



Latest Audi S5 Coupé Road Test

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New Audi A5, S5 Coupé and Sportback ranges arrive – and more to come, says David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

Audi's new and replacement model introduction programme continues with the recent arrival of the A5/S5 Coupé. The A5/S5 Sportback arrives with customers during March,



followed by the A5/S5 Convertible – and there are more models to follow. At this week's opening of the Geneva Motor Show, Audi had all the variants on display plus the long awaited RS5 Coupé with its 2.9-litre, V6, 450hp TFSI petrol engine and their DTM German Touring Car RS5 Coupé.

For now we have the longer, lighter, more powerful, and more fuel-efficient A5 two door Coupé, priced from £30,700 through SE, Sport and S line spec levels, with a wide range of 2.0 litre petrol and diesel engines, plus a 3.0 litre TDI. Some feature front wheel drive and of course others come with quattro all wheel drive, with prices topping out at £41,375. Until the RS versions arrive the range currently tops out with the S5 Coupé 3.0 litre, V6, 354 hp petrol TFSI quattro, priced at £47,000.

The five door A5 Sportback arrived in January with the same spec levels and most of the same engine options as the Coupé, and prices start at £33,050, rising to £47,000 for the S5 Sportback variant, the same price as the top S5 Coupé.

The A5 Cabriolet two door arrives in April with similar engine transmission choices and SE, Sport, S line and S5 spec levels, priced from £35,235 up to £51,835.

The RS5 variants due later this year have an estimated price of around £60k. Gone is the 4.2 litre, V8, 444 bhp engine and in comes a 3.0 litre V6 480/500 bhp new engine based on the new motor in the S5, but with electronic boosted turbocharging – and an RS5 Cabriolet is also rumoured.

Robin Davies, Audi UK's Product Affairs Manager said that they do not give sales forecasts but last year the A5 Coupé sold 3,200 units, the Sportback 5,200 units and the Cabriolet around 1,200 vehicles. The most popular engine for mainstream versions was the 2.0 litre TDI 190 bhp unit, and S line was the most popular spec level. The S5 variants accounted for between 5 and 7% of sales in the A5/S5 Coupé, Sportback and Cabriolet ranges.



My new A5 test drive experience was scheduled to be with the best-selling 2.0 litre TDI 190 Coupé, but unfortunately that was damaged with a rear end shunt so Audi UK very kindly substituted it with the most welcome S5 Coupé with its new 3.0 TFSI V6 354 hp petrol engine - which is the only power unit available for the S5 models. This has quattro all wheel drive and an eight-speed tiptronic auto gearbox as standard, and is priced at £47,000. But fitted with a comprehensive array of extra cost options the final on-the-road price was an eye-watering £57,895.

The A5/S5 Coupés were first produced in 2007, and now we are now onto the second generation which offers a shade more space with a slightly longer wheelbase - but these vehicles are still best described as 2+2 seaters. The model does however have a large 465



litre (16.42 cu.ft) boot – claimed by Audi to be the largest in its small sector where the BMW 4 Series Coupé and the Mercedes C-Class Coupé are its main contenders. Not only has the length increased, with a longer wheelbase, but it is marginally wider inside for improved passenger space, and it is a shade lower for improved aerodynamics. It's also lighter, to support more performance, better fuel economy and lower CO2 emissions, as well as helping with its agility in the handling department. The well-appointed S5 Coupé is still more of a 'cruiser' than a muscle-car 'bruiser'.



At the heart of the latest S5 is a new 3.0 litre, V6, TFSI direct injection petrol engine which replaces the old 3.0 litre, supercharged 333 hp V6 unit, with the new engine being the basis for the forthcoming RS road versions and DTM touring car machine. In this road going form it provides 354 hp from 5,400 rpm but also a massive 500 Nm (369 lb.ft) of torque is developed from only 1,370 rpm. This power is 6.5% more than the old engine, with 13.5%



more torque. A single twin-scroll turbocharger sits inside the V of the engine layout with each scroll routing blown air/petrol via short inlet ducts to each bank of cylinders. This provides instantaneous engine response. The zero to 62 mph acceleration time is 4.7 seconds and the top speed is restricted to 155 mph.



