

CLASSIC DRIVER

The New Audi A5



Based on what many industry pundits believe to be the underpinnings of the next-generation A4, Audi's new A5 is a totally new model for the company, being a genuine four-seater two-door coupé. Previous cars in this mould have been '2-box' in profile variations on existing cars, the latest A5 has more akin with the ultra-successful BMW 3-Series Coupé.

The styling of the A5, that's debut is scheduled for Geneva this month, features a swoopy side sculpture married to a front with overtones of both the new TT and the R8, and a boot treatment akin to the company's A6. It looks good, and with Audi's trademark superlative interior finish and four-wheel-drive (on higher-spec models only), it has every likelihood of being a very strong contender in the 'stylish yet practical' mid/high-price coupé segment.

As you'd expect, the new car comes with a barrage of technical trickery that's designed to make life easier and safer for its occupants, as well as ensuring Audi's recent strides forward in performance driving satisfaction (the RS4 being a case in point) are maintained. The A5 has further revised suspension technology, the latest spec 4wd system, Audi adaptive lights combining bi-xenon headlights with the 'dynamic cornering light system', deluxe automatic climate control with three temperature zones, a bodysell of extremely high rigidity, and a new key (that sounds like Mercedes' one) that can also store important information, such as the vehicle's current mileage or warning messages from the Audi A5's driver information system. This data is always up-to-date, and available to allow after-sales staff at a dealership to receive the vehicle for servicing quickly and easily.



Sticking to their tradition inline-engine layout, Audi have nevertheless managed to produce a car with a long wheelbase (more secure handling and greater internal space) and short overhangs. Top of the range of the standard A5 models is the 4wd 265 bhp new 3.2-litre FSI-engined car, while a 1.8 TFSI delivering 170 bhp, will be available from autumn 2007. Two diesels are shown from launch, the top-of-the-range 3.0-litre engine TDI with 240 bhp - yet offering an average fuel consumption of 7.2 litres per 100 km - as well as the familiar 190 bhp 2.7-litre V6. Gearboxes are either 6-speed manual or Audi's 'multitronic' auto, with eight forward gears and a sport mode.



The S5

Of interest to Classic Driver readers will be the flagship S5, with its 354 bhp V8 delivering peak torque of 440 Nm at 3,500 rpm. 0 - 100 Km/h (62 mph) is covered in 5.1 seconds and its top speed (like other versions) is electronically limited to 250 km/h. Visually, the S5 has a different radiator and bumpers, together with aluminium-look exterior mirrors, 18-inch wheels with 245/40 R 18 tyres, colour-keyed door sill trims and a dual-branch exhaust system with four oval tailpipes. Inside the sportiest model, Audi have done its usual superb job of blending hugging seats and sporty instrumentation with discrete styling. For the extroverts there's a copious extras list to make any A5 or S5 truly 'yours'.

The A5 and S5 are available to order from 6 March 2007 in Europe with the first vehicles due for delivery from June.

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