

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## [Audi S5 Sportback - Road Test by Tony Dron](#)



**Let's start with what this car doesn't do. It absolutely does not scream 'show-off' to your neighbours and its appearance is never going to be instantly offensive to other road-users. Nor does its ride rattle those very expensive crowns off your high-quality dental work.**

At the same time, once you're at the wheel, it does not feel like an ordinary car. Any time you need it, the **Audi S5 Sportback's** new supercharged three-litre V6 petrol engine can deliver 333PS and propel you up the road at a prodigious rate. Maybe it's not as quick as **Audi's R8** or **RS5** models, but the S5's 0-62mph capability of 5.4 seconds is most definitely close to the stunning category, as is the keen response of this all-new forced induction engine. Top speed is governed to 155mph.

This is one of those family cars for the proverbial intelligent, thinking man who likes very high performance and has a sense of discreet style. The target market for the **S5 Sportback** is considerably younger than the average saloon car buyer: in the main, they'll be married men in their forties, successful high earners who appreciate good design and advanced technology.



The coupé style of the body is rather deceptive as the **S5 Sportback** offers genuine four-door saloon practicality, plus an unusually wide tailgate opening and a very large boot. With the rear seats up, boot space is the same as in the **S4** saloon at 480 litres but, surprisingly, the **S5 Sportback** actually offers slightly more luggage space than the saloon when the back seats are down. Longer, lower and wider than an **S4** saloon, this is the largest B segment (or medium-sized) body yet built by **Audi**. The low roofline reduces air resistance, helping to increase performance while improving fuel consumption and emissions. The claimed official combined fuel consumption figure is 30.1mpg; the CO2 emissions are 219g/km.

Our test model **S5 Sportback 3.0 TFSI Quattro S tronic** was fitted with a wide range of options, including the quattro sports differential, plenty of high-tech sound and navigation gadgets, **Audi's** damper control and dynamic steering, plus pearl effect paint and a black silk nappa leather interior. This all added up to an on-the-road price of £47,575.



Permanent quattro all-wheel drive is standard, as is the superb seven-speed S tronic twin-clutch transmission system. Gearchanges are rapid but virtually imperceptible, heard but not felt. The **S5 Sportback** has the latest evolution of the quattro system, with a 40:60 front:rear torque distribution under normal conditions. The optional sport differential enables torque to be automatically adjusted between front and rear axles and also between the wheels across each axle. Instead of braking an inside wheel when stability needs to be maintained in a corner, the optional sport differential increases the torque delivered to the appropriate outside wheel. The **S5 Sportback** also has the latest ESP, including a cross-axle front differential lock.

Although the **S5 Sportback** delivers the sort of high performance and response you'd expect in a fairly expensive sports car, it does not come at the expense of comfort in terms of ride and noise. Flowing along normally in the traffic, the suspension never jolts and the **S5 Sportback** feels extremely quiet, spacious and dignified.



Its looks really don't give the game away, either. This car is undeniably stylish but somehow it just blends into the scenery. When you want to go for it properly, however, the performance of this flagship model is phenomenal and it has the brakes, roadholding, traction and handling to match its genuinely sporting heart. **Audi** claims that this car has no true rival and they could well be right there. If your neighbours ever get to find out what your **S5 Sportback** really can do, they would probably be very surprised indeed – but then, there's no reason to let them know, is there?

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