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The Audi A4 allroad quattro: at home on or off the beaten track

Audi is launching the A4 allroad quattro in Australia for the first time in history. With its permanent all-wheel drive and increased ground clearance, the A4 can handle any road or trail; it also offers driving pleasure – even on unpaved surfaces. Naturally, the Audi A4 allroad quattro features all the innovative technologies that the A4 model line is renowned for: a powerful and highly energy-efficient engine, the dual-clutch S tronic transmission, and of course, quattro all-wheel drive technology.

The design of the Audi A4 allroad quattro recalls the A4 Avant: crisp lines enclose tastefully curved surfaces and the low roof line establishes a coupé-like silhouette. Striking details re-interpret this model line's sporty elegance. The single-frame radiator grille bears vertical chrome strips; an accentuated bumper and large air inlets underscore this vehicle's unique identity. Underneath the front end and tail end, the A4 allroad has a stainless steel underbody guard.

The headlights are immediately recognisable as that of an Audi. Their interior is detailed, the housing is wedge-shaped and their lower edge forms a subtle

wave. With the standard xenon plus headlights, the highly efficient LED daytime running lights form a narrow, homogenous clasp that largely follows the outer contour, remaining open in the area of the xenon lens. The turn signals are a strip at the upper edge.

Viewed from the side, the vehicle dazzles with flared wheel arches, angular sills with stainless-steel insert strips, and large wheels – 17-inch wheels in 7-arm design are standard. The roof is capped off by an offset rail with two high crosspieces. The width of the A4 allroad quattro is emphasised by the rear bumper's distinctive styling and the integrated horizontal reflectors. The two exhaust tailpipes appear side by side.

Body and Luggage Compartment

The Audi A4 allroad quattro is a truly expressive car. Its measurements include 4.72 metres of total length, with a wheelbase of 2.81 metres. It is 1.84 metres wide and 1.50 metres high. It also features greater ground clearance than the Audi A4 Avant, offering 180 millimetres when the Audi A4 allroad quattro is unloaded.

Audi has created a vehicle body consisting primarily of high-strength and ultra strong steel panels – which, in turn, reduce the car's weight while enhancing its rigidity, vibrational comfort, and impact safety. An array of precisely arranged metal sections protects passengers in the event of an accident.

In addition to the two front airbags, which take into consideration the precise positions of the driver and front-seat passenger, there are side air bags in the front and in the rear as well. Last but not least, a head-protection airbag system also stands at the ready. The integral head-restraint system in the front diminishes the risk of whiplash in the event of a rear-end collision.

The luggage compartment's base capacity is 490 litres. This can be increased, however, to an impressive 1,430 litres and a length of 1.78 metres by folding down the split rear-bench backrest. The hatch is exactly one metre wide to allow for wider luggage. The luggage compartment boasts an ingenious design which enhances its use and is lined with high-quality carpet. Befitting its character, the A4 allroad quattro has a wealth of practical

flourishes: the luggage-compartment cover and the partition safety netting are stored in separate compartments; a mere tap of the hand triggers the cover to automatically retract upward. Additional standard equipment includes fastening rings and bag hooks as well as a shelf on one side with an adjustable net.

The Engine

Audi offers a powerful 2.0 TDI diesel engine with the A4 allroad quattro. The technical specialties of this engine include low internal friction, a turbocharger with adjustable vanes, and a new centrifugal governor in a dual-mass flywheel. Thanks to its sophisticated design, the flywheel only requires a slight mass to compensate for most of the vibrations caused by the engine. This makes the engine even smoother at low revs, which permits earlier upshifts and thus more efficient driving. Fuel consumption decreases by as much as 0.2 litres per 100 km.

The 2.0 TDI engine produces a healthy 130kW of power and 380 Nm, from just 1750 rpm. Technologies from the Modular Efficiency Platform like start-stop, combined with the fast-shifting seven-speed dual-clutch S tronic transmission, ensure fuel consumption is very frugal, at 6.0 litres per 100km (CO₂ emissions are 156 grams per km). Performance is also impressive, as the A4 allroad quattro accelerates from standstill to 100km/h in 8.1 seconds.

The S tronic transmission switches extremely smoothly among its seven gears within a few hundredths of a second. S tronic also excels thanks to its high efficiency ratio and a broad spread of the gear ratios. The seven-speed S tronic has a fully automatic mode at the ready: the driver can shift as required, if necessary via shift paddles on the sports steering wheel.

