

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

2023 Audi Q4 Sportback 50 e-tron quattro

MSRP: \$58,200 (Premium) \$64,400 (Premium Plus) \$65,900 (Prestige)



The Q4 e-tron and Q4 Sportback joined the Audi lineup last year. The lowest priced of Audi's eight, electric vehicles, the two, newest Q's are mainly separated by their styling. The Q4 50 e-tron (MSRP \$55,200) has a conventional, crossover shape, while the Sportback (MSRP \$58,200) is a notchback, with a steeply sloping backlight. Three trim levels are offered: Premium, Premium Plus or Prestige. My test car this

week was a Sportback Prestige.

All Q4's are based on Audi's MEB platform, with substantially similar mechanicals. Both the Q4 50 e-tron and the Q4 e-tron Sportback utilize front and rear electric motors, for 295 combined horsepower. The 2023 model year brings an additional, lower priced option to the series. Available only in the Q4's conventional body style, the rear wheel drive Q4 40 (MSRP: \$49,800) employs a single, 201 horsepower electric motor.

The 77-kWh battery pack provides an estimated range of 265 miles on a full charge (Q4 40 e-tron), 236 miles (Q4 50 e-tron), and 242* in the Q4 50 Sportback. (* The improved aerodynamics of the Sportback accounts for the difference between the latter two ranges). The Estimated 0-60 times are 7.9 seconds for the RWD Q4 40, and 5.8 seconds for the AWD Q4 50/Sportback. The battery supports charging at up to 150-kW, so Audi estimates that a commercial, fast charge station can bring you from 5% to an 80% charge in 36 minutes. With a 240v hookup, it takes about 9 hours for a full recharge.

Though it doesn't feel as fast under foot as the sub 6-second times suggest, my



Photos courtesy of the manufacturer



Sportback tester felt sufficiently quick to dispatch all normal driving duties with ease. The near 8-second time quoted for the Q4 40 e-tron sounds underwhelming in this class. So, for the combination of added pace, range and the all-season confidence of AWD, I'd recommend either of the Q4 50 e-tron models over the new Q4 40 e-tron. Going down the road, my Q4 tester offered a smooth ride and competent cornering.

Sliding inside the cabin, the HVAC controls are in easy reach, just below the beltline in the dashboard. The main access point for the infotainment system is the 11.6" MMI touchscreen. The screen is upsized from its former (10.1") dimensions, and the amount of drilling down necessary to make adjustments is on par with other luxury brands. Secondary controls for some functions are embedded in the steering wheel. I found that the touch sensitive controls in the wheel were a bit too touchy, so in this case, the volume control found further away is the better option. Pretty much all of the technology you might wish for is available for the asking, added in layers as you climb the trim ladder.

Choosing the Sportback over the standard Q4 50 raises the starting sticker price by \$3,000. The Sportback's slippery styling requires certain givebacks. The steeply raked backlight, rear seat headrests, and rear deck spoiler combine to reduce your straight back visibility. And, the slanted roofline reduces rear seat headroom by 1.3", so taller passengers in back may brush against the headliner. So, it's a question of form vs. function, and the nice thing is, you have a choice. Either way – Q4 e-tron or Q4 Sportback – I recommend the two motor, AWD equipped version. While you give up some driving range, the power is more in line with premium class expectations, and AWD gives you the luxury of all weather driving confidence.

A 40 year resident of the Capital District, Dan Lyons is the author of six automotive books, and photographer of more than 200 calendars.