New Audi A5 Cabriolet and Q5 SUV – First Impressions (plus latest Audi news)

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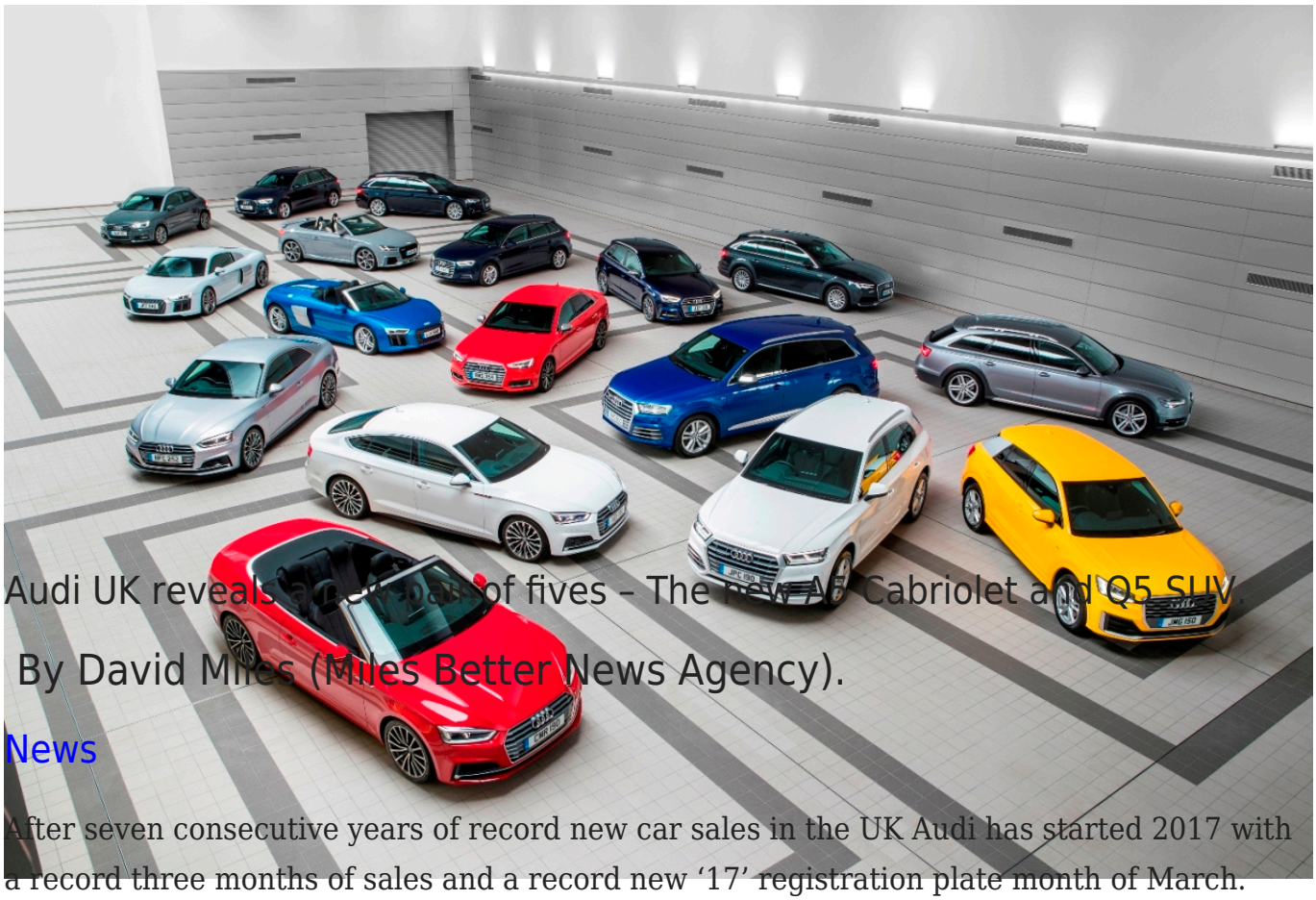

Audi UK reveals a new pair of fives – The new A5 Cabriolet and Q5 SUV.

By David Miles (Miles Better News Agency).

News

After seven consecutive years of record new car sales in the UK Audi has started 2017 with a record three months of sales and a record new ‘17’ registration plate month of March.

