Latest Audi RS5 Coupé (V6) – Road Test

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2018 Audi RS5 Coupé – larger, lighter, faster and cleaner.

David Miles (Miles Better News Agency) tells all...

My latest new model road test starts with an apology. This road test was supposed to be about the very new Audi A7 Sportback but unfortunately it was damaged before delivery to me. However those on-the-ball Audi UK PR people substituted it with the 2018 RS5 Coupé 2.9 TFSI 450 hp quattro, not a bad substitution.

The current A5 range consists of two-door four-seater Coupé and Cabriolet and five-door

five-seater Sportback models, and the RS versions are the pinnacle versions for some of these body styles. An RS5 Sportback five door version made its global public debut in March at the New York Auto Show but as yet it's not available in the UK.

However the RS5 Coupé is available and this new model replaces the previous six year old version which had a glorious sounding 4.2 litre V8 normally aspirated petrol engine. The all-new RS5 is now powered by a 2.9 litre TFSI V6 twin turbo petrol unit with 450 hp, the same as the old V8 but with more torque at 600 Nm (442.5 lb ft) from only 1,900 rpm and this 'grunt' is available across a huge engine rpm range up to 5,000 rpm. Its emissions of 197g/km are 17% lower, it's lighter and faster with a standard top speed of a restricted 155 mph and zero to 62 mph takes just 3.9 seconds. For an extra cost of £1,450 you can have the engine derestricted to reach a top speed of 174 mph should you feel the need for even more speed, track use of course!

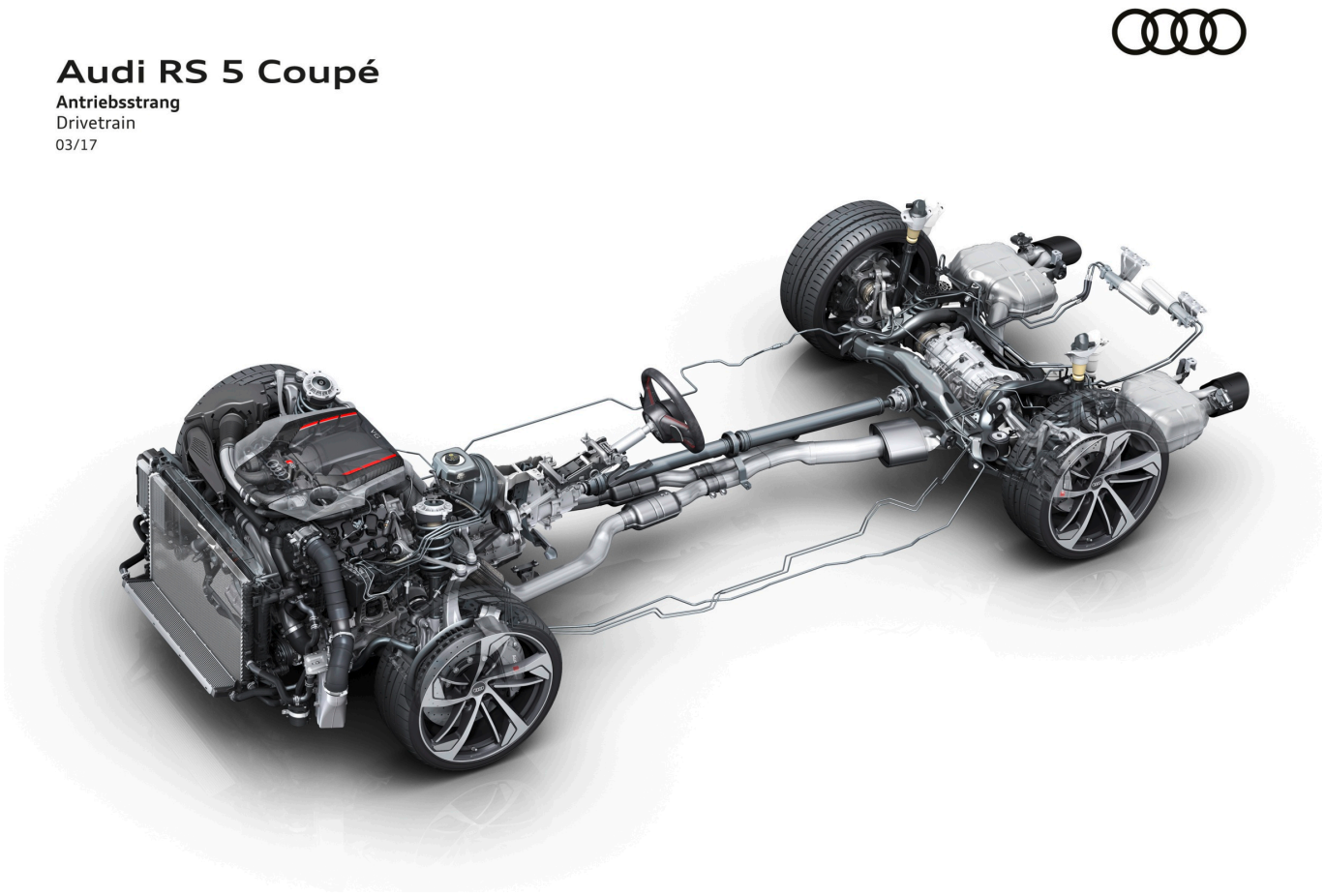
Fuel economy in the Combined Cycle is officially 32.5 mpg and my week of test driving, short in-town trips and winding country road driving returned an overall average of 27.4 mpg but one longer 70 mph motorway cruise saw 31.4 mpg on the computer screen.



