

Ford Unveils New Focus To Be Sold Globally

DETROIT (AP) — Ford Motor Co. is unveiling the 2012 Focus, a small sedan that is the company's first truly global car.

The new Focus, due in European and North American showrooms early next year, was designed and engineered to be sold worldwide using almost all the same parts, unlike past versions. It'll be sold in Asia, the Americas, and Europe.

The aim is to keep costs down and make money on small cars, a segment that used to be a loser. The Focus also shows that gas mileage is a prime motivator now for more frugal car buyers, and that small-car owners still want performance, quality and a lot of features. Pricing will be announced closer to the date it arrives in showrooms.

Ford unveils the new four- and five-door Focuses on Monday at the Detroit auto show. The cars are equipped with a new two-liter four-cylinder engine and six-speed automatic transmission. The company wouldn't reveal gas mileage, but said it will be significantly better than the current North American Focus, which gets up to 35 mpg on the highway.

It also has the same electronic-controlled suspension as the European Focus, generally known for better handling than U.S. vehicles.

But Jim Hughes, the Focus' chief engineer, said new technology will allow it to handle well without compromising ride quality.

"It certainly has a lot more steering precision and agility," he said. "The vehicle itself will still be very, very comfortable."

The new Focus' interior is slightly larger than the current version, and Ford says it will be quieter than all vehicles in its class and even the larger Honda Accord midsize car.

The Focus styling has a smaller windows and lines that rise from front to back. Hughes said they took steps to reduce wind drag.

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