

Matrix.

A simple pure sport sedan with four dimensions of drive options added. *By Joe Sage*



At under 3500 pounds and with 292 turbo-charged horses, the Audi S3 is just what the S cars are known to be—a precision premium sedan with speed, handling and a sporty (but not ticket-me showy) character. The interior and inter-faces remain among the best in the biz.

We like the current A3, a nicely tuned German compact sedan about the same size a midsize A4 was about a decade earlier. And we always love an Audi S car. This S3 arrived highly anticipated.

Ours was outfitted with Nappa leather, yes, but manual seats, why not. Set 'em and leave 'em. Options are reasonable and good for the car's spirit and yours. Just over \$50,000 is a nice price for an S Audi, albeit the smallest one (though that makes this one's existence such a great opportunity).

The only thing working against the car is layer upon layer of electronic options that can come between your brain and the road. At least as an automatic. Any frustrations we had centered around its many combinations of shift and drive modes, which can create both great opportunity and great mystery. You choose among four set-

tings in Drive Select (auto, dynamic, individual or comfort), between Drive and Sport in the shifter, and between automatic and manumatic. That's sixteen ways to set up your drive. Each option has its own sub-purpose, but combine them and you have a 4-dimensional chessboard to occupy you for quite some time. This is not unique to this car, but the core personality of an S Audi could come through more clearly with just its pure drivetrain.

Auto stop/start aggravated the experience, noticeably rough and slow to come back to life. The right combination of settings can defeat this, and selective use of manumatic can also mitigate it, though we started to think it'd be less work to drive a manual than this complex automatic.

Ultimately, we concluded the best approach is to just pick one set of combinations and roll with it. It's just when you're experimenting with all the possibilities that it makes you a little crazy. Any combo left alone will give you superb performance. Don't let the advanced tech come between you in this relationship. Horsepower to quattro to road, the Audi S3 is a solid, fun sport sedan. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	.....2.0L TFSI turbo four
HP/TORQUE	.....292 hp / 280 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	.....6-spd S tronic® dual-clutch auto
STEERING	.....electromechanical power
DRIVETRAIN	.....quattro AWD
0-TO-60 MPH	.....4.7 sec
TOP SPEED	.....(summer tires, electronically ltd) 155 mph
TURNING CIRCLE	.....36.1 ft
LEGROOM FRONT/REAR	.....41.2 / 35.1 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....10.0 cu ft
WHEELBASE / LENGTH	.....103.8 / 175.8 in
WEIGHT	.....3462 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....premium / 14.5 gal
MPG	.....21/28/24 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	.....\$42,900
GLACIER WHITE METALLIC	.....575
TECHNOLOGY PACKAGE: MMI navigation plus, MMI touch, Audi connect® Prime & Plus 6-month trial, side assist with rear cross traffic alert, Audi virtual cockpit	.....3000
DYNAMIC PACKAGE: 19" 5-double-spoke-star wheels, summer tires, Audi magnetic ride	.....1500
S SPORT SEAT PACKAGE: Manual adjust front S Sport seats, Nappa leather, S3 embossed	.....1450
BANG & OLUFSEN® SOUND SYSTEM	.....950
RED BRAKE CALIPERS	.....400
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....950
TOTAL	.....\$51,725

