

Smart Car Preview at NJ's Ray Catena Motor Cars

EDISON, N.J. – Aug. 20 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – The diminutive smart car (the company prefers the lowercase letters) that will be coming to the U.S. market early next year, made a sneak preview yesterday at The Ray Catena Mercedes Benz Center in Edison. Smart is touring America with their “Street Smart” 2007 smart USA Road Show. Hundreds of smart car enthusiasts lined up for the chance to take a test drive in half a dozen 2008 smart fortwo models (for two people).

The colorful little cars were welcomed in a big way with a catered afternoon spread of food and refreshments, hosted by Catena, one of only a handful of smart dealers, scheduled to be in business in New Jersey in the first quarter of '08.

“The smart fortwo is all about urban independence and freeing people from the constraints of city driving, so this road show offers consumers a unique way to discover the brand and get up close and personal with this amazing car,” said Dave Schembri, president of smart USA. “The best way to understand the benefits of a smart fortwo is to experience it – and this vehicle will change the way drivers look at the driving experience.”

Schembri said his company has taken about 20,000 \$99 deposits on fortwo preorders, being accepted only through its website, smartusa.com. Penske is the U.S. importer for smart cars, being built in France by the Smart unit of DaimlerChrysler

At less than 9 feet long, the two-seat smart fortwo is 41.6 inches shorter than BMW's Mini Cooper. The entry level U.S. model with automatic transmission is slated to be priced at \$12,000. A convertible will also be offered for around \$17,000.

“With an average fuel economy of about 40 miles per gallon, I believe the car will be very popular,” said Doug Wells, General Sales Manager for Ray Catena Motor Cars. “It sports features that you usually don't find on a car so inexpensive. It's small, but I've heard comments from the people who have taken test drives today that it has all the roominess of our Mercedes-Benz E-Class.”

“The fortwo is not about a person's age and income, it's about attitude and lifestyle,” said Lisa Ray, a smart spokeswoman and part of the traveling road show.

“Everything about the fortwo shouts different. You could park two of them end-to-end within a standard parking space. Its three-cylinder, 12-valve, 61-cubic-inch gas powered engine is capable of 90 miles per hour on the highway. And rear-wheel drive, coupled with rear-engine design means the fortwo goes in the snow!” Lisa Ray exclaimed.

Small enough to save you money, but smart enough to keep you safe...that is what makes the Mercedes engineers most proud. The smart fortwo features a built-in steel roll cage that includes front and rear crumple zones to absorb the energy of a collision and dissipate it throughout the car's shell. "It's the kind of roll cage you find in race cars," Ray said. Four airbags are standard equipment.

As one of the top automobile dealers in the nation, celebrating nearly 50 years of keeping customers happy, Ray Catena sees the smart car as a unique extension to his luxury automobile line-up.

"The car has pep yet it's cost-efficient. The Mercedes Car Group engineers have built a value-packed, sporty, well-equipped safe car. I think that in this case the old saying really does hold true: Good things come in small packages," Catena smiled.

In addition to the smart franchise scheduled to open in Edison in early 2008, Ray Catena Motor Cars sells Mercedes-Benz in Edison and Union, NJ; Maybach, Porsche and Aston-Martin in Edison, NJ; Lexus in Oakhurst and Freehold, NJ and in Larchmont, NY; Infiniti in Edison and Bridgewater, NJ; and Jaguar in Edison and Oakhurst, NJ.

For more information, visit their website at www.raycatena.com.

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