

NEW AUDI Q7 3.0 TDI QUATTRO

Tim Barnes-Clay tells us why this new Audi is a motor of two halves



The handsome new Audi Q7 combines the poise of a sports saloon with options for leisure-time and family use.

Strong and efficient engines, Quattro permanent all-wheel drive and agile running gear have been brought together to create a performance Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV) for all seasons and all surfaces.

With its elegant, flowing lines, the design of the Q7 is perfectly in tune with the character of Audi as a brand. The front end is dominated by expressive headlights and, viewed from the side, the large wheels and rising edges are especially prominent features. At the rear, the tailgate clearly still identifies this SUV as a relative of its younger brother, the Audi Q5.

Although the exterior dimensions have been reduced, the new Audi Q7 offers more interior room, and has the all-important seven seats. Also,

all Q7s come with heaps of kit, including keyless go, cruise control, and 19 inch alloy wheels.

The seats in the second and third rows have Isofix fixtures for child seats. Indeed, the car offers plenty of room and a high level of safety for children. Up to six child seats can be installed in the luxury SUV. The generous interior space makes their installation simple and comfortable.

Unsurprisingly, the European Euro NCAP consortium has awarded the new Audi Q7 the maximum five stars for safety. The results for adult protection in frontal and side impact collisions, pedestrian protection and child safety put the current Audi Q7 among the safest cars in its category. The results for the rear passengers in a frontal impact collision show that they are just as well protected as front passengers.

What's more, the new Q7 received the Euro NCAP Advanced award for the multicollision

brake assist system, one aspect of the standard Audi pre sense city, and the optionally available Audi pre sense basic, which in emergency situations, tensions the seatbelt before a collision and closes the windows and sunroof. The multicollision brake assist system initiates braking automatically in case of an accident to reduce the risk of skidding and the danger of further impacts.

Central to Audi pre sense city in the Audi Q7 is a predictive warning and emergency braking system for accident avoidance and the protection of pedestrians. At speeds of up to 52 mph, the system observes the road with respect to other road users. If it anticipates a collision, it warns you, according to a graduated concept: warning, warning jolt and automatic emergency braking. If necessary, it initiates full deceleration. Accidents at speeds of up to 24 mph can be avoided completely within the system limits.





Max speed: 145 mph
0-62 mph: 6.5 secs
Combined mpg: 47.9
Engine layout: 2967 cc,
V6 turbocharged diesel
Max. power (bhp): 268
Max. torque (lb.ft): 442
CO2: 153 g/km
Price: £52,970



But it is not all about safety. The superlative SUV has been designed to make light work of free-time and family activities. Numerous practical storage compartments, bottle holders and onboard power outlets are supplied and the German car maker even offers a climate-controlled drink holder to keep liquids hot or cold.

This Audi ticks all the boxes needed to be a success for business or recreation, thanks to its large carrying practicality, classy interior, powerful performance and relaxed ride.

The 3.0 TDI Quattro, on test here, has a nicely weighted power steering system and the eight-speed tiptronic transmission is sophisticated and alert. My 3.0-litre TDI V6 model, tested around Southampton, quickly transformed Britain's south coast scenery from a picture post card to a movie filmed in technicolour. Zero to 62mph arrives in just 6.5 seconds, yet it seems even faster. The goliath of a car makes you feel indestructible, but, beware, the Q7 can do 145mph. Therefore, you might feel invincible, but your licence's life is likely to expire well before you do if you quicken the pace too often.

As well as being a prestigious, roomy and downright powerful car, the Q7 is a useful beast to have around for towing. It can pull up to 2800kg, so delivers excellent performance even when lugging a fully laden horsebox or caravan around.

All of this makes the Q7 a motor of two halves; on one hand it's an ideal country lifestyle vehicle, and on the other it is simply a safe, strong, luxury family car that will last for years.

