Audi customer numbers increase...

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Plus and RS Performance Models Arrive and More Q Sales from Audi

By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency)

Audi in the UK has achieved record new cars sales in 12 of the past 15 years and already has got off to a flying start for the first quarter of 2016. Globally Audi achieved record sales in 2015 with a 3.6% increase to reach a total of 1.8-million new cars finding new homes.

Although Audi were knocked off the top spot in the UK in 2015 as the best selling premium brand by BMW, who unusually registered a very high number of cars in December, Audi still sold 166,708 cars – just 508 less than BMW.

However the tables have turned and Audi are back on top for the first quarter of 2016 having sold 47,380 new cars, just ahead of Mercedes Benz with 47,239 units and BMW with 46,495 registrations.

Cian O'Brien, Audi UK's head of sales, has said this growth is being achieved organically and isn't centred on any one model range; "Demand grows every time we enter a new market sector and is due to the inherent strength of our premium brand image". In the last 15 years the range has gone up from 17 to 50 core models plus numerous derivatives – the latest being Plus and RS Performance variants.

The latest Plus and RS Performance derivatives with added performance and specification are in addition to the recent introduction of Ultra derivatives. These are more fuel and CO2 efficient versions of their standard production cars such as the A4 and A6 models, which have high sales from fleet and business customers. Mainstream core specification levels include SE, Sport and S line.

New derivatives given the Plus treatment include the SQ5 340 hp diesel SUV, the S8 605 hp petrol luxury saloon and the R8 Coupe V10 610 hp petrol sports supercar. The RS Performance title is given to the RS Q3 367 hp petrol SUV and the RS 6 Avant and RS 7 Sportback models, with their 605 hp petrol engines. All Plus and RS Performance versions have Audi's quattro all wheel drive system.

Anna Chudley, UK product manager for Q3 and Q7 models, said, "The RS Q3 Performance Crossover (pictured above) is being launched this month as the halo model in the Q3 range,

bringing sports car performance to the family sector for drivers who want to have fun in an SUV."

Audi's Q models of SUV/Crossover accounted for almost 20% of their total UK sales so the demand for such vehicles is high. The Q3 range accounted for 15,545 UK sales last year and the RS Q3 is expected to be chosen by 2% of Q3 customers with conquest sales from buyers from Range Rover Evoque Si4 HSE Dynamic and Mercedes GLA 45 AMG rivals.

The large Q5 models achieved 11,965 sales and the huge Q7, 3,701 registrations. With the Q2 compact Crossover to come in December, the SQ7 435 hp turbodiesel to arrive in August and the Q7 e-tron plug-in diesel/electric hybrid also to arrive in August, Q model sales are expected to be even higher this year so the Q-queue is getting longer and faster.