Having grown their model lines from 17 to 52 across 18 ranges in the last 16 years, more new and revised models keep arriving. The latest arrivals are the A5/S5 Cabriolets – which appear in dealerships from this coming weekend – and the all-new Q5 mid-sized SUV with customer deliveries starting now.

The new ‘Fives’ appeared at Audi’s Range Review event for the motoring media which featured the latest versions from most of their ranges, from the A1 supermini to the flagship supercar R8 Coupé and Spyder.

Introducing the new ‘Fives’, Jon Zammett, Head of Press and PR for Audi UK said that the A5 and S5 Cabriolets complete the all-new A5 range which includes Coupé and Sportback models as well. “Their introduction has been completed in a short time not seen before by Audi” he said.

He added, “Although the new A5 range has evolved, it’s new from the ground up, with improvements in ride comfort and handling. They have an all-new interior with the latest infotainment systems. With regard to the four seater A5/S5 Cabriolets the acoustic fabric roof opens in 15 seconds at speeds up to 31 mph and closes in 18 seconds”.

On-the-road A5 Cabriolet prices, which include the new VED road tax costs introduced from the 1st April, start from £35,235 for the 2.0 TFSI petrol 190 hp SE manual and rise through 16 variants to £51,835 for the 3.0 V6 TFSI petrol 354 hp quattro S5 version. Turbocharged petrol TFSI engine choices are 2.0 litre 190 and 252 hp units plus the 3.0 litre TFSI 354 hp S5 engine. Turbodiesel engine options are the TDI 2.0 litre 190 hp and 3.0 litre 218 hp units. Specification options, depending on the engine chosen, are SE, Sport and S line plus the one S5 model.

Marios Alexandrou, Audi UK’s A4/A5 Product Manager, said overall the A5 range accounted for around 15,000 UK sales last year and with the run-out period of the old version and the introduction of the new they expect sales to be around the same number this year. He said that 60% of A5/S5 sales were for the Sportback five door models, 30% for the two door Coupé and 10% for the new Cabriolet. He added that 70% of Cabriolet sales will go to retail customers whilst the Coupé and Sportback models have more or less a 50/50% sales split between fleet and retail buyers. The most popular Cabriolet version is expected to be the A5 2.0 litre, 190 hp TFSI petrol with S line specification, costing £38,785 in manual gearbox form. The automatic transmission variant of the same version costs £40,315 and will still be

popular despite the fact that it breeches the new £40k on-the-road VED road tax cap. This adds a further £310 per year cost for five years to the new road tax bill for the £140 standard rate which applies for the second year onwards.

Returning to the all-new Q5 mid-sized SUV, Jon Zammett said, “The Q5 has achieved 1.6 million global sales since it was launched in 2008. We already have a strong range of Q SUV models – the Q7, Q5, Q3 and the recently launched Q2, and our Directors have indicated that there will be Q4 and Q8 models to come”.

He added that the latest Q5 is an all-new car built in an all-new factory in Mexico for global sales. In the UK there will be three diesel and three petrol powered variants and all have quattro all wheel drive. Currently we have a 2.0 litre TDI 190 hp turbodiesel and a 2.0 litre TFSI 252 hp turbo petrol unit, and all have S tronic automatic transmission as standard. Specification levels for each engine are currently SE, Sport and S line. On-the-road prices, including the new 1st April VED road tax First Year rate, start at £37,240 and rise to £41,355

He continued that the new Q5s are constructed from a mix of lightweight hot steel and aluminium and they are 90 kg (198 lb) lighter than the previous first generation versions. All offer more agility and have a more compliant ride, and all have an electrically operated tailgate. Air suspension is also an option, he said.

Martin Baker, Audi’s UK Product Manager for Q3/Q5/Q7 models said, “Last year we sold 12,680 units and we hope to maintain that figure in 2017, taking into account the changeover period between the two generations. When the range is fully available about 95% of UK customers are expected to choose a diesel-powered model, with 65% choosing the 2.0 litre 190 hp unit. When it comes to specification levels, 65% will choose the top level S line, 30% Sport and 5% SE. With the lower running costs and improved emission levels he added there is already an increase in interest from fleet buyers, which to date have only accounted for 20% of UK registrations”. The expected best-selling version, the Q5 2.0 litre, 190 hp, S line costs £40,290.

