

# New dealership ready for Fiats to roll into Austin



Dealership owner Nyle Maxwell, with a Fiat 500, predicts Austin 'is going to be one of the top markets for Fiat.' General manager Lisa Copeland, above, said Fiat of Austin plans to sell 300 cars in its first year.

Brenda O'Brian photos  
AMERICAN-STATESMAN

## Maxwell Auto Group – one of about 200 U.S. sellers – gearing up for March 1 opening

By Barry Harrell

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

The construction work is winding up. The staff has been hired. The first orders have been placed. The initial shipment of cars is poised to head this way.

In short, the pieces are pretty much in place for Fiat's return to the Austin market.

Fiat of Austin, the dealership awarded late last year to Nyle Maxwell Auto Group, is scheduled to open March 1 at the Domain shopping development in North Austin, said Maxwell and Lisa Copeland, the new dealership's general manager.

Maxwell, a former mayor of Round Rock who owns three other area dealerships, was one of about 200 U.S. dealers awarded Fiat franchises as the Italian automaker seeks to make a successful return to the American market.

After a construction meeting Wednesday, Maxwell stood beside a marketing model of the Fiat 500 outside his Domain studio and said that



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it's "easy to be excited about this opportunity to bring Fiat back to the United States."

"Austin, quite simply, is going to be one of the top markets for Fiat. It has to be, because

of the demographics of our market area," he said. "This fits quite well."

The 2012 Fiat 500, a revamped version of the company's well-known subcompact, went on sale in January at about 130 U.S. dealerships. The base version starts at about \$15,500.

Fiat of Austin will accept delivery of 60 to 70 Fiats in the next two weeks, and about 20 have already been sold, Copeland said. She said Fiat of Austin projects selling 300 new cars in its first year.

The dealership will have 12 employees on site initially, with another six at an off-site service center that will be shared with other Maxwell Auto Group dealerships.

Copeland said the new roughly 6,000-square-foot showroom for Fiat of Austin will feature a custom "finale" delivery system to provide a sales experience she compared to "a Milan fashion show." That includes a rotating stage, surrounded by seating for friends and family, and filming the customers accepting delivery of their cars.

"It's such an individualistic automobile, and they are buying Fiats because they want to be different," Copeland said. "We wanted to celebrate with them."

Additional information from The Associated Press  
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