



Audi A6 3.0 Quattro

## 2012 Audi A6 3.0 and S5 Coupe

### All-Wheel Drive Boosts Winding Road Fun!

Anyone notice the roll Audi has been on in recent years? I'd say it's due to clean lines showing refined understatement, solid engineering, tasteful interiors, strong performance, exemplary handling and a big fun-to-drive factor.

Audi's A6 sedan is newly redesigned for 2012, including a new engine and transmission in this 3.0 model. Overall exterior design is conservative and upscale. Audi's trademark grille has a chrome outline emphasizing its grand size and looks slightly out of place on a \$70,000 car.

Inside you'll find comfortable, supportive seats, smoothly flowing lines and high quality materials. Rear seating is spacious but better for two due to the center drop-down armrest.

Two drive trains are available. A 2.0L 4-cylinder turbo with 211 hp, CVT transmission and front wheel drive, and this 3.0L supercharged V6 with 310 hp, a new 8-speed Tiptronic transmission and all-wheel drive (awd).

Local mountain roads allow the A6 3.0 to strut its stuff and it handled beautifully. This model's awd, fairly sticky tires and a gear for every need promoted confidence on tightly winding roads. When pushed to the limit, handling felt neutral, with negligible under- or over-steer. The A6 felt nimble for a car its size, belying its 4,000 pound heft.

This V6 is smooth and powerful. Acceleration is strong and should fully please

most owners. Road noise was minimal. The suspension was "comfortably firm" and offered a good compromise between handling and ride. But what if you want something sportier in looks and performance? Then you'll find that...

The S5 Quattro Coupe with its 4.2L 354 horsepower V8 impresses with great looks and stellar handling. Has a terrific growl, too. Arguably the most beautifully sculpted 2-door coupe around, it manages to look both elegant and aggressive at the same time. I recommend and love the buttery smooth 6-speed stick; an automatic is available.

Up front, plenty of room and comfortable leather seats with adjustable everything make for a perfect setup. A car for all seasons, with standard awd. Its adjustable suspension has Auto, Comfort and Dynamic

settings. Auto switches between Comfort and Dynamic depending on a sensor's reading of your driving mood. Standard awd helps give amazing grip when cornering hard and makes this a head-for-the-hills kind of car. It loves to run, and the harder you push the better it feels, taking a set and digging in with its wide, sticky tires. A true "driver's car" and huge fun while still comfortable enough on freeways or around town.

In back, rather vertical seatbacks, tight legroom and fixed rear windows detract from one's comfort level. That's it for nits to pick.

The S5 has milder cousins in the A5 coupes and convertibles, with 4- and 6-cylinder engines and lower prices.

The new A6 3.0 starts at \$49,900 (4-cylinder is less) and this loaded example including LED headlamps, adaptive cruise control and head up display totaled \$71,330 with destination fees. \$5,900 for its "Advanced" sound system seemed a bit steep though. It is EPA-rated at 19-city, 28-highway mpg and I averaged 24 mpg overall, while getting 32 mpg on the freeway with cruise set at 70. The S5 begins at \$53,900 and this one totaled \$63,825 including special paint (\$2,500) and a \$1,300 gas guzzler tax. The S5 is EPA-rated at 14-city, 22-highway mpg and I averaged 18.8 mpg.

Throughout its lineup, Audi continues to build cars which provide great driving enjoyment. I hope you have a tightly winding road nearby, otherwise you may never know how much fun they really are.

*Mike Cooney is a lifelong auto enthusiast living and writing in Southern California. Comments are welcome at [Michael@GlobalBrand.com](mailto:Michael@GlobalBrand.com).*



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