

# XPRESSIONS

DAIMLERCHRYSLER CORPORATION'S TRADE MAGAZINE FOR AFTERMARKET PROFESSIONALS

Redefining The

**MINIVAN**  
Segment

The All-New  
2001 Chrysler  
Town &  
Country



**Tech Tips:** Proper Valve Timing Techniques

**Reman Roundup:** Mopar Remanufactured Water Pumps

**Diagnostics:** Diagnosing Powertrain NVH Problems



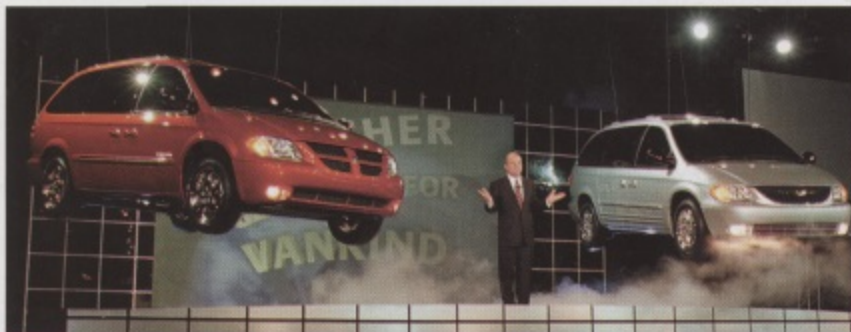
Since the former Chrysler Corporation created the minivan segment in 1984, other automakers have been playing a game of catch-up. Each time they get close, DaimlerChrysler ups the ante. And that appears to be the case again with the 2001 Chrysler Town & Country and Voyager and the Dodge Caravan.

While the styling changes outside are evolutionary, engineers have made a significant number of improvements to the powertrain lineup and ride and handling characteristics, plus added a number of important safety features. An industry first for minivans, for example, the next generation Chrysler and Dodge minivans now

offer dual power sliding side doors and a power liftgate.