That’s the impressive performance but just how much does the RS5 Coupé cost to buy? The standard, but still high spec model, costs £63,615. There is also a Carbon Edition with the same performance figures but with various carbon bodywork panels such as the roof, side sills, rear spoiler, diffuser and interior carbon inlays, larger wheels, sports exhaust, Matrix LED headlights and costs £76,115. Both versions have the same engine, same eight speed automatic gearbox and quattro all-wheel drive.

My test RS5 Coupé was the standard version but it was loaded with ‘showcase’ options and the high cost items were the £1,250 Driver Assistance Pack, Parking Assistance Pack at

£1,000, 20-inch wheels to replace the standard 19-inch ones at £2,000, Matrix LED headlights and LED rear lights £850, RS Sport Exhaust at £1,200, RS Sport suspension with Dynamic Ride Control at £2,000, panoramic glass sunroof at £1,250 and the top speed restriction increase to 174 mph costs £1,450. All-in-all the final on the road price with other lower cost options included weighed-in at a hefty £78,385.



So what do you get as standard in terms of kit? A dual branch exhaust with two oval tailpipes, sport suspension, Drive Select with Auto, Comfort, Dynamic and Individual modes, quattro all wheel drive with Sports differential, LED headlights and rear lights, acoustic windscreen, RS body styling with front and rear flared wheelarches, a front bumper with large air inlets, honeycomb grille with quattro logo, front spoiler with matt aluminium highlights, rear spoiler, side sill extensions, RS sports seats, leather upholstery, electrically

adjustable front seats with massage function, 3-zone air-con, multi-function steering wheel, RS Aluminium trim inlays and sports pedals, MMI Navigation with an 8.3-inch dash mounted touchscreen, voice recognition, Audi Connect Safety Call, Audi Sound System with 10 speakers, DAB radio, 12.3-inch Audi Virtual Cockpit digital screen in the instrument binnacle, Audi Connectivity, Pre-Sense City Braking and Brake Assist plus Blindspot Monitoring.

So whether the RS5 Coupé is for family, road, track or business use there are enough standard and extra cost specification items to suit the driver's needs and depth of their pockets. In terms of styling the RS5 Coupé looks 'the business'. It's long, low, wide and sleek with huge sporting road image and I can vouch for the fact that it 'turns heads'; some fellow road users were less polite with their gestures – I just put it down to envy. Being a two plus two sports coupé does bring restrictions as to its functionality if adult rear passengers are to be carried on a regular basis so the forthcoming RS5 Sportback might be a more suitable fast family coupé.

