

German groundbreaker



Audi has made a breakthrough in premium compact hatchback quality and capability with the all-new A3.

Re-designed from the ground up following the principles of 'Audi ultra' lightweight construction, the German motor tips the scales an impressive 80 kg lighter on average than its forerunner. The same meticulous pursuit of progress is evident in the sophisticated cabin, which genuinely breaks new ground in the class with standards of materials, workmanship and ergonomics that indisputably push the boundaries at this level.

British Audi A3 models have launched with a choice of three specification options – SE, Sport and S line – all of

FAST FACTS

- Max speed: 134 mph
- 0-62 mph: 8.6 secs
- Combined mpg: 68.9
- Engine: 1968cc 4 cylinder 16 valve turbo diesel
- Max. power (bhp): 148 at 3500-4000 rpm
- Max. torque (lb/ft): 236 at 1750-3000 rpm
- CO2: 106 g/km
- Price: £22,730 on the road



Tim Barnes-Clay drives the slick, stylish and economical new Audi A3 2.0 TDI Sport (150 PS)



which are extraordinarily well appointed. The Sport model, on test here, sits on beefy 17 inch alloy wheels and features the 'Audi drive select adaptive dynamics system'. This enables you to choose from five modes which prescribe the car's driving characteristics – Comfort, Auto, Dynamic, Efficiency and Individual. They influence the weighting of the steering, the sensitivity of the accelerator pedal, the shift points of the S-tronic transmission, if fitted, and the parameters used by the optional adaptive cruise control system. Additional Sport features include a revitalizing two-zone climate control, sports seats, sports steering wheel and aluminium detailing inside and out.

On the move, the A3 Sport, although perched on firm and athletic springs, is not uncomfortable and it sticks to some of Suffolk's more twisty roads like a limpet. There is plenty of room for you and your passenger in the front, although your friends in the rear seats might find it hard to stretch their legs out. That said, all the seats are supportive and the 2.0-litre 150 TDI lump allows you to accelerate from 0 to 62mph in 8.6



Left and above; interior detail from the new Audi A3 2.0 TDI Sport

seconds. But the car doesn't stop there – where legal the needle will spin way up the dial to 134 mph. The rapid acceleration is made all the more easy to achieve thanks to the all-new A3's slick six-speed manual gearbox.

Not only is this first-class hatchback's turbo diesel engine quick, it is also highly fuel efficient. Engine start-stop technology and energy recuperation systems enable the A3 2.0 TDI Sport to achieve up to 68.9 mpg – and this is the selling point. Yes, the Audi is quick, comfortable and stylish – but, more importantly, it will keep you from frequently forking out at the pumps.