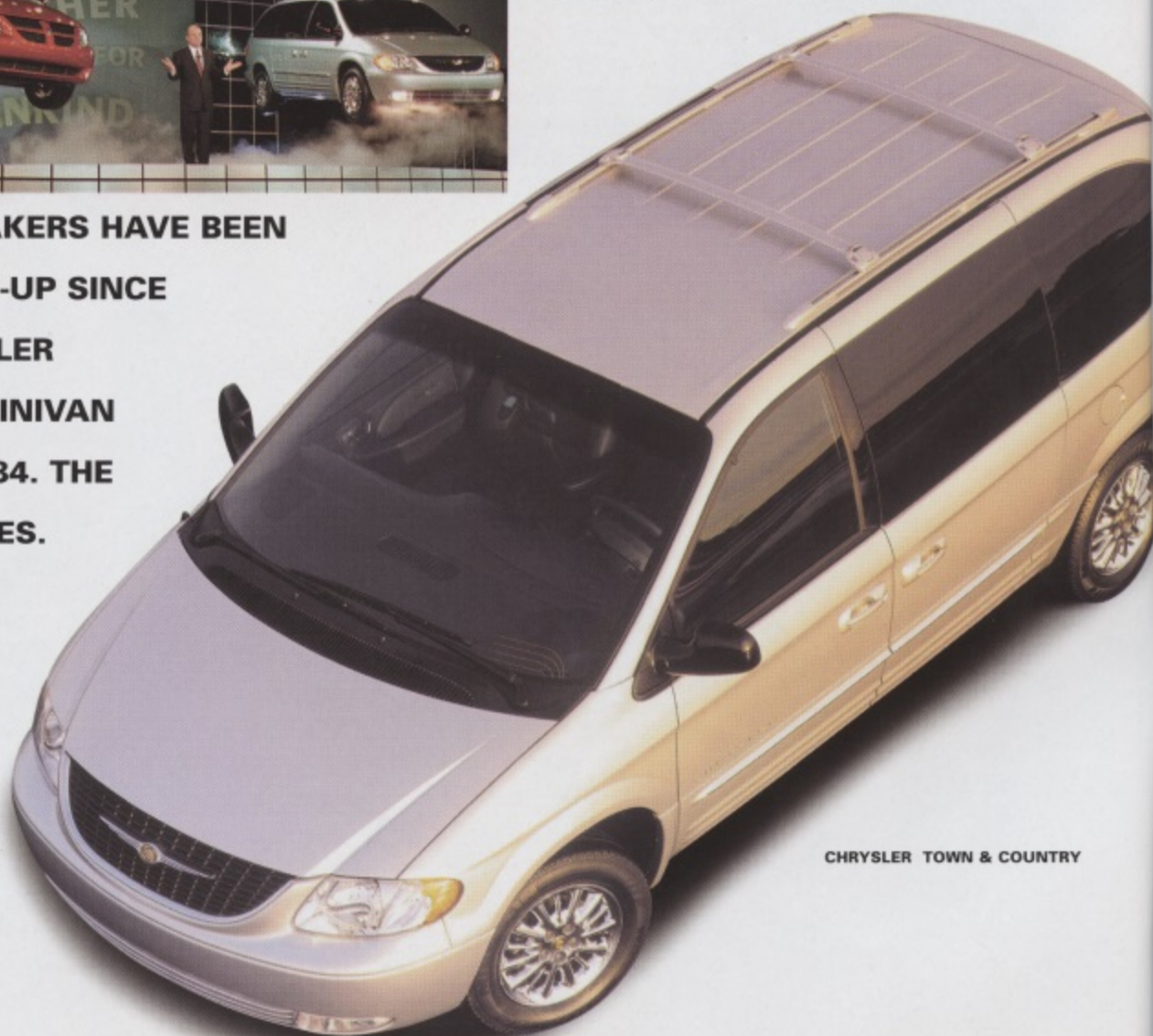
"In addition to offering the best-looking minivans with the best new features, every aspect of the Chrysler and Dodge minivans have been improved to make them smoother, more powerful, safer and more comfortable," says DaimlerChrysler Senior Vice President of Marketing Bud Liebler. "With our all-new minivans, we have reached a new level of car-line handling that will once again raise the bar in the segment we created."

# Redefining THE SEGMENT



DAIMLERCHRYSLER'S PRESIDENT JIM HOLDEN UNVEILS THE 2001 DODGE CARAVAN AND CHRYSLER TOWN & COUNTRY AT THE NORTH AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW IN DETROIT LAST JANUARY.

**OTHER AUTOMAKERS HAVE BEEN PLAYING CATCH-UP SINCE DAIMLERCHRYSLER CREATED THE MINIVAN SEGMENT IN 1984. THE GAME CONTINUES.**



CHRYSLER TOWN & COUNTRY

One of reasons DaimlerChrysler continually captures the lion's share of U.S. minivan sales is selection. With four powertrain choices, standard wheelbase, extended wheelbase, all-wheel-drive, entry- and mid-level models and an upscale luxury model, DaimlerChrysler's minivan family continues to grow.

## Why Mess With A Good Thing ... Too Much?

DaimlerChrysler designers have hit upon a solid exterior design formula with the current family of

air intakes and driving lights.

Chrysler's minivan line now includes top-of-the-line Town & Country LXi and Limited models and the entry-level Voyager model, which Chrysler inherited following the demise of the Plymouth brand. The Town & Country's grille is larger and bolder than its predecessor and features an "egg crate" texture surrounded by a chrome molding. Chrysler's resurrected winged medallion logo appears at the center of the grille opening on the Town & Country models, while it moves above the grille of the Voyager.

## Technical And Dynamic Improvements

DaimlerChrysler's 2001 minivans are chock full of technical and dynamic improvements for 2001, including four powertrain choices.

With a fill-up requiring a bank loan in many parts of the country these days, the powertrain lineup starts with a gas-sipping 2.4-liter 16-valve I-4 that generates 150 horsepower and 167 lb.-ft. of torque. Moving up a notch brings you the 3.3-liter V6 with 180 horsepower, up 15 percent from

In addition, a state-of-the-art electrical architecture uses electronic relays to provide integrated self-diagnostics as well as circuit protection.

