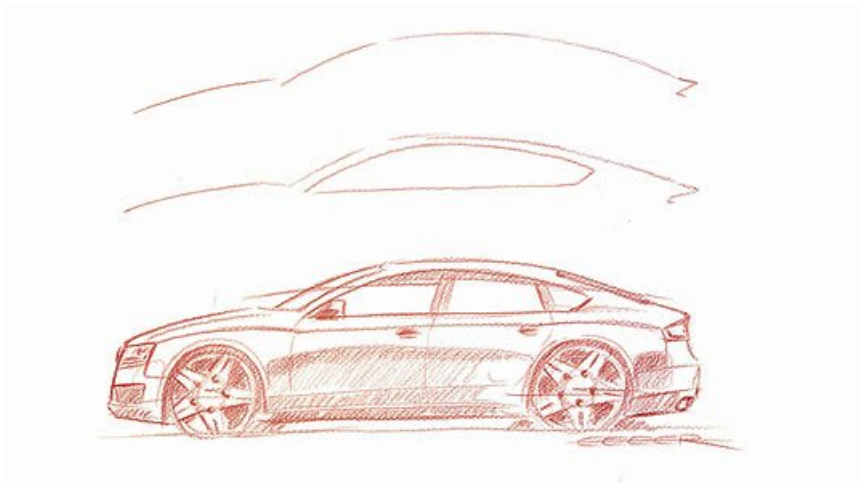


CLASSIC DRIVER

Audi A5 Sportback



Having just been to Le Mans and back in an A5 Coupé, enjoying surprising performance from the 2.0 TDI engine (we wanted something economical for the 900-mile trip), I can see why a five-door alternative could be popular. It was hard to fault the Coupé when there were just two of us on board but, picking up a couple of friends for an afternoon at La Chartre-sur-le-Loir, things got just a bit *too* intimate in the back. And it was none too easy climbing out, into the throng of Le Mans crowds. Particularly when the majority of the locals supported Peugeot.

The new Audi A5 Sportback aims to combine the elegance of a coupé with the comfort of a saloon. Joining the Coupé and recently launched Cabriolet as the third member of the A5 family, the five-door Sportback will arrive in the UK in September, offering a choice of TFSI, FSI and TDI engines. With an entry-level price of EUR 36,050 for the 2.0 TDI – and an even cheaper version due next year – the Sportback will be the most affordable model in the A5 range.



The coupé-like silhouette is possible through Audi's clever design, incorporating a long, tapering roofline that is 36mm lower than the A4 Saloon, together with short overhangs at the front and rear and a long, 2810mm wheelbase. Four frameless doors add to the slim, dynamic styling, while the rear is the most unusual aspect of the car. The distinctive hatchback design is, says Audi, 'emblematic of the vehicle's excellent functionality'. Certainly, the baggage volume of 480 litres, almost equal to that of the A4 Avant, rising to 980 litres with the rear seats dropped, is impressive.

Initially the A5 Sportback will be available with a choice of two petrol (2.0 TFSI quattro and 3.2 V6 quattro) and three diesel engines (2.0 TDI, 2.7 TDI and 3.0 V6 TDI). The V6 diesel boasts 240HP and a very cheerful 500Nm of torque. With (unsurprisingly, given that transmission-wrenching torque) quattro all-wheel drive.

Finally, Audi promises that the new A5 Sportback will have four properly comfortable seats and, of course, easy entry through those rear doors. That should make it ideal for transcontinental journeys, four-up.

Text - Charis Whitcombe
Photos - Audi

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