

AUDI R8 V10 PLUS

By Jim Mc Cauley

Based on the track successes of the original R8, which includes GT3 Championships worldwide, the second generation of Audi's flagship sports coupé saw simultaneous development of both the road and race cars. The new model, first seen at the 2015 Geneva Motor Show, sees an increase in power



for both the V8 and V10 engines. In addition, the car is lighter with improved environmental credentials.

Test choice was the ultimate version of the normally aspirated 5.2 litre V10 which pushes out 610PS with a phenomenal torque figure of 560Nm, both achieved at 6,500rpm in an engine that can rev up to 8,700rpm.

Identified externally by the restyled air intake panels which are now 'split' by the body colour as opposed to the one-piece vertical panels of

the original, the new model retains most of its classic proportions adding just 40mm to its overall width. Nevertheless, the body weights in at 200kg, some 10kg lighter than the previous model.

Slip into the cabin and you are presented with the finest cockpit environment of any sports car in terms of both practicality and quality. A flat bottom steering wheel reinforces the car's sporting heritage with starter button and 'Drive Select' controls on the spokes while instrumentation, including satellite navigation mapping is displayed on a 12.3 inch high definition screen.

Fire up, and the automatic blip lets the neighbours know you are on your way while for maximum disturbance-and thrill-the exhaust orchestration can be switched to a sport setting for downshift hiccups. But despite its 600 plus horsepower the car is docile on light throttle allowing the driver to savour the scenery as well as the car. But sweep the throttle a little further and you are taken into the supercar league.

Responsiveness goes without saying as the revs advance through the seven ratio S-tronic transmission, and the steering-paddle override seems superfluous other than to offer the driver the opportunity to satisfy his need to feel really in control. While steering feel may be remote, it nevertheless asserts its authority and the car is smooth and fluid in both the throttle application and



steering response with the satisfaction of immediate security from the superb multi-piston brakes. To further enhance the driving experience, the Drive Select System offers a choice of four modes as well as a Performance Program for dry, wet or snow conditions. Additionally, the car can be fitted with the optional Dynamic Steering and Magnetic Ride packages both of which featured on the test car, adding £1,200 and £1,600 respectively.



But above all, the R8 V10 Plus is an everyday usable car, one without primadonna idiosyncrasies, and a car that can be fully enjoyed without it continually challenging the driver.

The cabin offers the benchmark Audi quality with supportive seating and, for a mid engined car, good visibility with the optional availability of a reversing camera. Adding opulence to the interior is the optional £2,400 addition of the Alcantara headlining with stitched diamond design. For communication on the move, the car features three small microphones integrated into the seatbelts as part of the standard MMI Navigation system which further allows access

to the voice control of a coupled smartphone. This system also displays incoming emails and text messages as well as reading them aloud.

Overall, Audi has once again raised the standard in their model development, honing an already excellent design to further perfection. The new V10 Plus is listed at £132,715 with a range of extras available to further embellish an already complete car. A CO2 emissions of 287 gms/km puts it in Band M for maximum annual car tax, while insurance costs tend towards the highest grouping.

(Driven April 2016)