

AUDI A4 2.0 TDI

By Jim Mc Cauley



The safe progression of body styling belies the fact that Audi's latest A4 is all new from the ground up. The marginally bigger saloon remains easily recognisable as the company's highly desirable flagship which, as always, is available with a wide choice of four- and six-cylinder petrol and diesel engines.

The new car is more angular in its lines than the previous models with the highlighted waist line running from the outside edge of the headlamps to the upper edge of the tail-light units. Test choice was the 2.0 litre TDI turbo-diesel model, delivering its 190 PS to the front

wheels via Audi's S-tronic 7-speed automatic transmission.

From the push button fire-up, smoothness is the key word and immediately you are aware that this all-new model has seen significant engineering upgrades. Power is readily delivered through the auto transmission, and with the exception of an initial hesitation on take-off, the gearbox deals almost seamlessly with the changes up and down. In its default setting, the tendency is to maintain the most economical setting and therefore higher gear, but the twin-clutch unit is quick to change down when required, say for brisk overtaking. However, for those who require an even sharper response at times, there is the option of manual override, or indeed the 'Sport' setting which holds the gear ratios for longer with snappier changes.

With its class leading aerodynamics (0.23 drag coefficient) and a weight reduction in the region of 120kg over the previous model, the car feels more nimble than before while retaining its solidity on the road. Steering response, however, does not appear to be as sharp as that on the outgoing A4, but that may be down to the fact that the test car was fitted with winter tyres.



Inside, and the familiarity continues with this fifth generation model. Yes, A4, but once again the impossible had been achieved in further improvements including a stretch in rear leg room. For further comfort of the occupants, the test car came with acoustic glazing to reduce exterior noises. Up front, and in this S-line specification, there are firm and secure sports seats while the driver has a high resolution virtual instrument display in the binnacle and a fixed 8.3 inch infotainment screen mid dash in lieu of the pop-up ones from previous models. As before, this is operated from the central console with the main control knob now also doubling as a touch pad.



But what is not immediately obvious in the new A4 is the technology support packages that contribute so much to the car's active safety provision. Among these options are adaptive cruise control which automatically allows the car to come to a complete stop and start again automatically, as well as 'Side Assist' which aids the driver when changing lanes and advises of vehicles in the mirrors' blind spots.

Despite the car's performance of a 0-62 mph time of 7.7 seconds and the potential to top 147 mph, its CO2 emissions are given as 111gms/km which puts it in Band C for zero annual road tax.

The economy seeking gear selection in this automatic transmission also pays significant benefits with an official combined fuel consumption given as 67.3 mpg.

Among the standard equipment on the A4 is cruise control, front and rear parking sensors, stability control and automatic lights and wipers.

In the new EuroNCAP safety ratings, the car has been given the maximum 5-star award, scoring 90% for driver protection, 75% for pedestrian protection and 87% for child protection.

The car, as tested, is listed at £33,345 and for insurance purposes is in Group 26E. Like all Audi models, the new A4 range is covered by the company's 3-year / 60,000 mile warranty.