The RS5 Coupé uses the new VW Group MLB long wheelbase platform giving in an overall length of 4,723 mm (15.50 ft) and the two side doors are wide opening for ease of access, but they can cause their own issues trying to open them wide enough in the usual narrow parking slots we have today. The two sculptured rear seats are comfortable but the leg space is limited for adults and the coupé roofline reduces headroom for six-footers. The two rear seats are actually split 40/20/40 and can be folded almost flat to increase the 465 litre (16.42 cu.ft) boot space further.

The interior is beautifully crafted with impeccable workmanship and fortunately it retains its involving sporty design for the dashboard and controls. Thankfully it doesn't have the minimalist design and the clinical arrangement used for the new Audi A8 which has substituted two touchscreens to replace the tried and tested conventional dial controls for the heating, ventilation and other functions. It's an Audi cockpit as we have come to expect, not the Audi of cockpit of the future as with the new A8 which so far I'm not happy with.

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Using the new MLB platform includes changes to the suspension system which uses five-link layouts front and rear on aluminium subframes and the lighter weight V6 engine over the heavier previous V8 unit has shaved 60 kg (132 lb) off the Coupé's overall weight, the engine change making half that saving. This overall lighter weight and the new engine have obviously helped with the improved performance in terms of speed, fuel economy and lower CO2 emissions.



Perhaps the new 2.9 litre V6 twin-turbo direct injection petrol engine doesn't have the same 'theatre of noise' or acceleration exhaust howl of the old V8 which will be missed by petrol-heads but we all should enjoy the endless supply of 600 Nm (442.5 lb.ft) of torque this new unit supplies over such a wide engine speed range from 1,900 to 5,000 rpm. The power

output of 450 hp is more top end available from 5,700 rpm to 6,700 rpm, but it's the torque that does the 'talking' as far as responsiveness during acceleration and it still maintains first rate flexibility as we chug along our congested roads. The new engine harmonises well with the new eight speed Tiptronic auto gearbox with normal and sport mode options. Gone is the twin-clutch auto unit and with the new engine comes a ZF torque converter unit so the changes are slick, nicely cushioned and backed up by well-matched gear ratios.

As always with the quattro all wheel drive system torque is supplied to the wheels which need it most, giving well-balanced targeted grip and of course the Drive Select various modes allow tailoring of the Coupé's performance to meet individual needs or road conditions. Most of the time I found the Comfort setting to be the most user-friendly because any of the other settings just made the ride comfort far too unpleasant and firm, especially as the optional 20-inch wheels with very low profile tyres were fitted to my test car. Although slalom driving has become a necessity these days to avoid the worst of the damaging potholes, even on motorways, occasionally they cannot be avoided and these transferred considerable shock impacts into the cabin.

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VERDICT

Overall the new RS5 Coupé has undoubted pace, superb road holding, classy sports image and a rewarding driver's cockpit design, but it lacks driving 'thrills' which some motoring enthusiasts will miss. It has become almost too sanitised despite is performance potential, it just needs to be a little more exciting when the mood takes you.

For: Classy sports coupé exterior design, high quality well laid out driving controls, lovely interior, huge torque provision over a wide powerband from the new engine, generally a compliant ride in Comfort mode, balanced handling, quattro road grip.

Against: The new V6 turbo engine lacks the 'theatre of sound' and character of the previous V8 normally aspirated unit, almost now too sanitised to give you an occasional 'fix' of

driving excitement, ungenerous warranty, high cost options, expensive to run.



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

2018 Audi RS5 Coupe 2.9 TFSI quattro auto.

Price: £63,615 (£78,385 as tested).

Engine/transmission: New 2.9 litre, V6 twin-turbo direct injection petrol, 450 hp, 600 Nm (442.5 lb.ft) from 1,900 rpm, eight speed Tiptronic torque converter auto with

Sport mode, quattro all wheel drive.

Performance: 155 mph standard but test car derestricted to 174 mph, 0–62 mph 3.9 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 32.5 mpg (27.4 mpg overall on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 197g/km, VED road tax £1,240 First Year rate followed by £140 Standard rate + £310 per annum for five years as the vehicle costs more than £40k, BiK company car tax max 37% rate.

Insurance Group: 44E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000-miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,723 mm (15.50 ft), W 1,861 mm (6.11 ft), H 1,360 mm (4.46 ft), boot space 465 litres (16.42 cu.ft), two doors/four seats.