

Perfection in mid-grade by Joe Sage

When the Audi A5 and S5 were introduced in 2008, stylist Walter de' Silva proudly declared them the most beautiful cars he had ever designed. This is evidenced by the model (joined by an RS5) still bearing the same fundamental body shell in its 15th year, with Audi's characteristically gradual styling upgrades applied front and rear.

Take this same thinking into the SUV-dominant era, and we find that the Q5 and SQ5 (which have evolved a bit more than the A5 series) are every bit as handsome, crisp, clean and well-proportioned, sitting high and proud, especially so atop the optional 21-inch wheels of our sample.

The Q5 also launched in 2008, receiving a minor refresh in 2012. The new second generation arrived in 2017 and received a refresh in 2021.

The sample we recently had for a week in 2022 is a 2021 model, as supply chain issues and com-

puter chip restraints continue to affect the industry at large and tighten the flow of the new model year, but all is the same for both years.

The base Q5 45 now includes S Line badging and features as standard, while wheel options and other finish details are upgraded inside and out.

The full Q5 lineup (lower right) looks complex at first glance, with fully 15 models, but it boils down easily, to three powertrains, two body styles and three trim levels of each.

That could create 18 possible combinations, but while the 261-hp 2.0-liter turbo-four and the 349-hp 3.0-liter turbo-six are available as a Sportback, the 362-hp plug-in hybrid (PHEV) is SUV-only.

Our sample is a mix, with the base 2.0L engine, the top Sportback body, finished in mid-level Premium Plus trim.

Beautiful as the Q5's sheet metal is, we encour-

age visualizing any vehicle without its body in mind, taking a better look at its stance and structure—and in this, the Q5 also excels, especially in Sportback form. The bigger, bolder and more linear grille of current models also works exceptionally well with the added height on an SUV. Space trade-offs on the Sportbacks are minimal—headroom is almost identical and cargo volume is surprisingly close—although they are priced about \$2500 to \$4000 higher than the traditional two-box SUVs.

Audi has long done a fine job with interiors, and this is no exception, even in mid-trim. They've also done quite a job of providing bins, nooks and otherwise leftover space for stashing your goods.

Though the S and PHEV models offer 33 to 39 percent more power and torque, we found the 2.0-liter's 261 horses plentiful and well applied via the S tronic dual-clutch transmission. Suspension and steering are fundamentally the same between regular and S models, working hand in glove with the



engine to maintain power through solid and strong cornering and launch forth like a champion.

Styling and stance remind us a bit of the future-is-now Audi e-tron EV models (a bit ironic, as the dominant grille is a factor in this, though of course it is functionally quite different). We dove into some online rabbit holes to see what others might think about this—and learned that it is a big conversation. We might have thought of the e-tron as an

alternative to the Q5 for some buyers, only to find a sizable presence of EV-focused fans who instead see the Q5 as a stopgap till they get an e-tron. We're not sure that adds up, since they both exist now and you already have a choice. Nonetheless, at a minimum, it underscores the strong contemporary stance, power and roadhandling we see in the new Q5, which should hold its own for years to come. Grab a Q5, gas up and go! ■



SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	San José Chiapa, Mexico
ENGINE / TRANS	Mexico / Germany
ROWS / SEATS	two / five
ENGINE	2.0 TFSI alum alloy crossflow 16v 4-cyl DOHC turbo, valvelift & var timing
HP/TORQUE	261 hp / 273 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	9.6:1
0-TO-60 MPH	5.7 sec
TRANSMISSION	7-spd S tronic dual-clutch
DRIVETRAIN	quattro AWD w ultra tech
SUSPENSION	F: five-link indep steel spring; R: five-link indep steel spring
STEERING	speed-dependent electromech
BRAKES	F: 13.3-in; R: 13.0-in
WHEELS	opt 21-in 5-dbl-spoke module design
TIRES	255/40R21 summer perf tires
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	184.6 / 111.0 in
TURNING CIRCLE	38.7 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	w sunfr 38.0 / 37.5 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	40.9 / 38.0 in
CARGO CAPACITY	24.7 / 51.9 cu.ft
WEIGHT	4178 lb
TOW CAPACITY	(braked) 4400 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	prem 91 octane / 18.5 gal
MPG	23/28/25 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	\$47,800
PAINT: Daytona Gray Pearl Effect	595
INTERIOR: Black w Rock Gray stitching	incl
PREMIUM PLUS: auto-dim pwr-fold mirrors w memory, SiriusXM (w 3 mo trial), advanced key, driver's seat memory, leatherette console and armrests, Audi virtual cockpit, Audi phone box, adaptive cruise w traffic jam assist, active lane assist, heated steering wheel w hands-on detection, top view camera system	3200
NAV PKG: MMI Navigation plus, Audi connect Prime and Plus (w 6 mo trial)	1500
SPORT PKG: sport suspension, 21-in 5-dbl-spoke Module design wheels w summer tires, aluminum rhombus inlays	1400
AUDIO: Bang & Olufsen w 3D sound	950
DESTINATION CHARGE	1095
TOTAL	\$56,540

2022 AUDI Q5 / SQ5 LINEUP

2.0L 4-cyl	261 hp / 273 lb-ft
Q5 45 TFSI quattro	
Premium	\$44,100
Premium Plus	49,100
Prestige	54,800
Q5 Sportback 45 TFSI quattro	
Premium	\$48,400
Premium Plus	51,800
Prestige	57,100
2.0L 4-cyl PHEV w 17.9 kWh batt	362 hp / 369 lb-ft
Q5 55 TFSI e quattro	
Premium	\$52,900
Premium Plus	57,000
Prestige	62,350
3.0L 6-cyl	349 hp / 369 lb-ft
SQ5	
Premium	\$53,900
Premium Plus	58,100
Prestige	63,300
SQ5 Sportback	
Premium	\$57,300
Premium Plus	60,500
Prestige	65,700