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Audi TT – Range Starter 1.8 – Road Test

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New Entry Level 1.8 litre Audi TT Coupe – Less Pressure on Your Pocket.

By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

Until the value of the British Pound stabilises following the Brexit divorce, less expensive entry level models might become a more sensible buy when it comes to choosing an imported new car for the new '66' plate registration month of this coming September.

By chance, or foresight, Audi has recently introduced a less expensive 1.8 litre turbo petrol engine to their third generation TT 2+2 Coupe and two seater Roadster line up. This is an important move as the UK has been until now the largest market in the World for TT sales,



when at its peak 10,500 units a year were sold.

The latest TT made its appearance in November 2014 in Coupé form with the Roadster convertible arriving in March 2015. Currently the TT range, depending on the engine chosen, has Sport, S line and TTS specification levels with 1.8 and 2.0 litre petrol units from 180 to 310 hp and a 2.0 litre TDI 184 hp turbodiesel unit. However on their way are the TT RS Coupé (at £51,800) and the Roadster (£53,550) versions with a 400 hp 2.5 litre TFSI engine, with deliveries due at the end of this year.

At the other end of the power and price scales, the new entry level 1.8 litre petrol engine is only available with a six-speed manual gearbox whilst all other engines have the option of manual or S tronic six speed transmissions. Quattro all wheel drive is available for the 230 and 310 hp TFSI petrol engines. Prices now start from £27,585 for the new 1.8 litre Coupe and rise to £42,800 for the TTS Roadster 2.0 litre 310 hp quattro S tronic auto. But as with any Audi there is a long list of extra cost options that will push up the price considerably.



1,8 Liter-Vierzylinder-TFSI-Motor im Audi TT

mit FSI-Benzindirekteinspritzung, Abgasturboaufladung mit elektrischem Wastegate, integrierter Abgaskühlung im Zylinderkopf, vollelektronische Kühlmittelregelung und Audi valvelift system auslasseitig

1.8 litre four cylinder TFSI engine in the Audi TT

with FSI-petrol direct injection, turbocharger with electronically controlled wastegate, integrated exhaust gas cooling in the cylinder head, electronically controlled coolant control and Audi valvelift on the exhaust camshaft

1.798 cm³

132 kW (180 PS) @ 5.100 - 6.200 min⁻¹

250 Nm @ 1.250 - 5.000 min⁻¹

04/15





1.8 litre four cylinder TFSI

With the TT Coupe 1.8 litre with Sport specification, on road test duty with me just as the Brexit saga unfolded, the £3,065 saving with the on-the-road price of this new version over the same spec front wheel drive 2.0 litre model, now looks a wise choice. Not only does it cost less to buy, it uses less fuel – 47.1 mpg instead of 46.3 mpg – and emits less CO2 – 138 g/km versus 141 g/km – so VED road tax is one band cheaper at £130 instead of £145. Insurance is also two groups cheaper at 32E.

But what about performance, after all the TT Coupe is a sports car? Although the new 1.8 litre turbo petrol engine has 50 hp less than the 2.0 litre turbo unit, it will not let you down, with a top speed of 149 mph with zero to 62 mph taking 6.9 seconds. Pay the extra £3k and the 2.0 litre tops out at 155 mph and the acceleration dash to 62 mph is just 0.9 seconds faster, so cost-wise the new 1.8 litre engine option makes more financial sense given our current financial turmoil.

There is a larger difference in the torque between the 1.8 and 2.0 litre TFSI petrol engines. The new 1.8 litre unit produces 250 Nm (184 lb.ft) at 1,250 rpm against the 370 Nm (273 lb.ft) of the larger unit at 1,600 rpm. The result is the smaller engine produces almost instant 'grunt' from lower engine speeds and this continues right through the power band up to 5,000 rpm, making for strong linear power delivery. It is only at very high speeds that that 2.0 litre has the edge, but in most driving conditions they are a match for each other and probably the 1.8 litre is more responsive and smoother at lower speeds where we all do most of our driving these days. At the legal 70mph cruising speed there is absolutely no shortfall in performance so downsizing is not an issue in terms of performance, and in the future frugal days it will burn less of a hole in your pocket.

