

Town, country and all around

MEET THE ALL-NEW CHRYSLER PACIFICA BY JOE SAGE

Minivans carry a certain panache and also a purpose. Though thoroughly useful for painters and florists, or taxis and hotels, they are forever connected to family first. There are certain commonalities with utility vehicles and some commercial vans, but the minivan is often first recognized by its big sliding side doors. These are not only handy as heck for the family who owns one, but kids love minivans, and they're so exuberant by the time they exit, the sliders may be welcome by anyone parked next to one. Chrysler is in an especially good position to create an all-new van for the new millennium, as they are indeed the inventor of the minivan in the first place. When the Chrysler Town &

Country and Dodge Caravan were introduced for 1984, they were an immediate hit—and have remained so ever since. Till then, hauling a larger family in one vehicle meant a very crowded station wagon, a large commercial van built with windows and seats, or the underpowered original VW Microbus. It's the comparison with big commercial vans that gave the new breed the "mini" prefix. Chrysler had created a segment that exploded to include the other domestic makers and most import brands. Asia and Europe had long made tiny cargo and passenger vans, but none had entered our market. The ones that joined the fray in the US copied the Chrysler/Dodge formula.

Chrysler has had plenty of time to get to know the family. From the tail end of Generation X, through the millennials and now beyond, the Chrysler minivan is often the first set of wheels any American experiences, as they are brought home from the hospital. It becomes an extension of the home, as families spend more time on the go than at the dinner table—from school sports, to vacations, then finally off to college. For 2017, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) reinvents their venerable niche. The new vehicle is so different—as are the lifestyles of its buyers—it has been renamed. Gone is the Chrysler Town & Country name. Meet the all-new Chrysler Pacifica. That name had

been used before, for a large crossover utility vehicle about a decade earlier, but it's such a refreshing name, it immediately takes on a new life of its own, as does the new van. As with everything, the landscape has changed a bit over three decades, as SUVs and crossovers have picked up considerable market share. Chrysler has held its lead position in minivans, holding off 17 competitors till now there are just a handful. But they committed, telling us nothing else is as efficient and effective, and noting that we expect an additional four million kids by 2025. To appeal to customers both new and prior, Chrysler has tackled this project from several angles: safety, comfort and convenience, efficiency, and technology. Over 100 new safety features or improvements include 360-degree top view cameras, ultrasonic parallel and perpendicular park assist, stop-and-hold adaptive cruise control, forward collision warning with brake application and driver assistance, and lane departure warning with stages of alert and assistance.

Stow 'n Go seats are the segment's only such for both second and third row, have assist and easy-tilt access to the third row, and now let you leave a child seat installed while using them. Front seats can be tilted forward using a button in the second row. Sliding doors and liftgate can operate hands-free, and a tri-pane panoramic sunroof keeps everyone happy, even normally claustrophobic third-row folks. A standout available feature is the integrated tough-duty Stow 'n Vac RIDGID vacuum cleaner, mounted in the second row (always the dirtiest) with tools right at hand and a 14-foot hose long enough and nimble enough to reach every corner of the van, plus handle a few chores within decent reach outside—even your other vehicle. This is sure to be a can't-live-without accessory. Chrysler Pacifica with a Pentastar V6 gasoline engine is rated at 28 MPG highway, the highest figure in the segment (it ties Honda but beats all the others, and Pacifica has 40



2017 CHRYSLER PACIFICA	
ENGINE	3.6L Pentastar V6
DRIVETRAIN	FWD
HORSEPOWER/TORQUE	287 hp / 262 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	9-spd Torqueflite auto
SEATING	7- or 8-passenger (2/2/3 or 2/3/3)
WEIGHT	4330 lb
TOWING	3600 lb
MPG	18/28/22 city/hwy/comb
2017 CHRYSLER PACIFICA HYBRID	
ENGINE	3.6L Pentastar V6 Hybrid
DRIVETRAIN	FWD
HORSEPOWER/TORQUE	248 hp / 230 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	Electrically variable with dual-motor EV drive capability
SEATING	7-passenger (2/2/3)
WEIGHT	4943 lb
TOWING	[not recommended]
MPG	tbd
BRAKES	F: 13.0x1.1 vented, single-piston R: 13.0x0.47 solid, single-piston
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	203.6 in / 121.6 in
CARGO VOLUME	32.3 to 140.5 cu.ft
CARGO WIDTH AT WHEEL WELLS	48.8 in
CARGO HEIGHT	47.8 in
LIFTOVER HEIGHT	24.9 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	5.1 in
TURNING CIRCLE	39.7 ft
BASE PRICE (gasoline)	\$28,595
BASE PRICE (hybrid)	tbd

Five models of the new Chrysler Pacifica with 287-hp 3.6L Pentastar gasoline V6 (below) will be joined in the second half of the year by a 248-hp Hybrid model (far right). Chrysler engineers say "the platform could handle" all-wheel-drive models. The grille and headlights suggest a Möbius Strip, all part of a softer sculptural athleticism, reflected below that in the front fascia's grille and fog light housings. Side rear view "pedestal" mirrors allow larger side windows and a small new one.



