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CHRYSLER SEBRING CONVERTIBLE: It's the first from this company with a retractable steel roof and right-hand drive.

CHRYSLER'S FIRST HARD-SHELL DROP-TOP

Chrysler's Sebring raises the roof

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March 5, 2008

Chrysler's Sebring convertible has the company's first retractable hard-top that can be opened at the press of a button on the fascia or key fob.

"It's a first for Chrysler," says the company's South African PR manager Richard Sloman. "The Sebring convertible has a body-colour, steel, retractable hard top that can be opened at the press of a button on the fascia or key fob.

"It gives you the benefits of a coupé and the open-air freedom of a convertible."

The 2008 Sebring convertible is built on the company's new D-segment platform and is the first convertible to be built with right-hand drive .

The convertible is 76mm longer than the sedan

From the front, the convertible shares many design cues with the sedan version, including the brand's signature grille and

sculptured bonnet.

Large quad headlights wrap around to the side, where the convertible's profile takes on a shape of its own.

The convertible has a 2.765m wheelbase and is 76mm longer overall than the sedan, lengthening the side profile which is further defined by a long bonnet, a long roof and a high waistline.

The three-piece retractable hard top has been designed, says Chrysler, to look like a coupé when raised and allow maximum storage capability in the boot when it's down.

The Sebring convertible seats four adults in a soft-touch, two-tone interior with dark and lighter shades

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CONVERTIBLE - DETROIT STYLE: The Chrysler Sebring convertible may have only two doors seats four adults.



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How about getting traffic cops back on the roads?

Driving home the other night on the 10km or so of the R27 that links my home village of Melkbosstrand, north of Cape Town, and the booming suburbs of Table View brought home the fact that we need patrol cars, not speed traps and road blocks, to bring down the death toll.

On that short stretch of almost perfectly straight road I spotted:

- A big container truck that parks every night, unlit and with apparent impunity, on the hard shoulder.
- Two trucks travelling without any rear lights at all.
- Three cyclists without lights.
- One car without lights.
- Several with one broken headlight.
- A number of pedestrians almost invisible in dark clothes.

That's a dozen examples of road-users just waiting to die or, worse, to kill others who observe the law.

The number of sad little white crosses on this road is testament to the great business undertakers are doing and the lack of work the Cape Town traffic department is doing – and I've no doubt the same thing can be seen in countless other places in this country that seems to take 30 000 road deaths a year in its stride.

On Sunday night, on this well-maintained highway, there were two crashes within minutes of each other and only a few hundred metres apart.

The answer is a blitz on

of khaki or grey on fascia and doors, cream and beige leather trim and chromed and tortoiseshell accents .

The Sebring convertible also has Chrysler's MyGIG audio and entertainment system as standard

The seat belts are part of the front and rear seats and the front passenger seat has a slide and recline memory to keep access to the back seats easy.

The fascia has a lockable glove compartment and a heatable/coolable cupholder; the rear cup holders are in the rear quarter panels for easy access and there are map pockets in the doors and passenger seat back.

The Sebring convertible also has Chrysler's MyGIG audio and entertainment system.

The passive safety suite includes multi-stage front crash bags and front-seat-mounted side crash bags, anti-lock brakes and an electronic stability programme.

Motivation is provided by a new 2.7-litre V6 engine for which Chrysler quotes 137kW and 256Nm at the expense of 10.9 litres/100km in town and 8.4 litres/100km on the open road - the same engine is now available in the Sebring sedan in SA.

The Chrysler Sebring Convertible Limited costs R299 900 and comes with a three-year or 100 000km warranty and maintenance plan. Optional extras include the MyGIG Navigation upgrade for R14 900 and metallic paint at R1200.



THIS IS HOW IT WORKS: The Chrysler Sebring convertible's three-piece steel roof is stacked the boot when down rather than the Z-fold of BMW 3-Series convertible.

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moving traffic violations: crossing solid white lines, unsafe overtaking, ill-maintained vehicles (which should be instantly impounded), jumping red lights - and only traffic patrols will curb this scourge about which politicians talk much but do little.

31 people died on KZN roads on March 3. The MEC for safety and security announced, no doubt after deep thought and reflection: "This is not a very good morning." A senior traffic cop said: "This is a very sad day."

Well hey, guys (and you lot in Cape Town), get off your backsides, put your traffic cops to work, and bloody well do something about it. That's what you get paid for - go earn your cheques and put good men, in fast cars, back on the roads. - **The Editor**

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