

2005 SYNUS CONCEPT Exterior/Interior



*"SYNUS is a high-tech urban tree house on the outside; on the inside it's a club with privacy and security."
– José Paris, Designer*

Standing less than five feet tall, SYNUS^{US} concept signals that this Ford Fiesta-derived car can hold its own with both the big dogs on the road and whatever punishing conditions it might meet while parked downtown.



Flared fenders, an upright windshield, and a large, milled "FORD" badge establish a Built Ford Tough attitude.

Keyed to its protective posture, the ingenious exterior of the Ford SYNUS^{US} concept borrows design cues from two other tough forms – bank vaults and armored cars – right down to the big four-handle spinner that opens the windowless rear hatch.

While engaged in secure mode, the vehicle deploys protective shutters over the windshield and side glass. Small windows on the side and roof are non-opening and bullet-resistant.

Adding to the car's protective theme, the driver's door on the Ford SYNUS^{US} concept is unlocked via a safe-style combination dial on the B-pillar. Its door glass borrows the trademark shape from Ford's mighty F-Series pickups, and small, slot-style windows are set high on the rear flanks. These non-opening panes of bullet-resistant glass – deeply recessed to bolster the body's impression of thickness and impenetrability – are replicated on the roof as a pair of skylight panels, allowing natural light into the cabin without compromising security. The passenger side boasts a supplemental rear-hinged access door, similar to what is found on an extended-cab pickup, to ease rear-seat ingress and egress.

VISUAL CUES AND FAMILY RESEMBLANCE

Inspired by Ford's current range of rough-and-ready trucks and sport-utility vehicles, Designer José Paris has neatly integrated the big, bad attitude of its Built Ford Tough relatives in this diminutive urban sanctuary's wrapping.

A milled, block-lettered "FORD" badge – larger than those found on the F-Series trucks – is backlit in electric blue, hinting at the sanctuary within. Meanwhile, simple rectangular headlamps that

feature stacked halogen elements and a floating front bumper perfectly complete the confident neo-classical look. Boldly flared wheel arches at the front and rear accommodate the vehicle's exceptionally wide track, a clear statement that the SYN^{US} concept is every bit as nimble and fun to drive as its acclaimed European-market foundation, the Ford Fiesta.

The just-slightly raked, completely flat windshield is wide, low and set between two chunky A-pillars and beneath a substantial header – another visual element that helps give the little Ford SYN^{US} concept its armored vehicle character. A very fine centerline crease runs the length of the roof, a cue that is neatly reiterated in the vehicle's interior.

PRIVACY AND SECURITY DELIVERED TO A NEW LEVEL

Because the SYN^{US} concept's native habitat, the urban environment, can be inhospitable at times, the door glass and the windshield come equipped with deployable armor. These steel shutters are simple but effective security measures that help deter vandalism, and prevent smash-and-grab thievery. With the shutters in place, the Ford SYN^{US} concept can meet the challenge of overnight curbside parking with confidence.

The shutters also afford privacy and security when occupants choose to kick back and take advantage of the vehicle's array of communications and entertainment technology.

Key amenities include an onboard 802.11g wireless network hub and eye-popping 45-inch flat screen LCD from Sharp Electronics which fills the rear tailgate. This gigantic display can accommodate a variety of technologies, including DVD players, the internet, and video game systems. Moreover, a series of external cameras linked to the display allow occupants to monitor activities on the street – even with the security shutters in place. One such camera is housed in the four-handle spinner on the rear door, which has a single hinge and opens like a bank vault. The rear door is windowless with a convincingly impenetrable appearance. Stencil-style Ford SYN^{US} concept logo garnishes the smooth, slightly concave surface. Sliver-like taillights and a center high-mounted stop light that feature potent LED elements also emerge from within the fine gap between the rear door and the body.



Steel shutters cover the windshield and front windows, while the rear side windows are made of bullet-resistant glass.



The rear hatch is six inches thick, and features beveled edges like a bank vault.

Swing this door open and the Ford SYN^{US} concept reveals more brilliant, vault-inspired detailing. The six-inch thick door's inner edges are broadly beveled like a safe's, nestling into the body's similarly mitered frame. Both surfaces are finished in solid milled aluminum. A trio of substantial bars dominates the body's bottom edge. Recalling a vault door's retractable locking bolts, they actually serve as shock mounts for the floating rear bumper, which swings aside with the access door.



*"This isn't just the car you drive to the club or your friend's pad; this becomes the club or the pad – the tech-savvy place to hang out, especially in the city."
– Joe Baker, Chief Designer*

Striving for a design that exudes the warmth and welcome of a private sanctuary, Chief Designer Joe Baker has conceived and crafted a space that not only calms the spirit but eases the stress of urban life.

The Ford SYNUS concept features innovative front seats with articulated seatbacks that are identically shaped and padded on both the front and rear faces. Instead of using a traditional fixed pivot, each seatback is mounted on rails along the sides of the bottom cushion. This allows each seatback slide from back to front, allowing one or both of the front seat occupants to face rearward. This feature helps bring together front and rear occupants for socializing, or allows front occupants to take full advantage of the entertainment systems found on the SYNUS concept.

