



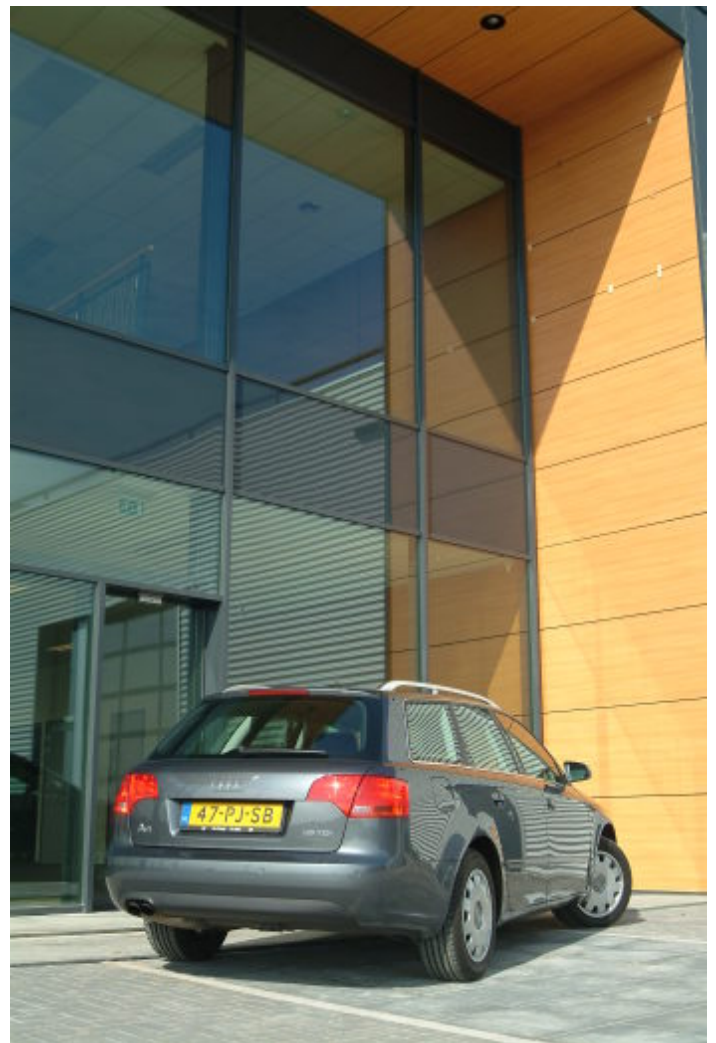
Audi A4 Avant (2004 - 2008)

Image-maker

Car review | People usually say it with a big sigh. "If only I could afford an Audi A4". Audi is the prestigious brand that many a business driver prefers to be seen in. The brand-new A4 is the best-loved model. This favourite among business drivers is therefore immediately available as a sedan and an estate. Furthermore there is now also a light diesel engine available, which makes the A4 come within reach of a larger public.

The test vehicle is the A4 Avant 1.9 TDi, a standard basic with the lightest of the available diesel engines and therefore a real 'ready-to-go' car. The car however does not look it. Particularly the design is for many the deciding factor for choosing Audi and this basic model too is the undeniable image-maker of company cars.

The interior and exterior design is modern, sleek and almost sterile. The design and finish always go just that one step further than other brands of the Volkswagen-company, which gives the Audi driver a privileged feeling. Nevertheless the difference with other cars is getting smaller all the time. The perfect finish simply doesn't leave room for improvement and the competition is catching up.



Interior

The firm car seats are adjustable in height from deep down with the shoulders in the metal to high up with the head almost touching the roof. The steering wheel is only adjustable in height, which even in the highest position turns out to be awkwardly low. However, posture and the preferred position of the test driver might well be to blame for that.

