

Dodge Redefines the American Truck With Design of All-new 2009 Ram

Design Theme Takes Bold, Powerful and Capable Theme to Next Level

Auburn Hills, Mich. -

Dodge created an icon in pickup truck design with the introduction of the now-famous "big rig" styling of the 1994 Dodge Ram. With the introduction of the all-new 2009 Dodge Ram, that bold styling is taken to the next level.

"The all-new 2009 Dodge Ram doesn't just push the envelope in truck design—it shoves it aside and reinvents it," said Ralph Gilles, Vice President – Jeep®/Truck Design Studio. "We wanted to design a game-changer, a truck that takes Dodge's bold, powerful and capable attributes to a new level."

Background

Research for developing the all-new 2009 Dodge Ram was centered on direct feedback from truck owners and potential buyers.

"We listened to anecdotes from truck owners, not just our own, but owners of competitive makes as well," said Mark Allen, Chief Designer – Jeep/Truck Studios. "We built a range of concept trucks that we took to clinics, including one that was intentionally not 'Ram-like.' We heard loud and clear that people wanted the look we own with Dodge Ram—bold, powerful and capable. We knew we had to build on that theme."

Designers started with 11 proposals for the 2009 Dodge Ram and culled it to three finalists. Design proposals were taken to several leading pickup markets throughout the country and shown to consumers in order to get their input.

Dodge Ram team members heard about real-world considerations that could impact the 2009 Dodge Ram design. For example, at one clinic, a participant noted that a Ram design concept featured a front bumper that seemed too close to the bodywork. "He said that ranchers sometimes use their trucks to nudge open gates, rather than climb out and do it by hand," recalled Allen. "If the bumper is too shallow, nudging the gate can bash up the bodywork."

Truck designers also hit the road on ride-and-drive trips, driving pickups outfitted for typical users: ranchers, tradesmen, firefighters and suburbanites. Driving outfitted trucks gave designers better insight into real-world considerations for pickup owners.

"We worked to create the most well-rounded pickup truck ever," said Gilles. "And who better to tell us than the people who will be our customers?"

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Exterior

The exterior design of the all-new 2009 Dodge Ram retains the essential “Ram-ness” that customers demand, but with refinements that add an unmistakable look of craftsmanship.

The grille is canted forward, creating an aggressive, head-down appearance. “We heard at a clinic that it looks like a drill sergeant—bold, authoritative, in-charge,” said Allen. The grille is now body-mounted and separate from the new hood, which contributes to better panel-gap clearances and much-improved aerodynamics.

An all-new aluminum hood with a more pronounced power bulge opens with the assistance of dual gas props. The new hood better shields wipers for improved wind noise, wiper flutter and aerodynamics. Headlamps have integrated lenses and their shapes are echoed in the bumper fascia. Below the headlamps, a fully integrated air dam contributes to engine cooling and air-conditioning condenser air flow.

Front doors are a new construction style. The roll-frame design now relocates the door cut to the side of the vehicle, similar to the Chrysler 300C and other recent products. This dramatically reduces wind noise and weight. Ram door handles are a pull-type and are large enough to be operated with gloved hands. Handles are finished in black and now feature upgrades such as body color or chrome depending on trim level.

A crew cab model is all-new for the 2009 Dodge Ram, which gives Dodge an entry into the fastest-growing and highest-volume (nearly 50 percent) piece of the pickup truck market. The new package offers an additional six inches of leg room and in-floor storage. The new crew cab features full-access rear doors that open 90 degrees for easy entry and exit.

Rearview mirrors on the all-new 2009 Dodge Ram were painstakingly designed for minimum drag and maximum image stability, while providing a wide range of visibility. They have been repositioned in relation to the body (further outboard and lower) for improved visibility and significant reduction in turbulence that causes wind noise. In addition, they are offered for the first time in body color or chrome and feature integrated puddle lamps with LED turn signals depending on the trim level. Available flip-up tow mirrors also have been redesigned with similar features. Both designs contribute to the Ram’s best-in-class aerodynamics.

The overall glass-to-body ratio on the all-new 2009 Dodge Ram imparts a modern aesthetic, featuring blacked-out center pillars creating a sleek look. On the inside, the Ram benefits from improved pillar sections all the way around, improving outward visibility. In addition, side sills are pulled down to cover frame rails, giving the all-new 2009 Dodge Ram a refined, contemporary look while improving aerodynamics.

The pickup bed height on all three body styles (52 inches on two-wheel drive ..

models, 53 inches on four-wheel drive models) allows easy over-the-side loading. Three bed lengths are available: 8-foot (regular cab), 6-foot-4-inches (regular cab and Quad Cab®), and a new-for-2009 box length of 5-foot-7-inches (Ram Crew 1500). Dimensions of the 8-foot and 6-foot-4-inch boxes are unchanged from the 2008 model year. All beds now feature integrated bed-rail caps on all three sides.

The tailgate on the all-new 2009 Dodge Ram is as inspired as the new front-end appearance. It features a dramatic, integrated, stamped-steel spoiler that aids aerodynamics and also allows for an ergonomic location for the tailgate release handle. A lift assist, new for 2009, decreases the effort needed to raise and close the tailgate.

