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New Audi A5 and S5 Coupé First Impressions

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Keith Ward samples the latest A5 and S5 models.

YOU may think at a glance that the new Audi A5 Sportback looks pretty similar to the still-stylish nine-year-old outgoing version.

In fact it is billed as “all-new from the ground up”, being 47 mm (1.85 in) longer but up to 60 kg (132 lb) lighter on its new platform. It also has a bigger boot at 465 litres (16.42 cu.ft), claiming to be the roomiest in class, and standing lowest to the ground among rivals at just 1,371 mm (4.50 ft) high – as well as sleeker than its predecessor, with a lower drag co-efficient of 0.25.

And just as arriving home-owners tend to rip out and replace bathrooms and kitchens, so



the Coupé interior has been smartly and completely refurbished and re-fitted with the latest in-dashboard infotainment and connective technology.



Standard trim includes heated leather seats, 10-speaker audio, Xenon headlamps with LED daytime running lights, 17-inch alloys, a seven-inch colour monitor on the dash, a smartphone interface for Apple or Android systems, three-zone climate control, cruise control, front and rear parking sensors and low-speed collision avoidance.

As usual, there's a small library of optional, extra-cost packages (Comfort and Sound, Driver Assistance, Vision Pack with Head-up Display etc.) which can rapidly boost the showroom price.



Despite a longer wheelbase, legroom as well as headroom is restricted for the two rear seat passengers. Claustrophobics should not enter. Also, moving the front seats to exit is an awkward, two-stage operation. More easily and more practically, the rear seats do divide and fold for extra cargo space.

But hey - probably none of this will trouble the typical coupé customer who is all about style and speed.

In an initial range of four, the A5 Coupe perms two trim levels - Sport and S line - and three engines - two diesels and a petrol, all with seven-speed S-tronic automatic transmission and the top two with quattro 4WD. A 190 PS 2.0 litre diesel claims 7.7 seconds for 0-62 mph and a 218 PS 3.0 litre diesel takes 6.2 seconds for this sprint. The 252 PS 2.0 litre TFSI petrol version is credited with 5.8 seconds.

Official combined mpg figures vary between 45.6 (2.0 litre petrol) and 70.6 (190 PS diesel); CO2 from 141 g/km (petrol) down to 105 g/km (2.0 litre TDI Sport ultra on 17-inch wheels).

Prices range initially from £36,480 to £41,375. To come is a basic SE version with a 190 PS petrol unit, from £30,700. (A thought: Audi's feisty little TT Coupe, around 20 inches shorter than the A5 at prices upwards of £30,000, has its own faithful following).

We tried and enjoyed first the A5 Coupé 2.0 litre TFSI petrol in S line trim at £41,240. Its 252 PS and 370 Nm torque, mated to a 7-speed S tronic automatic and quattro 4WD, brings up 0-62 in a seemingly effortless 5.8 seconds. Its combined mpg is 45.6 and CO2 rating on 18-inch wheels 141 g/km, so 25 per cent BIK. That was a lively taster.

However, alongside the A5 Coupé is again a performance flagship S5 counterpart, with its own unique badging and features, priced from £47,000 and expected to take seven per cent of A5/S5 sales. Equipment includes LED lights all-round with dynamic rear indicators, upgraded navigation with an 8.3-inch colour screen, a three-year subscription to Audi Connect infotainment services and hugging front "super" sports seats in Nappa leather, and with a massage function.



In place of the old S5's naturally aspirated V8 or supercharged V6 is a newly developed 354 PS turbocharged V6 unit, linked to a seamlessly-changing eight-speed tiptronic box and zipping the new S5 to 62 mph in a claimed 4.7 seconds.

Given the speed limits on public roads, it can still produce through its two pairs of chromed exhaust pipes a quadraphonic tune of music to the driver's ears, rapidly growing from a low burble to a resplendent rasp. (Not so tuneful is the tyre noise from the special 19-inch wheels).

On a new platform and with quattro 4WD the S5 handles, rides and corners superbly, judging from the limited taster of the designated one-hour test drive in and around Manchester, from the shadows of Media City and Manchester United football ground to a foray into Cheshire countryside on motorways and B-roads. This S5 is something special.

Look out soon for five-door Sportback and Cabriolet versions of the A5, plus a more powerful 286 PS version of the 3.0-litre V6 diesel in the Coupé.



Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Audi S5 Coupe 3.0 V6 TFSI quattro.

Body: Three door coupé; 4 seats; length 4,673 mm (15.33 ft), height 1371 mm (4.50 ft), width (excluding mirrors) 1846 mm (6.06 ft); boot 465 litres (16.42 cu.ft); kerb wt 1,615 kg (3,560 lb).

Engine: Petrol; V6 turbo; 2,995cc; 8-speed tiptronic auto; quattro 4WD.

Power: 354 PS @ 5,400 – 6,400 rpm.



Max torque: 500 Nm (369 lb.ft) @ 1,370 - 4,500 rpm.

Performance:

0-62 mph: 4.7 secs.

Top speed: 155 mph.

Fuel consumption: Official Combined 38.2 mpg; tank capacity 58 litres (12.76 gallons).
Approximate range at Official Combined mpg: More than 485 miles.

Emissions and taxation: CO2 emissions 170 g/km. BIK 34%.

Wheels: 19-inch; five-spoke partly polished alloys.

PRICE: £46,015; as tested with options £57,895.

Rivals: BMW 440i M Sport 2WD auto £43,925; Mercedes-AMG C43 4WD auto £46,875.