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Audi Sportback Concept Impresses in Detroit



One of the highlights of the NAIAS came from Audi, in the form of the Sportback Concept. Clearly previewing the company's future styling and engineering direction, the five-door features graceful lines, a new, 'clean' 3.0-litre TDI engine and the promise of outstanding performance (152mph top speed/0-62mph in under seven seconds) and economy (47.8mpg), together with a CO2 output of no more than 156g/km.

The new car could well carry the title 'A7', as it has similar dimensions to the current A6 yet has more coupé-like lines and a hatchback. The super-long glass sunroof is unlikely to make it into production, although it does impart a clean, sharp look to the car in concept form, at least.

Mechanically, the Sportback utilises A4/A5 suspension components, a 7-speed version of the twin-clutch S tronic automatic gearbox, permanent quattro 4wd and a raft of energy-saving features.



These include: electromechanical power steering with a pump that consumes energy only when the wheel is turned; a downstream exhaust emission control system which, by injecting a biological additive called AdBlue upstream of the DeNOx catalytic converter, helps to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions by up to 90 per cent; energy recuperation via the alternator boosting the battery when coasting, and start-stop technology.

The new, 225PS/ 550Nm engine will appear in existing Audis during 2009 and will be available worldwide (including the state of California). It has the potential to provide up to 47.8mpg and meet the emissions limits of all 50 US states, as well as the forthcoming EU6 standard.



Inside, Audi's unrivalled-in-the-mainstream interior styling shines once again. Extensive use is made of leather, while oak blockboard trim provides contrast in wood. It's a four-seater only, however - but does not appear to be as extreme as the Mercedes CLS in rear headroom.

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