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Audi's Super-Sedan Is as Fast as a Ferrari 458—At Half the Price

REVIEWED BY ERIC TEGLER JULY 16, 2014 | 6:30 AM |
 CATEGORIES: AUTOMOTIVE, AUTOPIA, REVIEWS

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Audi

The new Audi RS7 is a conflicted car. It's a five-door hatchback that can run neck and neck with a Ferrari 458 in the quarter mile. It marries straight-line performance with unexpected utility, and does it at a price that undercuts its similarly power-mad German competitors. Yet it's not the vehicle you want to take to the track—the power overwhelms, and the Audi S7 is the better choice if you actually want to turn at high speeds.

But, good grief is this thing fast! Full throttle, the RS7 is 4,500 pounds of luxury hurtling forward like anti-aircraft fire. Say another nouveau-riche fellow pulls up next to you at a stoplight in his 458. Fear not. You'll match him right through a quarter-mile drag race. As the two of you speed forward to 60 mph in around three seconds, he can ponder the fact that his \$233,000 (at least) two-seat sports car is holding even with a ride that holds four people and their luggage comfortably.

With the RS7, Audi tips further away from its characteristic tight-lipped restraint than with any other car it makes, including the R8 V10 Plus.

WIRED

Explosive acceleration and a bomb of an engine married with surprising utility. Even at \$122,545 as-tested it beats the competition on price. Combines the descriptors "Audi" and "nutty" in one car.

TIRED

Handling overwhelmed by the power at the limit. Faux brake ducts, faux dual exhaust tips. A spare tire tool kit including tow eye-hook but no spare. Not a track car so an S7 would really get the job done as well.

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HOW WE RATE

- 1: A complete failure in every way
- 2: Barely functional; don't buy it
- 3: Serious flaws; proceed with caution
- 4: Downsides outweigh upsides
- 5: Recommended with reservations

America's Most Powerful Audi

Based on Audi's A7 Sportback, the RS7 is the company's top dog performance sedan, a notch above the S8 in dynamics if not price. It starts for \$104,900, we tested one worth \$122,545. It's the most powerful Audi ever offered in the United States, boasting a 4.0 liter twin turbo V8 that makes 560 horsepower and 516 pound-feet of torque. The engine makes so much power that the regular A7's 7-speed double-clutch transmission can't handle the torque.

Instead, the RS7 gets an 8-speed ZF single clutch transmission that sends power to all four wheels via the Quattro AWD system. The resulting 11.5 second quarter mile dash is Gran Turismo easy – just plant your foot, no drama.

Driving the car, these giggle-inducing numbers feel like lowball estimates. After sprinting off the line, the RS7 pulls like a rocket sled to an electronically limited 174 mph (an optional "Dynamic" package bumps top speed to the same 189 mph ceiling you get in the European version of the car).



© Audi

A Practical Ride

Yet it's still a practical car. There really are four habitable seats, though your head will be bowed in the back if you're over 5'10". The space available easily exceeds what you get in competitors like Mercedes' CLS63 AMG, Aston Martin's Rapide, and BMW's M6 Gran Coupe. The rear hatch and folding rear seats yield 49.1 cubic feet of cargo space, more than a BMW X1 crossover.

The interior nods to fun, spiced up with aluminum pinstriping across black wood dash and door inlays, web stitching on the excellent seats, a perforated steering wheel wrap, and machined-out aluminum door handles. On startup, little Bang & Olufsen tweeters—ostensibly there to improve acoustics, really made for impressing friends and dates—rise from the dash in sync with the 7-inch MMI display screen.

The exterior signals aggression with 21-inch wheels enclosing 15"/14" wave-design rotors and a huge black gloss grille. Our Misano red pearl test driver had matte aluminum trim and a pattern based on the Audi quattro ring in the tail lamps. The effect is handsome, but borders on vulgar in bright red.

- 6: A solid product with some issues
- 7: Very good, but not quite great
- 8: Excellent, with room to kvetch
- 9: Nearly flawless; buy it now
- 10: Metaphysical product perfection

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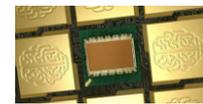
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There are other bits of awkwardness. Small aluminum steering wheel shifter paddles indicate Audi doesn't think you'll paddle shift much (it's probably right). The brake ducts on the front splitter are cosmetic only and the plastic cover over the engine keeps you from ogling the fabulous twin-turbo V8. Too bad, because beneath it you find the turbos mounted atop the intake manifold. The layout largely eliminates turbo lag, but Audi doesn't say how it keeps the turbos cool.

