

## Audi TT quattro sport – A modern classic much enjoyed

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Hopefully, a long road ahead for JW and a special Audi TT.

## Collector's dream or aged Golf in drag?

**The first edition of Audi's TT is 21 years old and divides opinions sharply, as Jeremy Walton discovered when he bought a limited edition TT quattro sport...**

*Kim adds:*

*A very warm 'welcome aboard' to Jeremy as a contributor to Wheels-Alive. He will already be known to many readers as a highly experienced motoring writer, especially in terms of covering motor sport subjects and performance cars, and with a wealth of practical*



*experience behind the wheel on roads and circuits far and wide. He writes from the heart, and his honest and entertaining articles plus (many) motoring books are enjoyed by car enthusiasts around the world. Over to you Jeremy...*

Audi's first generation of the TT coupé became a controversial car. Applauded as a Frankfurt Show concept, it progressed rapidly into 1998 production, remarkably intact in *haute couture* style. Possibly it was manufactured a little too rapidly, because there were some speedy autobahn accidents for the early adopters and an afterthought air dam was added to the rounded rump. Since then it has marched through three editions in 21 years, but there are still hardcore enthusiasts who pour disdain on the striking 2-door as just a fashion item with no convincing performance credentials.

Our 2006 run-out example marked manufacture of more than 275,000 TTs in Hungary, so it has been a bold and profitable venture for Audi at their Ingolstadt HQ. The author believes that first editions, whether in books or motorcars, are the most valuable and desirable.

In automotive terms, look at the cost of buying a classic Austin Healey 'Frogeye' Sprite versus the follow-on Spridgets; same with such diverse machines as Ford Capri and Lotus Elise. I have owned all of those models, so I went for Audi's initial TT format. However, if you want to stay in touch with the modern world, the October 2019 *Wheels Alive* test of the current 245 hp TT delivers interesting comparisons versus my 13-year old forerunner of similar horsepower.



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Bose Concert radio concealed beneath TT silver flap, fuel and rear boot releases under



[centre console sliding lid.](#)

What was so special about the TT I bought?

Assembled in 1998-2006 Hungary, my quattro sport run-out edition of 2005-06 was a comparatively low production item, just 800 delivered to RHD UK, fewer than 575 listed as UK-taxed today. A TT is not a 'proper' quattro, for it mechanically shares most with VW group front drive performers, utilising Haldex plates to add 4×4 rear drive. TT was also more affordable than the original 5-cylinder coupés that established the valuable 1980 quattro brand.



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New arrival at the Walton yard: so far so good!



Sport derivative distinguished by duotone paint, unique 18-inch wheels and aero package.



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Front carries quattro badge and detailed aero kit.



Rear little different to 225 hp TT, save extended spoiler lip and black tip exhausts, plus slightly wider rear wheels.

I fancied something enjoyable that I could improve, which retained value and delivered a splash of speed. The 1.8 litre TT sport's 0-60 mph in 5.7 seconds and a 155 mph max are not too shabby and directly compare with today's TT TFSi. The only numbers loss in the older TT is 32 mpg on a run, whereas the current TFSi reports 40 mpg.



Like my Elise Sport 135, the quattro sport featured a noble attempt to reduce weight [officially minus 75 kg/165 lbs.] and a mild [plus 15 PS] horsepower boost. This from a 20-valve cylinder head over 4 turbocharged cylinders.



1.8 litre turbo motor with 20-valve head, modestly uprated.

Additionally, quattro sport edition TTs offer a stronger identity, especially in the Recaro Pole Position race-seats that I selected, rather than optional Comfort [production] seating. Weight saving moves aft of the racy seats included deletion of tiny back seating, a hidden harmonic damper, parcel shelf and spare wheel. That left space for a self-conscious designer rear strut brace to be added, stiffening body torsional strength along with the production



steel braces in the engine bay.



Seats are prime attraction in motion, difficult to exit in tight spaces. Alcantara leathers to steering wheel, handbrake and gear lever.



Proud badge, but more affordable package than legendary 1980s predecessor.

Underneath transplanted 3.2 TT's body kit, the battery was moved into the hatchback boot and there were tauter suspension springs and firmer dampers with a low ride height. Plus a set of 15-spoke 18-inch cast aluminium wheels, a half inch wider than standard at the rear and carrying small 'eyebrow' wheel arch extensions for legality, plus a matt black finish for the twin tailpipes.



The duotone paint lures some to assume it is a convertible in my Phantom Black Pearl black/Avus silver combination, but this sport derivative was never available as a convertible. Alcantara leather part trims that pair of competition-orientated Recaros, steering wheel, plus a grey suedette handbrake and gear knob trim. All accompanied by a *quattro sport* badge within the usual style-conscious TT cabin.

During 2005, a TT quattro Sport cost £29,360 [equating to £45,000 in 2019]. Today, I found most such TTs bunched between £6,500 eBay 100,000- milers and £12,500 for tastier sub-60, 000- mile dealer offerings. I had my 2.0 [6-cylinder] BMW Z3 to trade, cosmetically improved at low DIY cost, and so tried my luck at dealers before private sellers.

Following multiple online searches, I targeted a TT sport listed at £8,790 by Portfield Car Sales in Christchurch. Fortunately, a trusted colleague and senior *Wheels-Alive* contributor Chris Adamson, lives locally to Portfield: Chris kindly inspected this Audi to see if it was worth my south coast journey. TT passed, with some pertinent Adamson reservations on interior condition at 85,400 displayed miles. Portfield then reduced the asking price to £7,490.

I drove south with my 142,000 mile BMW and understood Adamson's conscientious reservations. Cosmetically the exterior and engine bay were excellent, only fitment of a different brand tyre to the rest of the set a black mark on previous ownership maintenance standards. I was also not enamoured by the soiled and worn Alcantara steering wheel rim.

Although the TT had two vital remote ignition keys, service records were patchy and there was not even an owner, service or radio manual or booklet to hand. It was obvious this Audi had stood for months, but then my leggy BMW was hardly a forecourt attraction. A little haggling saw the BMW on a modest profit over its 2018 purchase price, leaving £6,240 to pay. The dealer agreed to supply and fit a matching Pirelli high performance tyre to the rear, offering receipted service for air conditioning refill, Haldex 4×4 clutch oil and filter, with a replacement cam belt and three months warranty.



Sorting out some scruffy cockpit detailing, air con and brakes were minor snags compared with my previous vehicles. I have covered only 800 TT miles, but I am a lot happier than expected from such a lack of paperwork. So far, the bills have been predictable: The air conditioning needed fixing properly with a replacement compressor and I spotted that one brake calliper was not the original red finish; that had misaligned and damaged brake pads. Including the dealer's warranty contribution to the air conditioning renovation and a minor bill for new rear pads it has yet to exceed £400 in bills, which is fine for such a gamble.



Dials soon after pick up, losing pixels in the centre readout...

Let's hope my luck holds, because the driving enjoyment with a steam power 'whoosh' from the turbo and more grip than my recent classic/modern classic buys is rewarding... And I



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still admire the appearance. So, I hope it'll prove a keeper!



It does fit my garage, but getting out of race seats without scratching driver's door is tricky!