The interior is logical and complete. Nowhere though is there any room for novelties or progressive bits and pieces. Everything that should be included in this price is present, although honesty obliges to say that this test vehicle is equipped with "Proline", a package which includes electric rear side windows and a parking aid. Furthermore the test vehicle has chromium-plated borders around the side windows and chromium-plated roofbars, which makes the A4 look very good, particularly in this colour.

Space

The space in the front is fine, the legroom in the back is moderate for a car this size. More important however is the luggage boot, which is considerable even with the backseat in its normal position. Besides that the boot is more useful because of a false bottom (practical for delicate items or to hide more valuable things), plus straps, luggage nets and generous side pockets.



The backrest of the backseat is foldable in a 60/40 divide. The seat remains in its place, which saves one extra action. Even the cover of the boot does not need to be removed as it hinges with the backseat. When folding or returning the backseat to its normal position, the safety belts are not in the way either. The

boot can therefore increase from 442 to 1184 litres, literally with a turn of the hand. If that still isn't enough, the before mentioned roofbars will come in handy.



Diesel

Besides the exterior the business driver praises the sporty character of every Audi. Again this basic model presents itself as a real Audi, albeit just by its tough double exhaust. Under the hood is the same 1.9 litre turbo diesel that mother company Volkswagen puts in almost every model from small city car to the biggest MPV. This reliable power source can now be found in the "noble" A4 too.

A big car can give the driver a superior feeling when a little push on the accelerator results in a huge acceleration where other traffic disappears into little specks in the rear-view mirror. Nothing like that with this 1.9 though. The combustion engine has to work hard to perform and gives a completely different experience. It makes the A4 unexpectedly lively and that is no unwelcome quality.

On single carriageways it is necessary to change back a gear for rapid overtaking. If the utmost is needed, this A4 does not disappoint. The light diesel engine requires some getting used to unlike the larger engines that usually come with cars like these, but performance never falls short. This is certainly not a car where one feels one has made a compromise to be able to drive an Audi. Whoever is not in a hurry will experience this basic diesel version in the end as

strong, silent and most of all very economical. Although on occasion the engine had to work hard, the average fuel consumption was better than the manufacturers data! A considerable esatet car that does 52.3 mpg has to be music to the ears of the business driver.

To the promised sportsmanship belongs a sporty chassis, which is the strongest point of this A4 Avant. Especially unloaded, the suspension of the car is so stiff that it hardly dips when braking or leans in the bends. The result is an ability to drive ruthlessly fast seemingly effortlessly. The A4 takes bends, which would be quite a challenge for other cars, like nothing is the matter. This is not only fun, but also very safe and it strengthens the lively character of the car even more. With this, Audi's sportsmanship comes to full expression even in this basic A4 Avant.

ergonomical tour de force and space saving inventions. Only on exterior and price the A4 truly exceeds the average. Despite that the attraction for the business driver is enormous. He now knows that the new Audi A4 is a fine car, but also that image still prevails. ■



Conclusion

Will the next leased car be the reliable option or will there be a little something added to afford an Audi? Even after a meticulous test it is impossible to answer this question. A decision like that is a very personal one particularly because the choice for an Audi is made on sentiment.

Common sense will not get in the way though. Road handling is good, there is a high level of safety (passive as well as (more importantly) active) and even the basic engine scores above satisfactory. As an estate the A4 is functional, spacious and practical.

What is lacking in the A4 is innovating technology,



Specifications

Audi A4 Avant (2004 - 2008) 1.9TDI 115BHP 5-speed

Size and weight

Length x width x height	459 x 177 x 145 cm
Wheelbase	265 cm
Kerb weight	1.450 kg
Trailer	750 kg
Trailer - braked	1.500 kg
Fuel capacity	70 l
Luggage space	442/1184 l
Tyre size	205/55R16

Engine and performance



Capacity	1896 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/
Max power	115 PS @ 4000 rpm
Max torque	285 Nm @ 1900 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	11.5 secs
Top speed	197 km/h
Average mileage	5.8 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	7.7 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	4.6 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	155 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 42,810
Price base model	Â£ 38,950