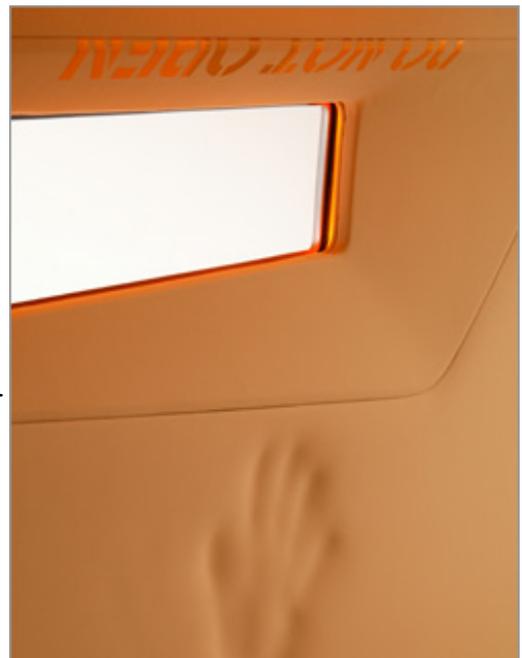


The Naugahyde front seats feature seatbacks that slide forward, creating rear-facing seating for tailgating or socializing.

Power adjustment controls are centrally located on the underside of the seat, and the whole unit rides on a single floor track, yet another innovation that maximizes space. The rear seats can accommodate two passengers in comfort, or fold completely flat to increase interior volume.

Color and fabric selection have as much to do with the cabin's welcoming atmosphere as do its soothing shapes and intelligent ergonomics. The seats, headliner, and side panels are swathed in a smooth, elastic fabric that lacks a noticeable grain or texture. Its soft, skin-like physical properties and off-white tones help make occupants feel one with the interior.

Secondary surfaces, including the underside of the front seat and the lower portion of the instrument panel, are clad in vintage-style Naugahyde in a warm, complementary shade dubbed "yield yellow" by the design team, for its similarity to colors used in road signage – another nod to the vehicle's urban intention.



In addition to the soft-touch fabrics, the side panels behind the front seats are layered in supremely supple "memory foam," that seemingly hugs body parts, makes the rear compartment as hospitable as the front, and promotes this area as more than just added cargo space.

Side panels are covered in memory foam that conforms to body parts.

Likewise, the Ford SYN^{US} concept's instrument panel is a model of ergonomic efficiency, incorporating easy-to-read, amber-lit gauges and user-friendly controls. The steering wheel folds away beneath the dash – offering additional sanctuary space behind the concept's fortress-like exterior. The passenger compartment's understated LED lighting also changes moods as the occupants see fit, easing from cool white to warm amber.

TAGS AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR STYLE AND FUNCTION



Faux "selvage" accents the interior, such as the "79 cents/yard" on the headliner.

Color and materials designer Elizabeth Salonen has accented the passenger compartment with strips of faux "selvage." (Interestingly, selvage is most appropriate for this security themed concept in another sense. One meaning of the word is "the edge plate of a lock that has a slot for a bolt".) These cut-off-and-throw-away edges on lengths of fabric often note such mundane information as fiber content and care instructions. However, Salonen believed that exposed lines of selvage – custom-made with clever, SYN^{US}-inspired descriptions – would highlight the handcraftsmanship in the interior fitments.

One such line runs the length of the headliner, elegantly paralleling the centerline crease on the roof panel. Salonen also included a few stencil graffiti-style "instructions," like "feet" placed on the floor mats. In addition, designers highlighted phrases that playfully caution against doing the very thing the part is designed to do.

"Very often people do the exact opposite of what they're told," Salonen said. "In this case, we knew they would lift the back sides of the rear seats so we stenciled 'DO NOT OPEN' on the panels."

STAY INSIDE, SEE IT ALL – THE ULTIMATE IN VOYEURISM

Perhaps the SYN^{US} concept's most eye-popping feature is a gigantic widescreen liquid crystal display that's built into the vehicle's tailgate.

When engaged, the Sharp Electronics television– the largest flat screen LCD ever mounted in any vehicle – offers viewers inside the vehicle the choice of internet surfing, people watching, or movie viewing.



Measuring fully 45-inches on the diagonal, this mammoth television is derived from Sharp's new Aquos LC-45GX6U high-definition technology and displays a true 16:9 aspect ratio and full HDTV resolution of 1920 x 1080 pixels. It's completely plug-and-play ready, allowing for quick hookups to the viewer's favorite gadgets, as well as three unique usage modes.

The 45-inch, flatscreen LCD incorporated in the rear hatch is connected to external cameras, acting as a virtual rear window in Observation Mode.

In *Observation* mode, for instance, tiny external cameras allow occupants to watch activity on the street outside, even when the vehicle's roll-up security shutters are sealed. In motion, the display works with the cameras to function as the vehicle's rear window; the driver, looking in the rearview mirror, actually sees a high-definition closed-circuit image of the rearward view. Think of it as a virtual rear window.

In *Generate* mode, the screen serves as a vast electronic desktop, acting in tandem with the vehicle's integrated 802.11g Wi-Fi wireless network system and PC controller. In this mode, users can surf the Web, manage digital music files, or create and edit images and video while the vehicle is parked.

Finally, in *Entertain* mode, the television display becomes the ultimate mobile home theater and arcade, with the ability to interface with DVD and VHS players and video game systems. When the display is in this mode, sliding the front backrests forward creates the best seats in the house.