The RS7 doesn't drive perfectly. It corners and stops very well, until you push the power close to the limit. The chassis is marvelously stiff but the power out-muscles the suspension. The rear sport (electronic) differential over-speeds the outside rear wheels in hard cornering but it cannot defeat the inevitable AWD understeer. Nor can it make up for the RS7's mass. Steering feel is vague and the air suspension doesn't communicate what's happening underneath.

What all that means is that when you barrel into a corner 40 mph quicker than you expected (likely at first) the car lurches, struggling mightily with front-end plow as you add more and more steering. The well heeled toffs who can afford an RS7 may not instinctively understand this.

For all its gobsmacking power, the RS7 really isn't an emotional car in driving terms. On long highway drives, it's nice to be isolated from noise and vibrations, but it takes something away when you want to really feel the car. Fortunately for Audi, the competition isn't much more involving.

But at least it's the dominant sort of isolation, the kind that allows you to look through dark sunglasses at the sucker next to you and rev the engine with confidence.

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erth · 23 days ago

like...

9 · Reply · Share

[Full Metal Binge](#) · · 20 days ago

Full Metal Pizza → erui · 22 days ago

No, want!

8 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›

bzdtemp → Full Metal Pizza · 22 days ago

Would be fun on the motorway.

One thing is for sure - the Audi and in fact almost anything else has a better interior than any Ferrari of late. The people of Maranello does seem to have left their interior design to a bunch of ten year old boys, even the cars from the tractor company nearby come of conservative in comparison.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›

Full Metal Pizza → bzdtemp · 21 days ago

There's something sexy about german supersedans. They're not overtly flashy yet they're luxurious and eye-catching. They're not as hi-tech as the priciest in the market and yet deliver more bang for the buck (A Veyron is just 60 mph faster on average yet costs 10X more and anyway it can sustain that speed for only 20 minutes), they're practical, roomy and fun to drive.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›

PayneX023 · 22 days ago

Willing to buy when it has 200,000+ miles and a salvaged title.

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›

Vice Squeezer → PayneX023 · 19 days ago

I was just in ebay checking out coupe type of cars.. many half priced lambos and fairly new with low miles.. oh yeah half the price of this new Audi.. if ya wanna get laid.. drive a lambo..

^ | v · Reply · Share ›

Doogeruoy Sihtdaer · 22 days ago

That's one sexy automobile.

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›

Pscr · 22 days ago

Audi seems to have the performance down with this car, but not the aesthetics. I walked through an Audi showroom the other day and was rather surprised that their cars are still kind of boring looking. Note to Audi--putting some gimmicky-looking (cheesy, in my opinion) lights on the headlights and tail light assemblies does not equal an advance in design.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›

Full Metal Pizza · 22 days ago

Style-wise, I like the BMW M5's better. Still, that Audi is awesome.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›

Vice Squeezer → Full Metal Pizza · 19 days ago

I agree BMW is better.. here in the states Audi's have had many mechanical issues and dealers steering the owner into high priced repairs.. if they need it or not..

Important to have a decent long lasting warranty.. once ended get rid of this car quick.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›

hussflief · 22 days ago

Very nice car, but still too pedestrian looking. You can pull up to a regular s7 with a soccer mom and a full seat load of kids and most would not know the difference between your extra \$50,000 spent and her grocery getter.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›

mynamehear · 22 days ago

What an excellent, yet completely needless way to destroy the environment even quicker. I'm sure it's 19 combined mpg will be quite a bit less with the small penis owners trying to overcompensate. Yet it's always these same jackholes that I end up passing. Oh look at me, I can beat you off the line yet now I'm going 10 mph under the speed limit!. Or maybe like their performance in the sack, they just don't know how to follow thru. Completely useless nonsense.

8 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›

HeelBuff → mynamehear · 22 days ago

You poor sad sack. I can't imagine what it must feel like to look at the world through a lens that compels you to be such a douche.

41 ^ [v] · Reply · Share >

Daumus → mynamehear · 22 days ago

You're gonna have to cry harder jelly... This isn't a murican truck, it's a luxurious high performance saloon and that has nothing to do with overcompensating. Oh, it also makes 30 mpg as it can disable 4 cylinders. .I. o_o .I.

