Latest Kia Sportage launched in the U.K. – and EV9 SUV Concept unveiled in the U.S.A.

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KIA WHEELS OUT ALL-NEW FIFTH GENERATION SPORTAGE SUV THIS WEEK.

By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

(All Sportage photographs copyright David Miles; EV9 photographs from Kia).

Kia UK hosted the Western Group of Motoring Writers this week in The Cotswolds to test drive their latest range of new and updated models ranging from the small Picanto up to the new EV6 all electric flagship saloon.

But the line-up didn't include their traditionally best selling model range, the Sportage mid-sized SUV. Why? Because the current Sportage is on sales run-out before the new fifth generation range arrives mid January next year with orders starting next month when prices will also be released.

But not wishing to short-change us motoring scribes Kia UK wheeled out for static display only an example of the all-new Sportage and it certainly looks a sophisticated machine with sleek muscular styling lines and at the front a more upright and much larger and classier interpretation of their Tiger Face grille.

What we don't know are the prices for the new generation Sportage but currently the outgoing models range from £24,785 to £36,675 taking in a line-up of petrol and diesel

engines, manual and auto transmissions and mild hybrid technology.

What we do know is the all-new Sportage. Along with Internal Combustion petrol and diesel engines, will also be available with mild-hybrid (MHEV), hybrid (HEV) and plug-in hybrid (PHEV) powertrains plus the usual 2WD/4WD systems and manual and auto transmission options. In keeping with Kia's commitment to automotive electric power potentially a full electric version could join the line-up in future.

The packaging of the new Sportage HEV and PHEV models has been arranged to minimise any impact on passenger and luggage space. For the HEV derivative, the battery pack is placed under the second-row seats, resulting in similar legroom and cargo volume as the IC engine Sportage models. For the PHEV Sportage, the high-voltage battery is placed under the body of the SUV, providing a balanced weight distribution whilst retaining interior space that is practical, comfortable and versatile.

The new very modern cockpit features a state-of-the-art; driver-centric layout that has been designed for European customers, the first time such a focus has been made in the model's 28-year history say Kia. The new cabin appears to combine advanced technology, up-market features, premium materials and modern style keeping it more than relevant in today's highly competitive SUV market.

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Drivers are greeted by a classy sculpted integrated curved fascia display featuring two high-definition 12.3-inch screens that help to deliver a near-cinematic experience. Located directly in front of the driver sits the Sportage's instrument cluster with the latest liquid-crystal display technology for precise and clear graphics. Located in the centre is a high-tech touchscreen that operates connectivity, functionality and usability requirements.

The top spec GT-line model we saw had premium dark suede and leather used for the seats, while a black headlining and suede trim inserts add to the GT-line's sports feel. A sporty and ergonomic flat-bottomed steering wheel infers agility and potentially a sporty driving

experience.

The all-new Sportage's interior proportions have been specifically designed for European customers, combining practicality, functionality and versatility. A compact wheelbase of 2,680 mm (8.79 ft), a width of 1,865 mm (6.12 ft), length of 4,515 mm (14.81 ft) and height of 1,645 mm (5.40 ft) make it fit for purpose and the luggage capacity comes in at up to 591 litres (20.87 cu.ft) rising up to 1,780 litres (62.86 cu.ft) with the rear seats folded.



Its driving manners are yet to be explored on UK roads but it should be at least as good as the outgoing models so nothing to fear in that department. Let's hope the new prices when

announced in December are as equally impressive and will keep the Sportage as Kia's top selling model range.



MEANWHILE IN AMERICA KIA UNVEILED THE EV9 SUV CONCEPT



Kia’s Concept EV (unveiled in Los Angeles). Photograph from Kia.

As Kia UK was giving us motoring scribes a preview of the new Sportage, in America Kia was unveiling their EV9 all-electric SUV concept at the Automobility LA event.

Kia says this concept hints at the next model in their dedicated EV line-up so don’t expect it to materialise in the UK for some time – if at all although the EV6 flagship all-electric saloon has recently gone on sale here.

Using the same platform as the new Kia EV6 current flagship all-electric saloon the Concept

EV9 measures 4,930 mm (16.17 ft) in length, 2,055 mm (6.74 ft) width, 1,790 mm (5.87 ft) height and has a wheelbase of 3,100 mm (10.17 ft). The concept also combines its stunning SUV form with state-of-the-art engineering. The all-electric SUV delivers driving range of up to 300 miles. It also features next-generation ultra-fast charging technology with a 350-kW charger that allows its advanced battery electric powertrain to replenish energy from 10 per cent to 80 per cent in 20-30 minutes.



Concept EV9 all-electric SUV. Photograph from Kia.