance and fuel economy. Maximum power is 200 horsepower at 6,200 rpm and maximum torque is 200 lb-ft at 3,000 rpm.

Match those figures to the MPV's low curb weight (3,772 lbs) and you get a driving experience more like a sports sedan than a minivan. Call it the sportscar of minivans.

The MPV's five-speed automatic transmission shifts smoothly and has electronically controlled overdrive. Most minivan rivals get only four speeds – so they're noisier at freeway speeds, typically less smooth during gear shifts and never seem to be in the right gear at the right time. 'Slope Control,' communicated by the engine's computer to the transmission's control unit, minimizes constant up-and-down shifts when driving through mountainous terrain, making for a smoother and more enjoyable drive, and less wear-and-tear on the driveline.

The suspension system – front MacPherson struts, rear torsion beam axle – ensures excellent wheel control for precise driver feedback, great freeway stability and a fine ride. Stabilizer bars front and rear minimize body roll, and are especially useful when the MPV is heavily loaded.

The behind-the-wheel experience also reminds you of a sports sedan. There's a prominent sporty instrument binnacle including large tachometer and a comfortable driver's seat that also offers excellent lateral support. Again, it feels car-like. Only the extra height over a sedan, suggests you're in something different.

A key reason for the MPV's nimbleness is its comparatively low weight and compact exterior dimensions. At 189.5 inches long and 72.1 inches wide, the vehicle has a true minivan 'footprint,' unlike most of its competitors, which have grown to garage-squeezing

full-size van dimensions. So not only is it more precise on bends and livelier on the open road, it is also more maneuverable and easier to drive in towns or cities. Parking is especially easy: Highly responsive power rack-and-pinion steering has only 3.3 turns lock to lock. That's just shy of sports-car sharp.

Most keen drivers admire good automobile design, and there is no minivan that looks more sporting than the Mazda MPV. It rolls on sporty 16- (LX models) and 17-inch (ES model) alloy wheels. Front and rear bumpers, door handles, deep front fascia and side-sill extensions – as well as the aggressive front grille with its prominent winged-M logo – are all body-color, creating a clean, uniform appearance.

The front and rear styling is similar to the MAZDA6, MAZDA3, RX-8 and Tribute, and includes projector-style headlamps, the company's trademark slatted five-point grille and individual taillights under one-piece clear lenses. The stainless steel exhaust system with a large-diameter tip, highlight the vehicle's sporty character.

### **WHY IT'S FUNCTIONAL, COMFORTABLE AND SAFE...**

Sports driving characteristics add real character to the MPV and are what you'd expect from the Zoom-Zoom company. But Mazda understands that the primary role of a minivan is to offer comfortable, spacious, safe and versatile transport. Otherwise, customers would simply buy an MAZDA3 or a MAZDA6.

The MPV, accordingly, accommodates seven people and plenty of cargo. In the front- and middle-seat rows, comfortable and supportive 'captain's chairs' are standard, each with fold-down armrests and adjustable seat backs and head rests.

Mazda's innovative Side-by-Slide<sup>®</sup> seating arrangement allows the seats to move fore and aft independently. They can also come together to create a bench seat when necessary or to aid access to the rearmost seats. In addition, the middle-row captain's chairs can be removed with ease for additional cargo capacity. They can also be placed on the ground outside the vehicle for use as recliners at a tailgate party.

The Tumble Under<sup>®</sup> rear bench seat is one of the most versatile in the minivan market. It can be configured in many different ways: as a normal upright rear bench seat with seat belts for three; tumbled 90 degrees to the rear for use as an outward-facing seat for tailgaters to sit comfortably with their legs dangling over the rear bumper; or folded completely flat into a recessed well, leaving a flat cargo floor. It is spring-loaded to make it particularly easy to use.

The MPV is also awash with storage space. It includes a large center storage console mounted between the two front captain's chairs, multiple cup holders, and large hooks in the cargo area to provide flexibility for tying down bikes, strollers and other bulky items that accompany today's active families.

It's a great cargo carrier, too. Whereas most seven-seat minivans offer minuscule rear cargo area when all seats are in use, in the MPV there is 17.2 cubic feet of space behind the third-row seat and more than 53 cubic feet with the third-row seat folded. With the seats in row two removed, cargo volume is 127 cubic feet. The MPV has a 2,000-pound towing capacity. With the 4-Seasons and Towing Package, towing capacity jumps to 3,000 pounds.

Passenger safety is always top of the mind at Mazda. Primary safety features, which help drivers avoid accidents, include standard Anti-lock Brakes (ABS) with Electronic Brakeforce Distribution (EBD), which compensates for different loads to deliver maximum braking force regardless of passenger or cargo load. A Traction Control System (TCS), which improves stability and reduces skids, is standard on the MPV ES and available on the MPV LX. All MPVs get four-wheel disc brakes for superior stopping power.

The nimbleness, smooth handling and responsive steering are further reasons why the Mazda MPV driver is well equipped to avoid accidents. But if an accident does happen, the MPV is well prepared.

It received a five-star rating in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) New Car Assessment Program in both frontal- and side-impact collisions for driver and passenger, making the MPV one of the safest minivans on the market.

Mazda's 'Triple-H' body construction delivers enormous inherent strength in the unibody construction. Front and rear side-impact door beams and advanced dual front airbags with passenger weight sensors ensure great passenger safety. Front seat-mounted side airbags are standard on the ES and available on the LX. First- and second-row safety belts are height adjustable, and all outboard seating positions have three-point safety belts. The MPV features child-safety rear door locks and a second-row LATCH system that includes child safety seat lower anchors and upper tethers.

To keep the vehicle and its passengers secure, all MPVs come equipped with a two-stage unlocking feature on the power door locks and a remote keyless entry panic button for use in case of an emergency.

As well as a six-speaker AM/FM/CD audio system, all MPV models come equipped with a Sirius<sup>®</sup> satellite radio compatible audio system. Sirius provides more than 120 satellite channels and is compatible with both the stock and upgraded sound systems.

Mazda offers many packages for the MPV so drivers can customize the vehicle exactly the way they want it. The All-SPORT<sup>®</sup> Package for the LX model offers 17-inch alloy wheels, rear roof spoiler, leather-wrapped steering wheel, eight-way power driver's seat, compass/outside temperature, auto dimming mirror with HomeLink<sup>®</sup> and a 180-watt nine-speaker audio system, including subwoofer and in-dash six-disc CD changer.

The LX Plus Package provides privacy-tint glass on rear windows and liftgate, tinted windshield band, fog lights, rear air conditioning, body-color protective side moldings and floor/cargo mats.

The 4-Seasons and Towing Package that gives the MPV a 3,000-pound towing capacity also includes a heavy-duty battery, heated door mirrors, rear heater, cold-weather wiper motor and a larger windshield washer fluid tank.

Stand-alone options for the LX-SV and LX are rear air conditioning and Whitewater Pearl paint. The LX also has the available option of power sliding doors, while both the LX and ES have optional power moonroof as well.

Mazda North American Operations is responsible for the sales and marketing, customer parts and service support of Mazda vehicles in the United States. Headquartered in Irvine, Calif., MNAO has more than 700 dealerships nationwide.

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