3 ^ [v] · Reply · Share >

Cahuatijo → mynamehear · 22 days ago

I am sorry all these small penises have dissatisfied you sexually. Maybe it is time to love yourself.

4 ^ [v] · Reply · Share >

hussflier → mynamehear · 22 days ago

Keep driving your chrysler mini van and thinking you are a stud that all the women want, while telling everyone within ear shot of your glory days on the highschool football field. I would be impressed if you could even present a woman that would make a normal guy lift off the bag when she was nude. Sorry about your miserable existance! hopefully you never concieve a child while with your uncomfortably awful looking wife, we have enough stupid people in this world you included!

4 ^ [v] · Reply · Share >

jimbon88 → mynamehear · 21 days ago

Another jealous hateful liberal has weighed in. I have an Audi, but I also have a big ol' 'merican V8 I love to burn gas with. Nothing like the sound of that V8. It's nothing that a limp d^&k Prius owner can enjoy.

1 ^ [v] · Reply · Share >

andybflo → jimbon88 · 21 days ago

Yet another liberal here with three 60's muscle cars, a '72 GMC pickup, an E63 AMG, and an ML350 (Wife) and my daily driver, an E350 4-Matic.

The only thing that sounds as good as an American V8 is an AMG V8. Sounds just as evil as my 409-powered Impala or the SBC in my Corvette. Just missing something from the sound of a 4150 to FI.....

1 ^ [v] · Reply · Share >

siujoey → jimbon88 · 21 days ago

Oh now we're going to make this a political argument? I am a liberal and my Dinan Stage 2 tuned BMW M6 will destroy your adorable Audi. Let's not try so hard to make everything political, shall we? It's a CAR. Moron.

1 ^ [v] · Reply · Share >

Isaac O → siujoey · 21 days ago

Dinan stage 2 M6 vs APR stage 1 RS7.....lol If you gonna talk, lets stick with stock coz any stunner can tune aWRX STi to leave your M6 in dust.

1 ^ [v] · Reply · Share >

jimbon88 → Isaac O · 21 days ago

Excellent point. Stick to stock. Liberals never let logic get in the way of their opinions.

^ [v] · Reply · Share >

siujoey → Isaac O · 16 days ago

Dinan stage 2 only bumps my HP from 500 to 554 and gets 5% more torque to the ground. So I am fine with sticking to stock, where I can only use 502 HP and get to 60 in a hair over 4 seconds. Using stock is fine with me.

^ [v] · Reply · Share >

jimbon88 → siujoey · 21 days ago

Typical low class liberal. When they have no intelligent response they resort to name calling. Sounds to me like you are a hypocritical liberal with your gas wasting call, but then, aren't most liberals hypocrits.

^ [v] · Reply · Share >

siujoey → jimbon88 · 16 days ago

"When they have no intelligent response they resort to name calling"

Did you see anyone else just write that in a post containing several

Did you seriously just write that in a post containing several instances of name-calling. I don't even have a response. That is hilarious. Thanks for the laugh, you're really starting my morning off right!

1 ^ | v | · Reply · Share >

jimbon88 → siujoey · 16 days ago

Sorry. I apologize. I didn't realize calling someone a liberal was an insult. Actually I DID!!!! Get some logic lessons before you post again. Your idiocy astounds.

^ | v | · Reply · Share >

bzdtemp → mynamehear · 22 days ago

Envy is such an ugly thing.

1 ^ | v | · Reply · Share >

George C · 22 days ago

Always remember, 2016/620hp Cadillac CTS-V is KING!!!!

American Muscle = #1

2 ^ | v | · Reply · Share >

osaebo · 22 days ago

Probably not the same target market, but now the new Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat is even faster and for only half the price of the Audi... 1/4 mile in 10.8, 707 hp, and only \$60k....

But it is hard to beat the complete package that this RS7 truly is,

1 ^ | v | · Reply · Share >

Gordon Delgado → osaebo · 15 days ago

>the new Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat is even
>faster and for only half the price of the Audi

Yes, but then you'd have to drive Another Fugly Dodge.