In the Audi A4 allroad quattro drivetrain, the differential is in front of the clutch and immediately behind the engine. This technical stroke of genius made it possible to reposition the front axle much closer to the vehicle's front end, in turn allowing for a long wheelbase and an ideal distribution of the axle loads. The benefits include steady straight-line stability, superb ride comfort, and excellent driving dynamics.

The Audi A4 allroad quattro features quattro permanent all-wheel drive as

standard equipment. Its purely mechanical centre differential favours the rear, distributing power at a 40:60 ratio to the front and rear axle. If necessary, the quattro permanent all-wheel drive can direct up to 65 percent to the front or as much as 85 percent toward the rear end.

The Chassis

The width of the Audi A4 allroad quattro lays the foundation for its driving dynamics. The car's track is 1,583 mm at the front and 1,574 mm at the rear – some 19-23 mm wider at the front and rear, respectively, than the A4 Avant. The body is higher on account of a chassis that rides on longer springs and specially tuned shock absorbers; these successfully balance sportiness with total comfort. The standard 17 x 8.0-inch lightweight alloy wheels are fitted with 225/55 tyres.

The chassis in the A4 allroad quattro retains all the advantages which distinguish the A4 model line. The five-link front suspension and the self-tracking trapezoidal-link rear suspension consist largely of aluminium to reduce unsprung weight. 314mm ventilated front brakes and 300mm solid rear brakes provide for rapid deceleration. It should come as no surprise that the A4 allroad quattro offers sportiness, comfort, and stability – onroad and offroad.

The highly efficient electromechanical power steering adapts its boost to the driven speed. The electric motor integrated into the steering gear consumes no energy when driving straight ahead, which depending on the engine lowers fuel consumption by as much as 0.3 litres per 100 km. The concentric arrangement of the steering rack and the servo drive minimises the dimensions of the steering gear.

The steering ratio of 15.9:1 is sporty and direct, and the steering gear transfers the input directly to the wheels. Feedback from the road is spontaneous and responsive: traction forces and disruptive forces are practically imperceptible. The Audi A4 has a turning circle of approximately 11.5 metres.

On rough terrain, the A4 allroad quattro relies on a high-tech feature of its Electronic Stabilization Program (ESP): the Offroad Detection (ORD)

technology automatically identifies the type of driving surface and adjusts the ESP's control parameters accordingly. When the driver depresses the accelerator pedal, ESP increases propulsive power by tolerating more wheel spin than otherwise. If necessary, it will override for a time in the interests of safety.

Interior

Refined touches, uncompromising quality and flawless functionality: the interior of the Audi A4 allroad quattro embodies all the strengths for which Audi is renowned. The cockpit clearly serves the driver.

Operation of the A4 allroad quattro is easy. The ignition key, the steering column stalk and the three-spoke leather sport steering wheel (with paddle shift) include chrome and high-gloss inlays. The multifunction buttons follow an intuitively comprehensible logic.

The air conditioning and infotainment controls have fine chrome clasps. The same is true for the power window buttons, the air vents and the switches for the power seats. Buttons allow you to switch among three settings for the optional seat heating; the centre console's displays are illuminated in white throughout.

The automatic transmission is operated using a selector lever. It is easy to switch into S mode – a single pull on the selector lever is all it takes.

Powerful media centre: MMI navigation plus

MMI navigation plus is the high-end media centre in the A4 model series. In addition to the DVD drive, it includes a 60 GB hard drive for navigation, phone and music data. A graphics processor from the specialist NVIDIA generates the three-dimensional images in top quality.

Measuring seven inches in diagonal and with a high resolution of 800 x 400 pixels, the MMI navigation plus monitor delivers tack-sharp images in brilliant colours. The advanced voice control enables the driver to spell the city and the street and also to control the telephone and music playback.

The operation of the MMI navigation plus is intuitive. There are four main buttons that control key functions (for Telephone, Navigation, Radio and Media), and the volume control includes a skip function enabling the user to skip quickly between songs. Mobile phones and mobile playback devices can be connected to the system via the Bluetooth interface so that the system can also play back music stored on them.

The Audi sound system is standard in the A4 allroad quattro. At its core is a 180-watt, six-channel amplifier that powers ten speakers, including a subwoofer and a centre speaker. The Bang & Olufsen Sound System offers even great sound quality. Its 505-watt, ten-channel amplifier drives 14 high-performance speakers, whose grilles are decorated with Aluminium. In conjunction with MMI navigation plus, the system can play back DVDs in 5.1 surround sound.

A convenient standard feature for telephony is the Bluetooth interface that also allows playback of music stored on the phone in the car (in combination with MMI Navigation plus) and a Bluetooth mobile phone preparation with a hands-free unit and voice control.