
Cars we love: Audi quattro

20 December 2014 | Charis Whitcombe

To look at, the Audi quattro is a squarish, practical sort of car. Its styling doesn't begin to hint at the fact that, under its utilitarian skin, it's one of the most innovative cars ever launched onto the world stage...

All bite, no bark





Before Jensen FF enthusiasts get all hot under the collar, we have to admit that the quattro wasn't quite the first high-performance 4WD road-going coupé. But in 1980, the year the quattro first appeared at Geneva, the new Audi fitted perfectly with the German company's plans to beat its rivals – both in rallies and, more to the point, in road car sales.

Any hint of weird and wacky styling could have deterred potential customers, so Audi kept things plain and simple: but in our opinion, that makes its strong, functional lines all the more appealing.

However, the real reason we love this car is that the quattro is a technical masterpiece. Audi avoided many potential pitfalls of the 4WD system, such as heavy tyre wear and loss of comfort, partly by using three differentials, while the 5-cylinder, turbocharged engine promised 200HP and – thanks to the astonishing traction – acceleration from zero to 60mph in 7.3 seconds. (The later 20V, built from 1989 to 1991, boasted 220HP and brought the 0-60mph time down to 6.3 seconds.)

While enthusiasts saw the road-going quattro as the last word in technical charisma, things were going even better on the rally stage. In the early 1980s, the Audi quattro dominated the World Rally Championship and changed the course of the sport for all time.

Shorter, lighter, faster



Which brings us to the car in the pictures. In 1984, Audi produced a limited run of just 224 road-going 'Sport quattros' to homologate the Group B rally cars. This is one of them. With more than 300HP, the Sport quattros could reach 60mph in less than five seconds; plus they had a significantly shorter wheelbase and a much lower weight. Technical genius and phenomenal performance in a very

unassuming package. Definitely one for the connoisseurs.

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