

MOTORING



Keystone

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The new, third-generation Audi Q5 is hard to beat as an all-rounder. It just fits today's demanding daily life like a silk glove.

I honestly cannot remember how long it has been since I wrote about a new Audi that I actually drove. Too long, I guess.

I have never owned one (note to self: buy an Audi in 2026!), but my sister owns an A1 as her daily driver and she has a very special 2004 first-generation TT 3.2 V6 Roadster with a manual transmission in the garage, one of the rarest models of Audi's modern era that was not built as a limited edition.

The A1 is a great little car, but the TT is something else. I love driving it and I always feel somewhat jealous that it is not mine. Twenty years separate the A1 and the TT and they both feel like cars produced by a company that cares about the driving experience.

That means the new, recently launched models, like the Q3, Q5, A5 and A6, should be real contenders for the pick of the bunch in their respective segments. I shall do my best to write about all of them and see how they fare against their nemesis from BMW and Mercedes - and I begin with the Q5.

Now, the Q5 and me, we have history together. The first generation Q5 was the first car I drove as a journalist - if you could call me that - back in 2009. I remember sending an e-mail to Audi's press department saying I had just begun working for the Open Media Group and 'could I please write about the Q5?' Yes - they said. And you know what? The person who handed me the keys to that Q5 is the same person who handed me the keys to this new one now, 16 years later. That is just unbeatably cool.

On the second day with the Q5, I had someone bumping into me 1km from my house. I couldn't believe

it. My first press car and I had to let Audi know I damaged their car, even though it was through no fault of my own. I got out of the car, the other driver got out of the car - a middle-aged guy who confessed to being distracted - we both looked at our cars and...nothing. Absolutely nothing, not in mine, not in his. I thought it had been a crash strong enough to at least scrap some paint off the rear bumper, but no. We smiled and waved each other goodbye.

The new Q5 is bigger than ever before and feels like a product carefully distilled over the years into a car that is the perfect reflection of today's market. It's a car so easy to like, so easy to use, it almost seems there is nothing special about it. However, to make a car feel like that takes a long time ... takes a lot of good decisions too.

I drove the diesel version. Heresy, I know! Except not - it actually makes a world of sense to have an oil burner in such a big car, where the torque makes all the difference and long trips are rewarded with incredible average fuel consumption in the low sixes. And for all

*The Q5 is a pivotal model in Audi's plans on a worldwide level. This car must be good. In fact, it must be great.*



you ecowarriors out there, you can relax: this is actually a diesel-hybrid.

The 2.0 TDI is quieter than you think and, around town, hands the propulsion responsibilities to the electric motor in many situations. The transition between both systems is predictably unintrusive, whereas the seven-speed dual-clutch transmission works so well you don't even notice it.

With 204 horse power and 400 Nm of torque, the Q5's performance is exactly what it should be for a premium SUV of this size. It's not a car that awakens your

inner gentleman driver, but it's so good at simply being a good car I found it very satisfactory, in a kind of dispassionate way.

The new digital stage interior adapts the no-buttons approach, but there are several features only one touch away, making it very easy to access those you end up using every day. The driver's instruments display and the central infotainment screen do everything you expect of a big Audi in 2025 and offer all the latest technologies. They are both very responsive and the infotainment system is quite intuitive. I had no trouble finding the menus and features I wanted.

Comfort is omnipresent, the seats feel great and there is space for the whole family, the bags, the dog, the cat and even the parrot (yes, some people have parrots). Prices start at €78,000 but beware of the options list. It's very easy to spend €10,000 on a few goodies, so make sure you need them.

The Q5 is Audi's best-selling model on a global scale, and it should remain that way with this third-generation model. It's what is called a keystone model. No, it's not as thrilling as my sister's TT (or the A1 for that matter), but it's almost perfect as an everyday all-rounder and that is precisely what its creators wanted it to be.

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