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DRIVEN: AUDI Q5 TDI QUATTRO TIPTRONIC

Incorporating Audi's Q5 diesel crossover in daily life

Jan Tegler
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There's a tendency among motoring journalists to take readers along for drives through sublime and exciting settings in their reviews of magnificent new automobiles. It's understandable. A dash to the store for milk and pasta isn't the most interesting way to highlight a vehicle's capabilities. But for the majority, running errands and commuting account for the lion's share of daily driving.

That explains why you're about to hear about our jaunt to Baltimore last week. Needing to head into the city to sign papers in relation to a project, we thought "Why not incorporate the Q5 TDI into our day?"

Key in hand, we headed out the door to the pristine, metallic Q5 TDI Quattro standing on the driveway. Though its styling was refreshed slightly in 2012, the Q5 has maintained the same basic tall estate-look it debuted with in 2008. Our example hid Audi's turbocharged, direct injected (TDI) 3.0 litre diesel V6 under its relatively short hood.

The TDI V6 promises efficiency and performance, and as we discovered - it delivers. Dip deeply into the throttle and the Q5 moves forward smartly without a hint of turbo-lag. Good for 240 horsepower, the engine can propel the 2,030 Kg crossover to 100 km/h in just over six seconds. Plentiful torque is the trademark of all diesel powerplants and the 580 Nm of twist produced by this unit made merging with and passing traffic a breeze on the three-lane motorway that leads north to Baltimore from Annapolis.

Power and torque are abetted by Audi's famed Quattro all-wheel-drive and an eight-speed Tiptronic (automatic) transmission. With so many ratios, the transmission is rarely flummoxed, needing only to drop a gear or two for assertive bursts through traffic. Grip enabled by Quattro was much appreciated with temperatures hovering around minus 7 degrees Celsius and patches of snow and ice along the roads.

INSIDER KNOWLEDGE



Only if we understand the past can we move forward to analyse the present and, as the last stage, look into the future.

Alexander Mankowsky - Mercedes-Benz trend scout

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CONTRIBUTORS



CORNELIA MARIOGLOU

Cruising and writing
about all things
water-based



ARIEL ADAMS

Watch lover and
aficionado of all
things timekeeping



PURNIMA SHRINIVAS

Reporting from
India on all things
culture, style and
travel



ADAM WILLIAMS

Sustainable tech enthusiast, architecture aficionado & VW camper van tripper

Sharing the same platform as the A4 sedan and A5 coupe/convertible, the Q5 handles like a taller version of its cousins. There's a bit too much lean and wallow for our taste but the crossover takes a predictable set in corners once weight is transferred. Ride comfort and suspension compliance are good, allowing the Q5 to swallow up potholes and any other irregularities encountered on the road.

There's ample space for five inside with leather all around and almost infinitely adjustable power front seats. The high quality fit and finish, and logical layout of our Q5's interior is typical Audi, however its relentless black hue (an Audi default colour) is a bit dreary. We'd opt for a brighter shade. The optional panoramic sunroof with power sunshade helps bring light into the cabin and improves the view. It was good to gaze up through the roof as we passed Baltimore's historic Emerson Bromo-Seltzer Clock Tower (the tallest building in the city from 1911 until 1923) on our way across town to the state business offices.

All of the information, entertainment and connectivity options drivers of contemporary luxury vehicles have come to expect are present. Linking our smartphone via Bluetooth to the Q5 enabled us to make a hands-free call to the state office asking them to stay open just a little longer as we became mired in traffic.

Fortunately, the bureaucrats were in a good mood that day and we completed our filing in good order. Gliding back into the driveway, a quick check of the trip computer confirmed our suspicion from what the fuel gauge was telling us. The Q5 achieves laudable fuel economy. Audi documentations claims a 6.4 l/100 km for combined driving, and we have no reason to doubt them.

The Q5 makes short work of daily driving with practicality and performance. Reasonably-priced for the segment, it's a vehicle we'd happily incorporate in our daily life.

See the Q5 on the Audi webpages



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