Audi A4 Avant 2.0 TDI Ultra Sport 190PS S tronic Road Test

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Tom Scanlan test drives the 190PS version of Audi's latest A4 estate, with seven speed S tronic automatic transmission.

The estate version of Audi's latest A4 saloon (that went on sale last November) is - available for those who need to carry more stuff than the saloon boot can manage.

The Avant, as Audi has long christened its load carriers, claims to have more capacity - at the back than any of its rivals in the sector (premium compact executive), so if you - would describe yourself as a premium compact executive, read on!

The A4 has already won a car of the year accolade from a leading magazine, so expect - no less quality and value in the Avant. Standard features across the range are the - powered tailgate and electrically-retracting luggage cover.

Yes, the financial outlay starting at £27,300 for the SE version might call value-for-money into question and, sure, you need to look closely at this…and wait for the eye-watering outlay for our test car!

With all premium sector cars, it's the optional extras that catch us out… you find you've got to have this and you've got to have that over and above the basic offering. - Having said that, there are always deals to be done, especially if you go the PCP route.

Audi expect that, of all the variations in engines and spec., it will be the diesel - Ultra Sport 190 PS that sells the most and will retain 40% of its new price after three - years or 60,000 miles. The claim is also that that beats the Avant's rivals.

(Note: If you would also like to read about the 160PS version, coupled with a six speed manual gearbox, and recently reviewed by David Miles, please click HERE).

Driving an Audi is almost always a most civilised experience. The very first - impression on switching on and driving off was of how quiet and smooth this diesel is.

Not unexpectedly, it was difficult to find fault with the engine… and the car as a - whole; diesel engines have come on amazingly over a couple of decades, and the 'grunt' of a diesel engine low down in the rev-range is particularly satisfying: this 190 PS engine develops 400 Nm of torque at just 1750 rpm.

Audi's automatic gearbox is a delight, as ever; from a stand-still you get a similar - feel to the clutch engaging in a manual box, after which the changes are almost - imperceptible, only really being detected from the sound of the engine if you push hard.

The suspension and seats combine to ensure a comfortable ride, and the - steering and handling are, respectively, accurate and sure-footed, helping to make - the car a real pleasure to drive.

As to the interior, Audi says there is more space up front for the driver and front-seat passenger than in the outgoing version in terms of head and shoulder room. There is, apparently, a similar increase for those in the back…I did, though, find that I could have done with more leg room when I got into the back and that was with the front seats set for occupants of only average height. It is a four-seater, not a five-seater because of the transmission tunnel.

Audi's 'virtual cockpit' is an attractive newcomer to the Avant in optional form; however, I reckon it would take far longer than one week, as I had, to work out how to access all the driver info available. Also new are the Matrix LED headlamps that are so polite to oncoming drivers who won't be dazzled by them. Standard items include 17-inch alloy wheels (the test car was fitted with 19-inch wheels at £900), Xenon headlights, smartphone interface, Audi Drive Select, three zone climate control and a 7-inch colour MMI monitor.

Audi's options list is lengthy, so suffice to summarise here just some of the gains that the new Avant makes over its predecessor: it's drag coefficient is a mere 0.26, it is 120 kilograms lighter, there is now the 1.4 TFSI petrol engine available and, depending on the version, up to 70.6 mpg as the official combined fuel consumption figure and 104 g/km in emissions.

My journeys over around 430 miles in one week in the 190 PS diesel ranged from a best return of 55.7 mpg (as indicated by the trip computer) to mid-thirties on short into-town runs and ended up overall at 47.1 mpg; this was over a good variety of roads and without pushing the car hard except on a couple of occasions…that did, admittedly, show that a good safety feature is the car's overtaking ability, not to mention beautifully powerful and progressive braking. With the free option of a 54-litre fuel tank, that could give a range of around 550 miles between fill-ups

Actually, this Avant can hit 62 mph in less than eight seconds. It can also whisk you up to a top speed more than twice our national speed limit, but you'll have to

find yourself an unrestricted Autobahn to test that claim out.

VERDICT

Give this car any job and it'll perform.. A real smooth operator!



Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Audi A4 Avant 2.0 TDI Ultra Sport 190PS S tronic

Engine: 2.0 litre, four cylinder turbodiesel, 190 PS, 320 Nm (295 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm.

Transmission: Seven speed S tronic automatic, front wheel drive.

Performance:

0-62 mph: 7.9 seconds.

Top speed: 143 mph.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 64.2 mpg (47.1 mpg overall, on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 (on 19-inch wheels) 116 g/km. VED road tax Band C; £30 per year; BIK company car tax 23%. Insurance Group: 26E.

Warranty: 3 years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,725 mm (15.50 ft), W 1,842 mm (6.04 ft), H 1,434 mm (4.70 ft), boot/loads space 505 to 1,510 litres (17.83 to 53.33 cu.ft), five doors/five seats.

Price (including all options, taxed, delivered): £43,925.