

ROAD WARRIOR

BY JOE SAGE

Audi Q5 moves into just its second generation for 2018, after a full decade of gen one, following the Q7's evolution by two show years and one model year. As with the Q7, the new Q5 is less curvaceous and loses much of its original classic streamliner look, gaining 2.3 inches of front headroom (but only 0.3 in the back) and more than three cubic feet of cargo volume (about a five percent increase). The new Q5 is about an inch longer, two inches wider, has a notable boost in horsepower, yet sheds about 45 pounds, for a three-point gain in city fuel mileage (though highway is the same, and its fuel tank is now smaller).

A regular Audi Q5 starts at \$41,500, the SQ5 at \$54,300. For this \$12,800 add-on, the 252-hp 2.0T cast-iron four-cylinder turbo upgrades to a higher-compression aluminum-alloy 354-hp 3.0L V6 turbo; the 7-speed dual-clutch trans moves to an 8-speed Tiptronic; wheels and tires are upgraded and upsized; and the trim level range runs a bit higher. Weight is up by 353 pounds against the standard Q5, length and wheelbase by fractions of an inch, and fuel mileage drops 3 or 4 points (both models require premium fuel).

The new Q7 and Q5 seem to have lost some of their prior style personality, though they now look more related. Audi evolution is slow and steady, simultaneously subtle and mildly alarming at first, then growing on you quickly.

Audi's user interfaces are among the best in the business, now adding a touchpad in front of the MMI controller, which along with the main screen gives you access to everything, some immediately, some less so.

We took the new SQ5 on a marathon turnaround to San Diego, 18 hours including three hours there and quick meals and fuel stops en route. Our drive was far better once we disabled an overly meddling lane keep system. We wanted cruise control but wished to disable its overly paranoid adaptive feature, but could only set that to minimum, at least an improvement. Our fuel mileage exceeded its statutory promise: 24.2 mpg overall, including a few miles of city streets in La Jolla.

We realized afterward that we had never once given the seats a second thought—the drive was both engaging and comfortable.

SQ5 versus Q5 gives a 40.5 percent horsepower boost for a 30.8 percent price boost. Zero-to-60 time improves by 13.6 percent. And its S badges and style cues are always a plus in our status-conscious market. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE	.....3.0T aluminum alloy V6 turbo/TFSI
DRIVETRAIN	.....quattro AWD
HP/TORQUE	.....354 hp / 369 lb-ft
TRANSMISSION	.....8-speed Tiptronic
0-TO-60 MPH	.....5.1 sec
SUSPENSION	.....F: Five-link independent steel spring; R: five-link indep steel spring, adaptive damping
STEERING	.....electro-mech speed-sensitive
BRAKES	.....F: 13.8" vented / R: 13.0" vented
WHEELS/TIRES	.....8x20 / 255/45 R20 summer perf
LENGTH/WHEELBASE	.....183.9 / 111.2 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....38.4 ft
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....8.2 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....40.9 / 37.8 in
CARGO VOLUME	.....26.8 / 60.4 cu.ft
WEIGHT	.....4398 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....premium / 18.5 gal
MPG	.....19/24/21 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	.....	\$54,300
NAVARRA BLUE METALLIC	.....	575
PRESTIGE PKG:	Dual pane acoustic front side glass, heads-up color display, interior lighting plus, Bang & Olufsen 3D sound system, Audi connect Prime & Plus (6 mos trial), MMI nav w MMI touch, virtual cockpit, top view camera system	4200
S SPORT PACKAGE:	Red brake calipers, sport adaptive air suspension, sport rear differential	3000
DRIVER ASSISTANCE PKG	.....	1800
NAPPA LEATHER INTERIOR	.....	1250
DYNAMIC STEERING	.....	1150
21" WHEEL PKG	.....	1000
CARBON ATLAS INLAYS	.....	500
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....	975

TOTAL\$68,750

