

A True Pocket Rocket the Audi RS3

No surprise to learn that the A3 accounts for one third of Audi sales in the UK market, so it is fitting that the range should have a RS version, which assumes the mantle as the top of the line.

This is the only high performance hatchback which offers permanent four wheel drive, a feature which gives this car tremendous grip as I proved on the press launch in Austria.

Powering this very attractive newcomer is a 340PS engine with turbocharging, in fact it delivers some 137PS per litre and its five cylinders delivers stunning performance, rest to 62mph in just 4.6 seconds.

Allied to the engine is a seven speed Stronic twin clutch transmission, so good that you can let it do the work itself or for added driver fun you can take manual control. I have to admit I just let the automatic work for me and it was as near perfect as can be.



No doubting the performance issued by the RS3, but we are in the times of economy and low emissions. Here again Audi has scored, on the combined fuel cycle thus car can produce 31mpg and the emission figure is 212g/km.

Performance is all very well, but there is always the need to stop and in some cases in an emergency; here again this newcomer delivers thanks to a high performance braking system.

Having such a powerhouse at your command deserves looks to match the role and the styling is sporty but not over done, it is not covered in badging that gives the game away, rather the sporting theme is

tastefully executed.

With 19 inch Rotor alloys and chunky tyres and the usual RS treatment this latest addition to the A3 family has great street cred.

Sports suspension and sitting lower to the tarmac aids good handling and the big surprise the comfort levels. I expected a firm and harsh ride, not the case; the engineers have come up with handling and high comfort levels. Few cars in this class come close to the RS3 and for me this is a key pleasing feature.

The interior and the sport theme is carried through, with Black Nappa upholstery etc; RS bucket seats are an option. To be perfectly honest the standard seats are comfy and supportive; no real need to spend the extra.

Driver's Info System, Audi Music Interface and a sport button on the centre console which permits you to change sport settings by adjusting throttle response and altering the exhaust note and by the way there are twin exhausts, another item to give the identity of this car away.

The RS3 is in the five door Sportback bodystyle it is also quite a practical little number and split folding rear seats give that added versatility that often we need.

A full safety and security package is provided for the good of all who travel in this Audi

Summing up this is one of the best cars yet to come from this German premium carmaker.

Ian Lynas