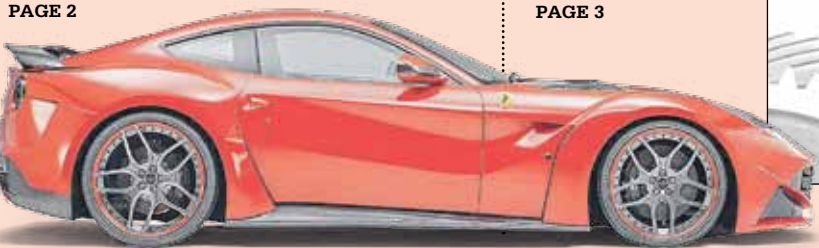


Will we ever see an electric-powered Ferrari?

Just say no and turn to...

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Black gold

Is synthetic oil worth the price?

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Ford diesels up

The F150 joins the ranks of diesels.

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TEST DRIVE

A3, 2.0

2016 Audi A3 Sedan 2.0T quattro S tronic

DAN LYONS | text and photos
Special to the Times Union

After a season of slacking off, wintertide got off the schneid, with a late burst of snow of cold during my test drive week.

While I would've been just as happy if winter had continued to phone it in this year, the sloppy roads did at least afford me the opportunity to sample one of the best features of this week's test car — the Audi A3 2.0T quattro.

Quattro is a full-time, all-wheel-drive system that distributes power between wheels as needed to maintain grip. Its benefits are most noticeable to most drivers in sloppy, winter conditions.

The late season snow event coincided with my drive time, allowing me to experience the uniquely controlled feeling of driving in a vehicle with max traction *and* the

2016 Audi A3 Sedan 2.0T quattro S tronic
MSRP: \$34,200 · As tested: \$41,100

balanced, lower center of gravity of a car. The latter part bears repeating. All-wheel-drive is a traction upgrade in any vehicle, but when you add in better balance and a lower stance, it's another dimension. A good AWD system takes a lot of the white knuckle out of driving in wintry conditions, and quattro is a very good one. However, the system's benefits aren't season specific. Quattro works on wet or dry roads, enhancing the balanced, sporty handling of the A3.

Now in its sophomore season, the A3 is offered in Sedan (\$30,900), Cabrio (\$36,600) and hybrid-powered Sportback (\$37,900) models. A high performance, all-wheel drive S sedan (\$42,500) is also available.

Four engines fill out the A3/S3 menu. Top-ranging S3 models get a 2.0L turbocharged four rated at 292 horsepower and 280 lb. ft. of torque. The top turbo mill howls from 0-60 mph in 4.5 seconds and returns an EPA estimated 23 mpg city, 31 highway.

The sedan-only, front-wheel-drive 2.0L turbo-diesel takes several ticks longer to reach 60 (8.2 seconds). But, with 236 lb. ft. of torque available at 1,750 rpm, I'd wager it feels faster than that off the dime. And, it posts fine fuel economy numbers (31/43).

A 1.8-liter turbo four is the base motor in entry level, front-wheel drive Sedans (and Convertibles). The 1.8L



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER

THE 2016 AUDI A3 is the German automaker's compact sedan that comes with four-wheel-drive (quattro) and is available in four different engine choices. The top 2.0L turbocharged powerplant is rated at 292 horsepower.

generates 170 horsepower and 200 lb. ft. of torque, with an EPA-expected 23 mpg's in town, 33 on the highway. Finally, the 2.0L turbo four (which is packaged with all-wheel-drive) is optional on Sedans and Convertibles. The 2.0T is listed at 220 horsepower and 258 lb. ft. of torque. The trip from 0-60 takes about 5.6 seconds — about 1.4 seconds quicker than the 1.8L. It feels lively when tweaked at any speed. A six-speed automatic transmission is connected to all engines, and Audi asks that you feed all of them Premium (except the diesel, of course).

Mid and top trim levels can be optioned with a Sport package that adds paddle shifters, sport seats, and Audi Drive Select. Drive Select offers four settings (Auto, Dynamic, Comfort and Individual), each with corresponding adjustments to shift points, throttle response and steering effort. The steering wheel mounted paddles offer a partial makeup for the lack of a stick shift. Dual clutch gearboxes

The quattro full-time AWD's benefits are most noticeable to most drivers in sloppy, winter conditions.

effectively preload the gear above and below the one you're in. So, when you're ready to go, shift response is

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