This new engine in the S5 Coupé will officially return 38.2 mpg in the Combined Cycle, and during my week-long driving experience the overall figure was 28.7 mpg, and that was not as a result of 'hard' driving, due to the appalling winter weather of ice, snow, fog and rain. Thankfully the standard quattro all wheel drive system provided all the grip the Coupé



needed in my hands. It was also fitted with an optional £1,200 sports rear differential which splits the driving torque between the rear wheels as required but I never got to the stage where it was of benefit, due to road conditions and the persistent heavy traffic which blights our roads today. The CO2 emissions are 170 g/km so currently VED road tax costs £300 for the First Year rate, reducing to £210 thereafter. Company car executives will pay 31% Benefit-in-Kind tax. These tax costs all increase of course for a new S5 Coupé bought after 1 April with VED going up to £500 First Year rate and then to £140 Second Year onwards BUT plus the additional £310 rate every year for five years to be applied to new cars costing more than £40k. BIK goes up to 33%.

The S5 Coupé uses a new version of Audi's eight-speed tiptronic auto box, not the seven-speed dual-clutch unit fitted to other engine options for the A5. It now has a shift-by-wire function which comes with a fuel saving Coasting Mode. When the foot comes off the accelerator this mode is engaged and the engine idles with the drive-line disconnected. Touch the throttle and the system reconnects instantly. A new torque converter is used to maximise the extra torque available. The gearbox also adapts its performance to match the driver's driving style, changing the appropriated gear-shift points. There are two gearbox operating modes, D for drive and S for Sport. D mode can be further tuned by selecting Efficiency mode in the Audi Drive Select function and most of my driving was done in its Comfort mode due to weather related speed limitations.

With the sports suspension lowered by 23 mm (almost an inch) over the A5 Coupé versions and 19-inch alloy wheels fitted as standard, ride was on the firm side and the 8.5J 255/35 low profile tyres tended to follow the ruts of our poor road surfaces, hence my selection of Comfort mode for most of my test drive time. Styling wise the S5 can be recognised from the outside by its specific-design larger bumpers and sports side sills, and the front bumper has larger air inlets. S specification dual chrome oval tailpipes exit either side of the rear diffuser. There are S5 badges on the honeycomb grille, black brake calipers, front wings and at the rear.



Inside it is another Audi design high quality masterpiece, with S instrument dials, multi-function flat-bottomed leather-bound steering wheel, plus a curved fascia similar to that used for the A4 range, with an 8.3-inch high resolution colour screen mounted centrally and a little above the top of the dashboard. Audi's Virtual Cockpit, with its 12.3-inch full digital instrument cluster for flexible display options, is positioned right in front of the driver in the instrument binnacle. This includes the duplicate sat-nav display if required as well and is a £900 option – and a similar cost gets you the useful head-up display. On-line communication technology and an array of safety functions, driving aids and alert functions are also fitted. Audi's MMI ('Multi Media Interface') Navigation Plus system is standard-fit, as is leather upholstery plus electronically adjustable front sports seats with massaging function, and the rear seat backs fold down to increase the load capacity. Although the wheelbase is a shade longer for this generation A5/S5 Coupé, rear seat legroom is still limited for adult passengers and access in and out of the Coupé for rear passengers is not that easy.



VERDICT

But forget rear seat passengers... the S5 is a high speed sports cruising machine designed for the driver's enjoyment. It is not the most hard-core coupé, even with its new 3.0 litre V6 turbo engine. It has undoubted pace, is well-balanced and with its high specification and eye-catching exterior design it's a 'cruiser' at heart. Given the amount of time we spend in our cars these days trundling along at 50 mph due to traffic congestion, road works or speed restrictions, performance is almost secondary. Driving refinement in a nice environment are more realistic and important features. In these areas the S5 scores highly.



Refinement sums up the Audi S5 Coupé's looks and performance.

For: Attractive, high quality, high specification 2+2 cruiser, massive high torque engine response, impressive acceleration and quattro grip.

Against: Not a 'hard-core' sports car, nice to drive but lacks the involvement and pure cut-and-thrust agility for when the mood takes you, future higher VED tax costs for cars bought after 1 April.





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

Audi S5 Coupé 3.0 TFSI, quattro, tiptronic auto.

Price: £47,000 (£57,895 as tested with options).

Engine/transmission: New 3.0 litre, V6 turbocharged TFSI direct injection petrol, 354 hp, 500 Nm (369 lb.ft) of torque from only 1,370 rpm, 8-speed dual mode tiptronic automatic and quattro all wheel drive.

Performance: 155 mph restricted top speed, 0-62 mph 4.7 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 38.2 mpg (28.7 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 170 g/km, VED road tax currently £300 First Year rate and £210 thereafter, BIK company car tax 31%.

Insurance Group: 41E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000-miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4,692 mm (15.39 ft), W 1,846 mm (6.06 ft), H 1,368 mm (4.49 ft), boot 465 litres (16.42 cu.ft), two doors/2+2 seating.