The 2009 Dodge Ram's best-in-class overall coefficient of drag (Cd) is an estimated .422 for a crew cab 4x4 model – compared with a Cd of .463 for a 2008 Ram Quad Cab® 4x4.

Responding to dealer and customer feedback, dual exhaust (available with the 5.7-liter HEMI) is now available for the first time from the factory on a pickup truck. The bumper features a flared radius around each of the new slash-cut 4-inch rolled chrome exhaust tips. The rear bumper is also the largest wrap-around bumper in its class, and depending on the model, it is available in mineral grey, body color or chrome. It offers three standard tow ball holes and a standard, integrated 7-pin connector. The new Ram also will be available with a ParkSense® Rear Park Assist System and ParkView® Rear Back-up Camera as options on select models.

Nearly all badges on the 2009 Dodge Ram are three-dimensional, rather than decals. Large, sculpted Ram badges adorn the center of the grille and tailgate – the Ram's-head badge on the tailgate is 250 percent larger than the previous badge. Other nameplates and badges are located on driver and front-passenger doors, box and tailgate.

Interior

The interior of the 2009 Dodge Ram is all-new and was refined in Chrysler LLC's new Advanced Interior Studio.

"Quite simply, our goal with the 2009 Dodge Ram was to make the competition sweat," said Gilles. "We spent a lot of time rethinking the layout, functionality, feel and packaging of the interior. We also no longer have a 'base' interior, just higher levels of luxury throughout the series. The new interior was conceived to match the image of the exterior and drill home a new level of perceived and actual quality. Much higher grades of materials and finishes were selected throughout, culminating in the Laramie interior, which is the exclamation point on a new level of luxury for the segment. All surfaces have been carefully thought-out, as we wanted a robust feel to the interior that communicates to the owner that he is driving an extremely high quality piece of engineering."

The all-new 2009 Dodge Ram provides many distinct interior features unique to individual vehicle trim levels. The craftsmanship of the redesigned interior trim contributes to the overall fit and finish. The Laramie interior features a full-width contrasting stitch on its soft instrument panel. It also includes chrome trim throughout, unique color combinations and wood-grain inserts on each door and the center instrument-panel stack. All Rams feature a unique industry-first two-tone technology, creating an inspired interior at all trim levels with the exception of the new Sport model. The Sport features an all-dark-slate interior, complete with stunning gray contrasting stitching on the instrument panel and seats. All Rams benefit from redesigned seats with more surface area and improved lumbar and lateral support. The Sport and the Laramie also feature unique high-shouldered bucket seats with model-specific premium finishes.

All interiors feature soft-feel door bolsters and armrests and one-piece molded door panels. Overall, the 2009 Dodge Ram's interior is designed to communicate refinement and craftsmanship.

The center stack is designed for optimum "reach zones"—the placement of controls in the most intuitive and comfortable locations. The center stack includes strategic placement of a large radio yet still allows room for a navigation system screen, two large "Venetian-blind" style airflow outlets with chrome accents, upper and lower switch banks for control switches (based on vehicle options), climate controls, improved cup holders, 12-volt and 115-volt power outlets and a sunglass bin.

Seats for the all-new 2009 Dodge Ram have improved side bolsters for increased comfort and front seats are available with full power and memory. An industry first for the all-new 2009 Dodge Ram is heated and ventilated (for cooling) front seats, available in leather. Heated rear seating is available on crew cab models.

A first for Dodge Ram on all-new 2009 crew cab models are two in-floor storage bins located in rear footwells that allow customers to conveniently store items in unobtrusive floor compartments. Both bins have removable inserts for easy cleaning. Each can hold ten 12-ounce cans along with ice.

Designers added thoughtful storage in other locations. Front and rear door panels, depending on trim level, include either one or two map pockets.

The all-new center console for the first time features a floor-mounted shifter with standard Electronic Range Select. It is available on most models and standard on the Ram Sport model. It features deep dual map pockets. There is abundant upper and lower storage space in the new super-soft, oversized clamshell center armrest. The console features multiple storage compartments around the gearshift lever (as well as multiple power outlets available for electronic devices).

An upper glove box provides 391 cubic inches of storage capacity, and combined with the lower glove box volume of 426 cubic inches, provides best-in-class glove-box volume. Driver and front-passenger seat backs include map pockets. The

interior features built-in garment holders and new larger passenger-assist handles at all locations.

All in all, there are 38, or nearly twice as many, storage locations in the all-new 2009 Dodge Ram than the previous model.

Doors have been designed to handle large (6-inch x 9-inch) door speakers for great low-range sound reproduction. The instrument panel also features two speakers for crystal clear midrange and crisp highs. Select models with the premium sound package feature a new center-imaging speaker strategically located to use the windshield as a sound reflection surface for exceptional surround sound, a first for the truck segment.

"The interior is where the customer lives with the vehicle," said Ryan Nagode, Senior Designer – Jeep/Truck Design Studio. "It's where they spend most of their time, so we listened to what people needed and gave it to them."