Test Driving Views

Audi A5 Cabriolet



The introduction of the second generation two door A5 Cabriolet completes in quick time the new A5/S5 range, which also includes the two door Coupé and the best-selling five door Sportback models.

The new design has evolved from the first generation but the four seater Cabriolet is new from the ground up, with improved ride comfort and sharper handling being the two major improvements, say Audi. Those improvements are backed up by the latest design of Audi

interiors and of course they are premium quality, including the latest in infotainment and connectivity functions. As usual there are considerable numbers of options which will push the price up further; items such as Technology package at £1,100, also the must-have wind deflector at £300 – and the Audi Virtual Cockpit displays will cost a further £1,150.



I managed a short test drive behind the wheel of the A5 Cabriolet 2.0 litre TFSI turbo petrol quattro with 252 hp, S tronic auto transmission and the best-selling S line specification. This version costs £45,360 which includes the new higher cost First Year VED road tax rate of £500 because it has CO2 emissions of 151 g/km due to the larger optional 19 inch wheels. Stick with the standard 17 or 18 inch wheels and the CO2 emissions are lower at 144 or 149 g/km and the First Year VED rate is £200 – definitely food-for-thought!

It is also worth giving considerable thought to exactly what version to buy. Prices start from

£35,235 but the majority are close to, or over, the £40K on-the-road price cap which pushes up the cost of the second year and onwards standard rate VED tax of £140 with an extra £310 a year being added for five years. Buy with discretion.

Key features of the new A5 Cabriolet are new headlamps with LED daytime running lights, whilst S line versions gain LED headlights, LED tail lights and dynamic rear indicators. There are heated door mirrors with built-in LED side indicators, the windscreen has acoustic glazing and the multi-layered fabric roof is acoustic as well. The overall length is 47 mm (nearly two inches) longer and 8 mm (about a quarter of an inch) narrower than its predecessor but the wheelbase is increased by 14 mm (just over half an inch) so rear passenger legroom is marginally better. At the rear is a 380 litre (13.42 cu.ft) boot and the two rear seats fold down to extend the carrying capacity.



The bodyshell is more rigid than before to improve handling, but there is still a faint degree of ‘scuttle shake’ with the roof down – but that goes completely with the roof in place. In all other respects the elegant A5 Cabriolet handled sharply, it felt more agile and the ride quality was much better, even over poorer country roads. Inside the car with the roof up it was noticeable just how quiet it was with the acoustic glass and fabric roof performing well. With the roof down, side windows up and the extra cost wind deflector in place (but this does stop use of the rear seats), wind bluster into the cabin was very low.



The 2.0 litre TFSI 252 hp petrol engine will not be the most popular in the range, that will be the 190 hp TFSI unit, but it was the only one I could get my hands on at the very busy

media launch. Mated with the seven speed dual clutch automatic transmission, plus quattro traction, with 370 Nm (273 lb.ft) of torque from just 1,600 rpm this is a strong-performing package. Top speed is 149 mph and zero to 62 mph takes just 6.3 seconds. Officially the Combined Cycle fuel economy is 42.8 mpg and the winding country Warwickshire roads took its toll with a test drive figure of 30.7 mpg. The CO2 emissions with the large 19 inch optional wheels are 151 g/km so that more than doubles First Year VED road tax costs.

VERDICT

Despite our unpredictable weather the UK is the second largest market for soft-top sales in Europe behind Germany, and the latest A5 Cabriolet has great appeal – but choose the right version carefully.

For: Lighter, stiffer body, improved handling, more compliant ride, higher specification.

Against: Careful consideration needs to be given to which version to buy, bigger wheels and breaking the £40k on-the-road price cap will add considerably to the VED tax costs.

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

Audi A5 Cabriolet 2.0 TFSI quattro 252hp, S line, S tronic.

Price: £45,360 including the new higher rate First Year VED cost.

Engine/transmission: 2.0 litre, four cylinder turbocharged petrol, 252 hp, 370 Nm (273 lb.ft), seven speed auto, quattro all wheel drive.