During my week-long test driving, covering the usual motorway and country A/B roads with some in-town travel, the real-life fuel consumption was an overall 40.5 mpg, with over 46 mpg regularly retuned for 70 mph motorway driving. This was realistically close to the official 47.1 mpg Combined Cycle figure. Much of the good fuel economy for open road



cruising comes about with the use of the six-speed manual gearbox, which has fuel-saving overdrive fifth and sixth gear ratios. Drive to the front wheels provides ample grip during acceleration and fast cornering with minimal body lean and all rounded off by sharp and precise steering. My test car had the optional £1,095 magnetic ride system and I think that should be a serious consideration by customers. Without it the ride is firm and I just dialled in the Comfort mode all the time and that produced a compliant ride without any loss of sharp handling. The Drive Select function also allows for other individual settings such as Efficiency, Auto, Dynamic and Individual.

Another must-have option is the parking system which costs £430 but it is worth it because rear and rear quarter visibility from the Coupé design is not very good. I wished the door mirrors would automatically dip once reverse gear has been engaged, as they do on other premium brand cars, so it would be easier to judge the distance between the kerb and those sparkling alloy wheels.

With its lightweight construction and use of the highly rated VW Group MQB platform the latest TT has all the performance and handling abilities to match its more muscular and edgy styling. The front face of the TT Coupe is very close to that of the Audi R8 supercar and the side profile continues that styling theme. Previous generation TTs had a bias towards female drivers, today's TT has shifted that bias towards men with its macho R8 profile.

Interior wise the latest Audi TT has received huge praise for its high quality design, better space in the front with its high-tech cockpit and all beautifully put together. The base level Sport specification includes air conditioning, cruise control, electric windows, radio and suede type Alcantara and leather trim upholstery for the door cards and seats. Highlight of the layout is the 12.3-inch colour display screen positioned right in front of the driver behind the steering wheel, in place of the conventional instrument dials. The driver can see all relevant information including the sat-nav system. This display is linked to the Audi MMI intuitive infotainment system, controlled via a rotary dial and buttons between the seats.



On the demerit side the space in the rear is very limited for legroom, rain water ran around the heavy-to-lift rear tailgate and into the load area, and rain water also ran off the roof into the passenger compartment when the doors were opened. The tailgate also doesn't have a wash/wipe system so that didn't help rear visibility either. Unfortunately the Sport specification doesn't include electrically operated or heated front seats which most owners would choose to have.

VERDICT

Although the new 1.8 litre version of the Audi TT Coupe doesn't tick all the boxes in terms of specification without visiting the options list, it does score where it matters and that is reducing the cost of TT ownership. Given today's financial turmoil following Brexit it will now be a step in the right direction for many potential owners.



For: New engine reduces ownership purchase and running costs without any real loss in performance, still great to drive, beautifully built, high quality interior.

Against: Limited rear quarter visibility, no rear wash/wipe system, rain water entered the boot and car when the tailgate/doors were opened, the Sport spec could be higher.





Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Audi TT Coupe 2+2, 1.8 TFSI Sport 180 manual.

Engine: 1.8 litre, four cylinder, direct injection turbocharged petrol.

Power: 180 hp.

Torque: 250 Nm (184 lb.ft) of torque from 1,250 rpm.

Transmission: Six speed manual, front wheel drive.

Performance:

0-62 mph: 6.9 seconds.

Top speed: 149 mph.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 47.1 mpg (40.5 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 138 g/km, VED road tax £130, BIK company car tax 23%.

Insurance Group: 32E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/Capacities: L 4,177 mm (13.7 ft), W 1,832 mm (6.01 ft), H 1,353 mm (4.43 ft), boot/load space 305 to 712 litres (10.77 to 25.14 cu.ft), three doors, 2+2 seating.

Price: £27,585 plus option costs.