

As this pair of Quattros show, Audi places a lot of confidence in the ability of all wheel drive (AWD) to lure enthusiasts to the showrooms, as well as give an edge in handling and all-weather competence. With so many AWD Quattros roaming the streets of southern California, you know it's not because of our snow-covered byways. Something else is going on here....

Audi has fine designers and it shows. The A6 exterior is smooth and sleek, yet still manages to project a slightly menacing stance. The flowing roofline gives it the look of a coupe.

Its interior doesn't disappoint either. Audi is known for beautiful workmanship inside; you may feel you're in a more expensive car than the price tag indicates. Fit and finish, materials, controls—all exude quality and subdued, elegant style. Seats are comfortable front and back, and there is generous rear seat legroom.

The A6 gives you several engine choices; this was equipped with a *smoooooth* 4.2L V8 rated at 350 hp for 2007 (up from 335) with Audi's slick 6-speed Tiptronic automatic. It's a fairly quick car; the main thing holding it back in acceleration is its weight: all 4,200-plus pounds of it. Still, it manages to sprint from 0-60 in the upper 6-second range, which is quite good. For icing on the cake, its V8 emits a great-sounding snarl when you push the pedal down.

Audi's A4 looks sportier. Exterior styling is quite similar to the A6's, yet simply by fact of having less length with which to taper the rear roofline, it looks less "sleek" and more "sporty."

Once again, the interior is worthy of



Great Grip, Confident Cornering... But Which is More Fun?

Audi A6 4.2 Quattro and A4 3.2 Quattro

its price tag. Basic interior layout and design is similar to that of the A6. There is somewhat less interior room, naturally, primarily expressed in shorter rear seat legroom.

A4s offer two engine choices: a 200 hp Turbo Four, and this example's 3.2L 250 hp V6. Coupled with the standard 6-speed stick and with Quattro AWD, this A4 was huge fun to drive in a more "spirited" manner.

The A6 is certainly no slouch in the handling department. Its V8 delivers impressive punch and with Quattro added becomes an impressive handler considering its heft. The weight factor, though, is what keeps it a step behind the A4 Quattro when pushed hard on tightly winding roads.

In that environment, the A4 comes into its element and is more communicative, more sure-footed when push comes to push harder. But then, dropping around 600 pounds compared to the A6 will do that for you.

Answering the "which is more fun" question depends on your preferences. If you take more pleasure in longer, sleeker, and a

bit more punch in acceleration, you'll prefer the A6. On the other hand, if handling prowess and maneuverability (with acceleration just a tick behind) is your ideal, the A4 will keep a big smile on your face whenever you're on a tightly winding road.

My choice of the two is the A4 Quattro simply because it matched what I consider to be big-time fun in a car: stellar cornering ability, good feedback, decent acceleration and an all-around competence that enthusiast drivers can more fully exploit. Those attributes combine to make it one of the most fun cars I've driven.

The A6 Quattro starts at about \$54,000; this loaded example came in just under \$65,000. It was EPA rated at 17-city, 23 highway mpg, and I averaged 18.1 mpg. An A4 Quattro begins at around \$36,400 and my loaded tester came in at \$46,810. This A4 was EPA rated at 17-city, 27-highway mpg, and my usual mix of city, freeway and winding roads returned an even 22 mpg.

With either of these Audi Quattros, you'll enjoy a rewarding driving experience—especially whenever you take the long way home and seek out those winding roads!



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