Performance: 149 mph, 0-62 mph 6.3 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 42.8 mpg (30.7 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 151 g/km, First Year VED £500, standard rate £140 +

£310 each year for five years because the price is over £40k, BIK company car tax 29%. Insurance Group: 39E tbc.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Audi Q5 Mid-Sized SUV



The first models in the all-new second generation Audi Q5 mid-sized SUV range are just starting to arrive with their new UK owners. The first arrivals are both 2.0 litre

turbocharged engines; a 252 hp TFSI petrol unit and a 190 hp TDI diesel, all have S tronic auto transmission with quattro all-wheel drive. In due course the range will offer the choice of three petrol and three diesel engines. Specification levels are SE, Sport and S line. On-the-road prices currently start from £38,305 and rise to £41,355 including the new higher First Year VED road tax rates.

At the media launch this week I managed to get behind the wheel of the best-selling model even after additional versions are introduced. This was the 2.0 litre, TDI 190 hp quattro S tronic S line costing £40,290 on-the-road.

The latest Q5 is all-new, built in a brand new factory in Mexico for global sales. The first thing I noticed were the new styling lines and sharp creases in the bodywork, a significant improvement over the previous rounded shape, and which gives the vehicle more ‘character’. As before it has five doors and five seats, with a slightly larger load space of 550 litres (19.42 cu.ft) and folding the rear three seats this goes up to 1,550 litres (54.74 cu.ft).





There is the usual high quality Audi signature interior with many of the same controls, instruments and overall layout as most new generation models. Improved levels of standard specification include Audi Drive Select, twin leather heated front seats, parking system and powered tailgate. Sport and S line models gain MMI Navigation with Audi Connect, and S line versions gain LED headlights and dynamic indicators.

There is the new cost option of adaptive air suspension with variable ride height and off-road modes but the new standard suspension is much more compliant than before even allowing for the 19 inch wheels and ‘S’ sport suspension fitted to my test car. Providing a more comfortable ride as standard is one of the major improvements made by Audi for their new cars. The handling agility has also improved as the vehicle is 90 kg (198 lb) lighter than its predecessors.

Also noticeable was the hushed ride, with less engine noise intrusion, and less wind and road noise as well. It just felt like a more polished performer. There is no doubt that although classed as an SUV with 4WD, most vehicles of this nature are no longer aimed at the work-horse sector of the market. Indeed the number of 4x4s available for those who really need off-road performance are getting less and less as manufacturers push their products further upmarket into the lifestyle bracket. Yes this new Q5 will have some off-road ability and it has a Descent Control function, but mainly away from city streets and open roads. It might be used occasionally to negotiate rougher tracks and a grassy field, but

in the main it will be used as a family or business car with the potential to tow a boat, trailer or horsebox. The braked towing weight of this model is 2,400 kg (5,291 lb).



On road the Q5 is well-balanced, although with some cornering body roll due to its increased height, if driven at higher speeds. It felt a big car to ‘muscle’ through winding country roads but sure-footed all the same. Around town and in the commonplace stop-start commuter traffic it was a doddle to drive.

Top speed is 135 mph, zero to 62 mph takes just 7.9 seconds and the Combined Cycle fuel consumption with the 19 inch wheels for this specification level is 55.4 mpg. On my test drive around the Warwickshire country roads the real-life figure was 42.3 mpg. With CO2 emissions of 136 g/km, the new VED road tax costs are £200 First Year rate and then £140 for the standard rate thereafter. However, for my test drive version, the expected best-

seller from the range, the on-the-road price crept over the new £40k price cap for a new car, so on top of the standard rate charge there will be an extra annual charge for five years of £310.



VERDICT

Again with so many new premium brand cars bought from 1st April this year, customers really need to select the model and added extra cost options with care, so as not to get stung with added tax costs. In the case of the new Audi Q5 it probably is an extra price worth paying.

For: Sharper styling, improved specification, better ride comfort, low noise intrusion, low depreciation cost.

Against: Select the model, wheel sizes and options with care due to increased VED tax costs.

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

Audi Q5 SUV 2.0 TDI quattro 190hp, S line S tronic (best-selling model).

Price: £40,290.

Engine/transmission: 2.0 litre, four cylinder turbodiesel, 190 hp, 400 Nm (295 lb.ft) of torque from 1,750 rpm, seven speed dual clutch automatic, quattro all wheel drive. Performance: 135 mph, 0-62 mph 7.9 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 55.4 mpg (42.3 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 136 g/km, VED road tax £200 First Year rate then £140 standard rate + £310 for five years as the vehicle costs more than £40k, BIK company car tax 29%.

Insurance Group: 30E tbc.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.