



Audi Q5 TFSI quattro 204PS S line S tronic – Road Test

Published: November 17, 2025

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Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/audi-q5-tfsi-quattro-204ps-s-line-s-tronic-road-test/>



Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales) writes... Audi has dealt a clever hand and a blow to rivals by offering petrol or diesel mild hybrid new versions of its highly popular Q5 rather than go down the pure electric road now being taken by competitors.

It is, simply, building and selling the cars customers are asking for in their



lives.

They are also a lot cheaper than pure battery electric vehicles. While initially sold with a self-charging 48-volt motor, there will be plug in hybrids joining the range in the near future.

Now in its third series, the range comprises six versions with petrol or diesel engines, mild hybrid electrical assistance, seven speed automatic transmission and four-wheel-drive. We tested the SUV version rather than the Sportback with a more sloping rear roofline.

The 204 PS 2.0 litre engines are used in the SUV and Sportback lines while the SQ models utilise 367 PS V6 engines.

The smaller engines come in models with Sport, S Line and Edition 1 trims with 19, 20 and 21-inch wheels respectively and the two latter models have firmer sport suspension and additional technology and styling differences in details.

The car's mild-hybrid powertrain was quiet and smooth in action apart from some occasional jerkiness moving off after a shutdown of a few hours. Once running it never showed this tendency.





Acceleration was good for a car weighing close to 2 tonnes and on the move it easily kept up with fast changing traffic flows. Top speed was more than most needed and the national speed limit was walking pace for this model.

What's more, the fuel economy proved really impressive without trying and much of that is down to the carefully tuned software which gave it silent running at walking pace and then a hefty push when the throttle was floored.

The seven-speed automatic transmission is one of the finest on the market with excellent ratios for any requirement and incredible smoothness and inaudible working.

You can also over-ride the fully automatic setting with a sporting mode and have paddles on the column to hold any desired gear.

Matching the powertrain was a feelsome braking system with lightness of touch belying its power to slow or stop the Q50 SUV at a moment's notice. However, the car's on-board safety assist system did react unexpectedly on occasions when the driver considered it did not have to intervene.

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It is a fairly big car but the power steering made light work of town driving and parking in tight spaces yet had good feedback on sweeping roads and bends with a convenient turning circle as well.

Secondary controls were split between the familiar lights, wipers' stalks and speed control on the column and buttons along the outer edge of the fascia



and under the central infotainment display. It's good to be able to select the most commonly used buttons with a simple push instead of having to go into a multi-layered touchscreen, which can be distracting and potentially dangerous.

There are two displays in the fascia, the 11.9-inch driver's essential instruments, which could be altered depending on one of the five chosen Audi drive-select settings and the central 14.5-inch infotainment screen. They are packed with data both immediate and longer term but I think most drivers would set their preferred readouts and leave it at that.



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Heated seats are part of a comprehensive three-zone climate control system and our car came with an big sunroof as well. The system had strong output, accurate directional control and instant changeability, backed up by four powered windows with privacy glass.

Oddments room was very good in the Q5 with central bin, small console trays and decent sized door bins front and back, supported by seat-back pockets as well. It's a real family car in this respect.

The boot floor was about knee height, wide and flat so easy to load and the split seatbacks folded individually to gradually raise total capacity.



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Access to the cabin was good and occupants had clear all-round vision as well as very adjustable seats but they were not powered on the passenger side. The seats' shaping was supporting and located occupants very well.

Room was good throughout, even in the rear, and headroom was plentiful.

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A couple of passengers commented that the over-riding dark hard plastic trim was not very attractive.

Ride quality was firm but not hard and you could use the drive-select system to take the edge off its snappiness.

Handling was entirely safe and surefooted on any surface thanks to the quattro set up pioneered by Audi, and it did not get nose heavy or tail light on damp surfaces.

Special mention in the safety notes must be made of the intelligent headlights, bright, far reaching and wide spread for country lanes and which automatically dipped when oncoming traffic neared.

VERDICT

The Audi Q5 SUV is an impressive car technically which is at home in urban or country area, and while it is probably a bit pricey not to be leased or obtained through a business it leaves a favourable impression.

The days of the internal combustion engine still have some time to pass when



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a car is as good as this.

For: Good performance and surprising economy, excellent comfort, seating, plenty of room, brilliant headlights and handling

Against: Drive engagement sometimes jerky, sensitive hazard braking, expensive with options and tax, average warranty.



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FAST FACTS

Model: Audi Q5 TFSI S Line

Price: £58,960

Mechanical: 204 PS 4cyl 2.0 litre petrol hybrid, 7 speed AWD

Max Speed: 140 mph

0 - 62 mph: 7.2sec

Combined MPG: 42.4

Insurance Group: 38

C02 emissions: 170 g/km

Bik rating: 37%, £1,390FY, £620×5

Warranty: 3 years/ 60,000 miles

Rating: 4.5/ 5

Size: L 4.72 m (15.49 ft), W 1.90 m (6.23 ft) , H 1.65 m (5.41 ft)

Bootspace: 520 to 1,474 litres (18.36 to 52.05 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,895 kg (4,178 lb)



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