
Audi R8 Diesel

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Well, this is one we all saw coming. Given Audi's vast success at Le Mans with the diesel-powered R10 TDI, and the equally vast success of its R8 road-going supercar, it was only a matter of time before the German giant put the two together and brought us an R8 diesel. As yet, it's only a concept car - unveiled at Detroit - but we have little doubt that it will soon be in production.

The R8 V12 TDI Concept replaces the existing supercar's V8 FSI petrol engine with the 6.0-litre, bi-turbo 12-cylinder TDI engine first seen in the Q7 V12 TDI. This gives it an astronomical 1000Nm of torque, not to mention 493bhp - a seductive blend which sees 0-62mph dispatched in a mere 4.2 seconds. Top speed is an estimated 186mph.

Remarkably, the new supercar concept already complies with the stringent EU6 emission limits expected to come into effect in 2014, thanks to its common-rail injection with piezo injectors, twin

particulate filters and new ultra-low emission system. And of course the structure of the mid-engined supercar, combining lightweight aluminium panelling and an aluminium space frame, helps keep weight to a minimum.



Aside from the engine, the V12 TDI Concept is equipped with some advanced Audi technology, including the magnetic ride adaptive damping system which swaps conventional damper fluid for a (deep breath) magnetorheological alternative, containing minute magnetic particles, influenced by an electromagnetic field. This means the viscosity of the fluid can be readily and rapidly controlled, reacting automatically to road conditions and driving style. Plus, of course, there's the assurance of quattro permanent four-wheel drive, and carbonfibre-reinforced ceramic brakes.

The concept also boasts a tailored version of Audi drive select, the adaptive dynamics system which offers 'Dynamic', 'Sport' and 'Race' settings. When the 'Race' setting is selected for, say, track-day driving, the interior instrument lighting changes from white to red and the onboard satnav displays navigation information relating to the specific circuit being driven, along with a lap-timer. In this mode, it will also give centrifugal force and boost pressure readings.



The diesel engine itself is displayed in all its glory beneath a clear glass cover. At 684mm in length, the 12-cylinder is 166mm longer than the V8 TDI. It doesn't sound a lot but I can't imagine it was an easy job to squeeze it into the engine bay. Audi says that the sensation of space which sets the R8 apart from rivals is 'barely' compromised. Whatever that means.

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Photos: Audi

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