

Thin Shell Over a Steel Frame Makes Faurecia Seats Special

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"About 60 percent of the human body comes into contact with a car seat. The seat and the steering wheel are the two points of contact the driver has with the vehicle."

Miner said when a customer walks into a showroom, the first thing he or she does is look at a vehicle. The second is to sit in the car. That experience of sitting in the car defines whether that customer will be happy with the car or not. And the seat must be comfortable, not just in the showroom, but over the life of the vehicle.

Faurecia uses a traditional metal frame, instead of one built around more advanced materials like composite plastics, because the OEMs know and are comfortable with metal frames, Miner said. So when they showed off the urban rhythm seat, they used metal instead of composites used in some of the company's other "vision" seats.

The thing to remember is that while customers care about comfort, OEMs care about safety. Car seats must meet rigid federal safety standards. But while the frame uses metal, its architecture is configured in such a way that the seat mimics with the driver or passenger's spine. This allows the company to eliminate a lot of polyurethane foam. The seat pivots at the top and slides at the bottom.

The urban rhythm seat also uses what Miner calls a compliant shell that goes over the frame. This shell makes it possible to eliminate foam trim covers, making the seat lighter.

This seat can still be trimmed with either leather or cloth, Miner said.

And because the seat uses a different architecture that doesn't require bulky foam, it gives the passengers in the rear seat a sense of openness as well as creating more leg room.

Miner said the reaction from the OEMs has been positive.

"They like the level of comfort that comes from the different architecture," Miner said. "And they're impressed with the look. But these are innovations that are still in the early development stage."

"One of the things we have to do is validate the concepts with the OEMs. We will want to work with them and do some ride-and-drives at their test tracks as they do long-term evaluations of the seat."

Miner said Faurecia's early



Both thin and sleek, Faurecia's Urban Rhythm incorporates responsive thermoplastic surfaces that adjust to body size, shape and posture to keep occupants comfortable and safe.

testing shows improved levels of comfort. He said it's a firm seat with a firmer feel, and has no hot spots, which he defines as an area of a seat with no pressure points.

"It has a very even pressure distribution," Miner said. "Even with the limited amount of foam used on the seat."

Miner said the urban rhythm seat isn't the only new technology Faurecia is working on. The company has also created a change in cover-carving technology. Miner calls it foam-in-place trim cover. That's when the foam is directly molded into the fabric.

This process saves trimming labor and allows for the trim cover to be placed on fine surfaces that normally can't be done using traditional trim cover production methods, which take place when a bag or sock is pulled over the seat.

Faurecia is an international company with its U.S. headquarters in Auburn Hills. Its research is being done all over the world and the U.S. portion is being done at the company's Troy Technical Center.

OCC Offers Course

Oakland Community College will present a class titled, "The Art of Children's Book Illustration" about the history of children's illustrations. The class is on Fridays, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Feb. 1 - May 3 at the Auburn Hills campus, 2900 Featherstone. For more information, visit www.oaklandcc.edu/ce.

Spark, Sonic Infotainment: TuneIn to 'Add Dimension'

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TuneIn is one of three new smartphone app-based features expected to be available later this year for MyLink-equipped Spark and Sonic models.

Others are BringGo, a full-function navigation system; and Siri, Apple's intelligent assistant (for customers with a compatible iPhone running iOS 6) that allows drivers to get things done just by asking. (Customers should consult their dealer and check the Chevrolet website for updates on when these features will be available)

Two other embedded apps, Pandora internet radio and Stitcher Smart Radio, were included with MyLink when it de-

buted in Spark and Sonic.

To access TuneIn through the MyLink Radio, a customer needs to download the free TuneIn Radio app to a compatible smartphone and connect the phone with MyLink for safe, seamless connectivity to live local, international and Internet radio. Users can search for programming by location, genre, sports team name, station type or call sign.

"TuneIn will add another dimension to Spark and Sonic infotainment choices, and demonstrates the ability to continually expand and update MyLink capabilities with new smartphone apps," said Landy.

The Spark's MyLink Radio functions as an extension of the

owner's compatible iPhone, Android, or BlackBerry.

MyLink also supports select phones with the Symbian operating system from Nokia and certain phones with the Windows Mobile operating system from Microsoft.

Owners connect their customized music libraries, contacts, videos and photos with the radio using their smartphones, and the vehicle's Bluetooth, plug-in outlet or USB. Then, they select from options projected onto the seven-inch color touch-screen: Audio, Pictures & Movies, Telephone, Smartphone Link, and Settings.

Each menu selection takes the user through a list of easy-to-select functions while the smartphone is safely stowed.

2013 Charger Sport V6 AWD Delivers Aggressive 370 HP

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Orders for the 2013 Dodge Charger AWD are open now. Vehicles will be built at the Brampton (Ont.) Assembly plant from December through February.

Dodge now offers new design and performance features not previously offered on Charger AWD.

Building on the success of the rear-wheel drive and blacked-out-styled Dodge Charger Blacktop - an enthusiast-desired package that has accounted for up to 25 percent of Charger SXT sales - the 2013 Dodge Charger AWD

Sport provides a new frontier for the Dodge brand.

The new Charger AWD Sport is available on the Dodge Charger SXT and SXT Plus AWD models for a U.S. Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (MSRP) of \$1,395 and Charger R/T and R/T Plus AWD models for \$1,195.

The Charger AWD Sport package renders a 40 percent package savings discount and includes a unique Gloss Black painted split-crosshair grille and grille surround, 19-inch polished aluminum wheels with Gloss Black pockets, all-season performance tires,

steering-wheel mounted paddle shifters and sport mode transmission calibration, rear body-color spoiler and sport seats in black cloth (SXT, R/T), or premium black or red heated Nappa leather (SXT Plus, R/T Plus).

In addition, the new Charger AWD Sport features the Beats Audio technology with a 12-channel amplifier that integrates the heart of the Beats proprietary equalizer algorithm, creating the high-definition sound of professional recording studios.

The Charger AWD Sport is based on Charger SXT and SXT Plus.

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