

## Type R

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### Donut logic

Is this an inspired solution to the spare tire problem? Or just plumb foolishness?

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## TEST DRIVE

# A4 Reloaded

## 2017 Audi A4 Sedan 2.0T quattro S tronic

DAN LYONS | text  
Special to the Times Union

The ninth generation of Audi's A4 rolls out for 2017, with a package of powertrain improvements, upgraded technology and a redesigned cabin, all wrapped in fresh sheet metal. The compact luxury sedan is offered in Premium (MSRP \$34,900), Premium Plus (\$38,700) and Prestige (\$45,900) trim levels.



Those prices are for front wheel drive models and include an automatic transmission. Stepping up to quattro — Audi's all-wheel-drive system — adds \$2,100 to the sticker. A4 can also be had with manual transmission, in Premium (\$39,400), Premium Plus (\$43,200) and Prestige (\$48,000) trims. All of the stick shift models are equipped with quattro and an exclusive, Sport plus package. My test car was a Prestige model, with quattro, automatic transmission and an as-delivered price of \$54,275.

**2017 Audi A4 Sedan 2.0T quattro S tronic**  
MSRP: \$39,400 · As tested: \$54,275

Style-wise, the A4 leads with its chin. The aggressive front end centers on Audi's signature, single-frame grille, flanked by horizontal slit headlights. The remaining bodywork is clean but conservative by comparison; a visual opinion colored my test car's low-key, metallic gray hue.

Under the hood, the A4 features a turbocharged four-cylinder motor. The 2.0L engine of the former model has been reworked to good effect, for 2017. The resulting power ratings — 252 horsepower and 273 lb.-ft. of torque — are +32 and +15, respectively, over the preceding version. Audi says that the A4 will get to 60 mph from a standstill in 6.1 seconds (FWD); 5.7 seconds (quattro). Unusually, the company quotes the same, 0-60 times for both auto and manual transmission versions with quattro. The A4's engine specs best the base motor versions of both the BMW 3-Series and the Mercedes-Benz C-Class — prime competitors in this class - though both offer a step-up, six-cylinder option which the Audi does not. Fuel economy estimates for an A4 with quattro are 24/31. I managed just above



THE 2017 AUDI A4 leads with an aggressive front end, centering on Audi's signature, single-frame grille, flanked by horizontal slit headlights. It's powered by a turbocharged 2.0L four-cylinder producing 252 horsepower.

the combined estimate of 27 in my week behind the wheel, and these numbers are on par with the Audi's competitors. Those looking for max mileage may want to consider the A4 Ultra; a derivative model that uses the same engine, but in detuned form. To get the EPA estimated 27/37, you give up power (-62 h.p., -36 lb.-ft.), speed (7.1 from 0-60) and traction (FWD only).

I've not had the opportunity to drive the A4/six-speed manual combination. The test car's seven-speed S tronic automatic transmission is a dual clutch design. With the gear above and below the one you're in preloaded, DCT's are programmed to be quick shifters, in manual mode. True here, and you can also use the manumatic approach to hold the car in gear, keeping the engine on the boil for

spirited driving. And left to its own devices, automatic shifts are generally smooth, though it's possible to catch the transmission (briefly) napping when switching quickly from deceleration to acceleration, or when taking off briskly from a full stop.

**Quattro is a full-time, all-wheel-drive system that distributes power between wheels as needed, to maintain grip.**

Quattro is a full-time, all-wheel-drive system that distributes power between wheels as needed, to maintain grip. The system typically apportions the power 40%/60%, front/rear, but can channel as much as 85% to the back wheels when needed. Since quattro works on wet or dry roads, its benefits

pay dividends year 'round. The added traction coupled with the lower center of gravity of a car (compared to a crossover or SUV) makes the A4 particularly rewarding in winter.

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