

# Chrysler Brings Back The Sizzling SRT Viper

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DETROIT (AP) — The SRT Viper is Chrysler's roar, a comeback car for a comeback company.

The 2013 Viper, introduced Wednesday at the New York Auto Show, is the fifth generation of the iconic two-seater, which first went on sale as the Dodge Viper in 1992. More important, it's the first Viper since Chrysler shut down production of the sports car in 2010. At that time, the company was emerging from bankruptcy protection and needed to focus on improving high volume, bread-and-butter products like the Sebring sedan and Jeep Grand Cherokee.

Ralph Gilles, the president and CEO of Chrysler's Street and Racing Technology team — or SRT — said uncertainty about the Viper's future was "gut-wrenching." The company decided to revive the Viper as its fortunes changed and sales rose. Chrysler earned \$183 million last year, its first annual profit since 1997.

"The launch of the 2013 Viper proves that we simply would not let the performance icon of the Chrysler Group die," Gilles said in a statement.

The Viper, which is built by hand at a plant in Detroit, won't make a lot of money for Chrysler. The company sold just 1,172 Vipers in 2007, the year before the recession began. They cost around \$90,000 then, and will likely top \$100,000 when they go on sale later this year.

Instead, the Viper is a so-called halo car that shows what the company is capable of. It will also bring luster to Chrysler's other SRT offerings, including performance versions of the Chrysler 300 and the Dodge Challenger.

Here are more details about the car:

**UNDER THE HOOD:** The original Viper was among the first cars with a V-10 engine. The 8.4-liter V-10 is back, although this version is about 25 pounds lighter than the last one thanks to new materials. Chrysler expects it to get 640 horsepower and 600 pound-feet of torque. For comparison, the Chevrolet Corvette ZR1 gets 638 horsepower and 604 pound-feet of torque from its V-8. There is a six-speed manual transmission. The suspension has been reworked to make the car 50 percent more rigid, which helps the driver keep it under control.

**OUTSIDE:** Gilles has famously said that the Viper's design was inspired by "a naked woman on the beach." The fluid design has some of Viper's hallmarks, including a "double bubble" roof that gives the driver and passenger more headroom and gills along the fender to release heat from the engine. The headlights are designed to look like snake eyes, while the LED tail lights have a snakeskin texture on the lens.

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**INSIDE:** Chrysler is bringing the Viper's signature bare-bones interior up a notch, with better seat padding, lower seats for improved ergonomics and higher quality materials. A specially designed instrument cluster can be customized by the driver. The Viper also will have an 8.4-inch touchscreen to control the radio, navigation, climate and other applications.

**FUEL ECONOMY:** Chrysler hasn't released that yet, but no one who buys this car will really care.

**PRICE:** Chrysler hasn't released a price, but expect it to crack \$100,000. The Corvette ZR1 starts at \$111,600.

**CHEERS:** Chrysler didn't truly have a full lineup until it brought back this car. It's a triumph for the company and for the Detroit plant where it will be made.

**JEERS:** There are lots of other great sports cars available for this much money, from the Audi R8 to the Porsche 911. The Viper could even face some competition from within its own family. Fiat, which holds a majority stake in Chrysler, also owns Ferrari and Maserati.

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