^ | v | · Reply · Share >

osaebo → Gordon Delgado · 15 days ago

Exactly. Just like one have to drive another fugly Audi compared to the Ferrari 458 mentioned in the article. That is my whole point. :-)

1 ^ | v | · Reply · Share >

jimbon88 → osaebo · 21 days ago

These silly commenters think that the quarter mile and HP is the only factor to consider. I bet none of them have ever owned a German car. They have no idea about quality.

^ | v | · Reply · Share >

Full Metal Pizza → jimbon88 · 18 days ago

Even with my undying love for all things German, I do like the current crop of Dodge/Chrysler big cars too.

^ | v | · Reply · Share >

osaebo → jimbon88 · 21 days ago

Exactly my point. But half price and same performance it is.

But as a owner of several German cars, I do agree with you. Even though the quality in top of the line U.S. cars have really improved just the last two years.

Audi has always had the total package. Design, quality AND performance.

^ | v | · Reply · Share >

Harrison Cole · 22 days ago

How would it fare against E63 AMG S and M5?

1 ^ | v | · Reply · Share >

bigshynepo → Harrison Cole · 22 days ago

The RS7 is slightly quicker than the E63 and a few points quicker than the M5. All 3 are awesome cars.

2 ^ | v | · Reply · Share >

Full Metal Pizza → bigshynepo · 22 days ago

Wikipedia states 0-60 time for the RS7 as 3.9 seconds and for the BMW

F10 (the newest M5) as 3.7. The Mercedes E63's 0-60 time is stated as 4.3. Really, you would have to be a professional race driver to take advantage of those tenths of second.

Indeed, all of them are awesome cars and my wet dream for style are the BMW E60 and E61 Touring.

^ [v] · Reply · Share >

HeelBuff → Full Metal Pizza · 22 days ago

Not entirely true. Here is a more accurate Wikipedia entry with verified 0-60 and 1/4 mile times: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L...>
RS7 is fastest of the lot (0-60 in 3.2 seconds)

3 ^ [v] · Reply · Share >

Full Metal Pizza → HeelBuff · 18 days ago

Impressive numbers indeed.

^ [v] · Reply · Share >

Cwilmot · 22 days ago

A great car but a simple APR stage 1 ECU tune and running on 104 Octane the car has the potential to reach 728 hp and 744 lb-ft torque

1 ^ [v] · Reply · Share >

Full Metal Pizza → Cwilmot · 22 days ago

Or, you can get the new 707-Hp Challenger.

2 ^ [v] · Reply · Share >

Cwilmot → Full Metal Pizza · 22 days ago

RWD, wouldn't be a good winter beater.

1 ^ [v] · Reply · Share >

Full Metal Pizza → Cwilmot · 22 days ago

Certainly, but racing in the snow with other than a dog sled or snowmobile does not have a lot of appeal.

1 ^ [v] · Reply · Share >

Daumus → Full Metal Pizza · 22 days ago

It's not about that, it's about the fact that you can actually drive your car when the snow falls instead of parking it in the garage.

2 ^ [v] · Reply · Share >

Full Metal Pizza → Daumus · 21 days ago

You just gotta be more careful. And if it snowed I think I'd rather drive the 4x4 F-150 that day instead of taking chances with a 40+ k sports car.

^ [v] · Reply · Share >

jimbon88 → Cwilmot · 21 days ago

AWD isn't just for winter. Why do you think most supercars have it???

^ [v] · Reply · Share >

Cwilmot → jimbon88 · 21 days ago

In a matter of speaking yes, but what about when you move into hyper cars like Pagani or Koenigsegg's, those are rwd. It's preference when it comes down to balance and other specs.

^ [v] · Reply · Share >

maserati123 · 22 days ago

The Dodge Hell Cat is also a better choice. Too much for a VW Passat.

1 ^ [v] · Reply · Share >

Daumus → maserati123 · 22 days ago

What? You must be drunk. Hellcat is a sport coupe, this is a full sized saloon. It's far more luxurious and performs better than Hellcat and has nothing to do with a Passat. Don't talk out of your ass...

3 ^ [v] · Reply · Share >

maserati123 → Daumus · 21 days ago

The audi is still CRAP no matter if i talk from ass or mouth.SCREW THE

STUPID AUDI/VW

^ | v | · Reply · Share ›



Daumus → maserati123 · 21 days ago

Judging from your previous Disqus comments you're a close-minded guy with tunnel vision for GM crap cars, you don't have to say a thing.

^ | v | · Reply · Share ›

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