

CHRYSLER IMPERIAL 2009

The Name Says It All

Like the great Imperials of Chrysler's storied past, the Imperial concept vehicle is designed as Chrysler's flagship, a luxury sedan that is elegant, provocative, aspirational, yet attainable.

For inspiration, the designers looked not only to the classic Imperials of the 1930s and 1950s but also to Chrysler's long tradition of creative concept cars, from the earlier Chrysler d'Elegance and Falcon to the more recent Chrysler Chronos and Firepower. This rich heritage is expressed in the crisp line that parallels the sill, then arches up over the rear wheel and flows to the rear of the car, signaling that this is a powerful rear-drive automobile.

A similarly-shaped line rises up over the front wheel and flows rearward, falling slightly as it moves into the doors. To fully realize the subtleties of the chaste body surfaces, every area was lovingly hand-sculpted in the hallowed tradition of the custom coachbuilt LeBaron bodies of the classic era.

"The Imperial's exterior artfully blends a stately nobility, hand craftsmanship, and modern dynamic sculpture and proportion," says Mike Nicholas, principal exterior designer.

The interior is characterized by the interplay of harmonious, expressively curving shapes in which the fuller forms of the instrument panel, door armrest and map pocket elements appear to "float" above sculpted recessed cavities. Even the seats seem to float above the floor. Their elliptically-curved bronze-and-burl side shields echo similar elements recessed into the full-length floor console.

"We wanted everything inside to be nested, fitted and hand-crafted," says Nick Malachowski, principal interior designer, "with every component subtly reinforcing the hand-sculpted look of the exterior."

This is a driver's car, with a minimum of distracting gadgetry. A simple touch pad with intuitive controls, mounted close-by on the suspended center console armrest, permits the driver to adjust settings for radio, climate and navigation functions. The driver air bag/horn pad is fixed, allowing the radio and cruise-control switches to remain settled in the same position regardless of the turning steering wheel. Boldly bisecting the uncluttered floating wood-and-bronze instrument panel are two large circular pods encircling sculpted gauges rendered in satin with polished aluminum bezels. Reminiscent of earlier Imperials, the exquisitely-detailed gauge faces are deliberately designed to satisfy the soul as well as inform the mind.

Drawing on the rich heritage of its memorable predecessors and endowed with modern dynamic proportions, this newest Imperial, crafted with a nobility of stance and purpose, is the finest expression of the Chrysler marque.

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