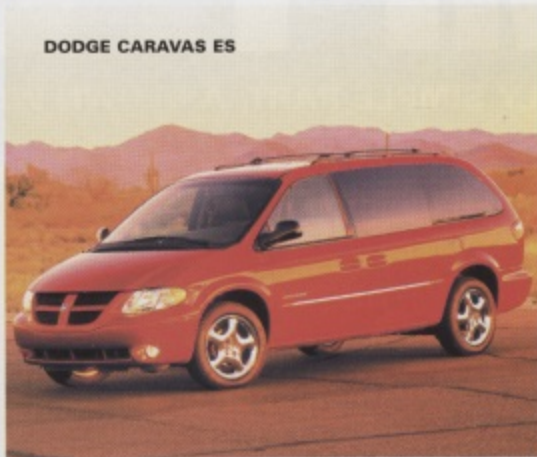
## Safety First

Safety sells more so than it did in the past, particularly in the minivan segment, so DaimlerChrysler engineers were careful to design a number of critical safety features into the 2001 people-haulers.

- **An all-new body structure is significantly upgraded to meet stringent European offset impact requirements and improve energy absorbing characteristics.**
- **Supplemental side (head and thorax) air bags provide side-impact protection for the driver and front seat passenger.**
- **Front driver and passenger air bags feature dual stage inflators that provide appropriate restraint for the severity of the collision, reducing the potential for injury in a low-speed crash.**
- **A completely redesigned steering column, with a stamped steel bracket at the forward end of the column, better absorbs and manages energy from an impact.**
- **A-, B-, C- and D-pillar covers are molded from Metalocene, a proprietary derivative of polypropylene that deforms and absorbs loads on impact. These new covers are offset from the body structure and include concealed ribs for energy absorption.**
- **Intermediate and rear seats include child seat anchors, which provide direct attachment to the vehicle seat rather than rely on the vehicle's seat belts for retention.**



A NUMBER OF ERGONOMIC IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE INSIDE, WHILE THE VANS FEATURE A BOLDER APPEARANCE OUTSIDE (RIGHT).



DODGE CARAVAN ES

minivans, so exterior changes to the 2001 models are evolutionary. Nevertheless, the new models move the minivan design philosophy to a new level.

Designers achieved a sleeker, more solid stance for the 2001 minivans by giving the side profile more of a wedge shape. Specifically, the roof and beltline rise toward the rear of the vehicle while the D-pillar and liftgate window are raked forward.

And similar to SUVs, the corners of the rear fascia were raised in the side view to provide visual lift to the rear of the vehicle.

The Dodge Caravan is instantly recognizable by the brand's signature cross-hair grille complete with an integrated ram's head badge. To emphasize the brand's Viper-inspired sporty image, the lower fascia features dual ported

"We've always designed our minivans from the inside out," says Executive Vice President of Product Development and Design Tom Gale. "So, we've enhanced the interior in terms of comfort, safety and ergonomics over and above an already functional package."

Also an industry first, the 2001 minivans now offer a removable, powered center console that may be latched into place either between the front or middle-row seats so owners can easily reconfigure the vehicle to best meet their needs.

And for minivan owners who are fed up with groceries or soccer balls rolling all over after a turn, the 2001 minivans offer a pop-up cargo organizer, located behind the rear seat, that can accommodate six full-size grocery bags or other potentially mobile cargo.

last year. Next comes the 3.5-liter SOHC 24-valve – the most powerful of the bunch – with 230 horsepower and 250 lb.-ft. of torque. A 3.8-liter V6 rounds out the group with 215 horsepower, up nearly 20 percent from last year.

With horsepower improvements in the go department, changes were made in the whoa department as well, with more massive brake rotors that are 20 percent larger than in the past. And, a 20 percent increase in torsional stiffness of the body structure contributes to a steady, quiet ride.

An additional two degrees of caster in the front suspension and a 30 percent more powerful, more precise steering gear not only provides an improved steering feel, but enhances steering returnability as well.