



## Audi S3

Also available in grey

Car review | Looking for something unpretentious, then you'd better stop reading this and start looking elsewhere. Wrapped in bright orange, the Audi S3 is screaming that it is not just any car. As the top model from the A3 series, the S3 has the most powerful of engines, four-wheel drive, super kit and a really sporty character. The only thing that remains is for the a very impatient test driver to do the rest ...

The A3 is available with a 3.2 litre six cylinder engine. However, when the key to S3 turns in the ignition, there isn't the roar of mighty power from a V6 engine. Instead, there is a very normal engine noise. An oil pressure metre, stopwatch or other fun gadgets don't come alive either.

The quickest A3 from Audi has been fitted with an ordinary four cylinder engine that has a very average two litre capacity. Petrol injection and a turbo mean that this engine can deliver an unusually high power of 265 hp and a maximum of 320 Nm pulling power.



### On your marks ...

The gear box has also adapted to the sporty nature of the car. The gears are short with the ratios making optimal use of the turbo. This is apparent from the

very first moment. The S3 is as impatient as the test driver with the pair of them desperate to perform. This is the type of car in which it is in fact more difficult to accelerate calmly and consistently than to tear away at every traffic light. For anyone who's tempted, it is possible to reach 100km/hr in 5,7 seconds. For anyone who still isn't tempted, they will nevertheless find that the S3 is usually the quickest of the mark without even trying.

In spite of the short ratios of the gear box, it still takes a moment or two before the turbo does kick in. At that moment, the S3 delivers a performance which is more recognizable with those from a sports car level. Anyone sitting in the car is forced back into the seats; the horizon approaches at an alarming rate; roads seem so much shorter; and the S3 just keeps on accelerating.



Even when the car is already moving at a considerable speed, the S3 registers cruising speeds which unite both supporters and detractors of this car. A car, the colour of an amber traffic light, might feel the need to prove itself time and time again. Or is it in fact the case of that really excited guy behind the wheel?

With its mighty torque, the S3 is a bit of traffic light sprinter. The German Autobahn does also prove to be an ideal playground. In order to protect such sprinters,

Audi has electronically limited the top speed to 250 km/hr. It can't actually go much faster than that, even though the speedometer's calibration does go up to an optimistic 300 km/hr.

The only thing that is missing from this show is a framework and a sporty noise. Subsequently, it sometimes feels as if it isn't go as quickly as it could. The experience is less intense than with similar cars.



## Quattro

With the Quattro four-wheel drive, the S3 can transmit an abundant capacity onto the tarmac without any problems. Wheel spin only occurs when the car is expressly unbalanced along a poor road surface, with full throttle being applied. If the car is kept balanced, it can even make a turn in full throttle, while remaining just as stable as if it were sprinting along a flat straight.



This is where the S3 shines, because the engine power is not unique. The considerably cheaper Seat Leon Cupra has the same engine (albeit with different engine management), however that one only has front wheel drive. Where other fast cars wrestle, creak and eventually slide, the S3 continues unflappably along its route. Over a winding path, this Audi only has to compete against Subaru and Mitsubishi.

The good road handling is also due to the adapted suspension. The S3 is 2.5 cm lower to the road surface than the average A3. Of course, the tyres and the bumpers have been given a sporty makeover. Behind the 18 inch alloys are 17 inch brake disks which are well designed for the task in hand. The S3 does have a hard suspension, but not so hard that it is exhausting. Every bump on the road can be felt, every ridge sends a wallop through the car, but even so it is still possible to endure it over long distances.

## Plain and simple

The S3 is able to behave like an ordinary Audi A3, particularly when not too much acceleration is applied. So long as the rev counter needle stays below 2,500 revs/min, it is barely noticeable that this is one of the fastest hatchbacks on the market.

It's in fact a really nice change that Audi has chosen not to use a large engine, a large exhaust and a massive sound. On top of which, it is also really great that the turbo engine is extremely economical.

The S3 is without doubt the top model from the A3 line, with as standard xenon head lights, cruise-control, individual climate control and alarm. The Pro Line packet includes a navigation system, expansive onboard computer and parking aids. It is advisable to avoid the optional Bose audio system with its bombastic and exhausting disco sound which would only be popular amongst teenagers suffering from chronic tone deafness.



As with every other A3, the S3 is finished impeccably. The room in front is spacious and the large sports seats are comfortable with good lateral support. If the test driver were to make a little change to his driving style and his jacket, the Audi S3 is suddenly a very respectable company car.

## Conclusion

For a whole week, this orange flash which goes by the name of "Audi S3", made the area around the Autozine editorial office very unsafe. However, that last word is strictly not entirely true. The S3's need to perform is enormous. With this in mind, Audi has done everything to make the transferral of power onto the road as safe as possible: a stiff suspension; brakes that never let go; and a four-wheel drive which makes optimal use of its horsepower. At the same time, the S3 is just as practical as a normal A3, which makes this great fun to drive every day.

Unfortunately Audi has given the S3 a price tag that is just as peppery as its performance. For a lot less money, there is the even quicker Subaru Impreza WRX or Mitsubishi Lancer Evo with comparable kit and four-wheel drive. With their roaring engines and massive spoilers, these cars give an even great sense of that sports car experience. Moreover both these Japanese cars can take corners a lot faster. However the Audi has a very big advantage: the S3 is also available in grey, making it a very civilised company car, which in it's own time can wreak absolute havoc■



# Specifications

## Audi S3 S3 2.0 T FSI

### Size and weight

Length x width x height	421 x 177 x 140 cm
Wheelbase	258 cm
Kerb weight	1.455 kg
Trailer	unknown
Trailer - braked	unknown
Fuel capacity	60 l
Luggage space	281/1011 l
Tyre size	225/40R18

### Engine and performance



Capacity	1984 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
Max power	265 PS @ 6000 rpm
Max torque	320 Nm @ 2500 rpm
Drive	four wheel drive
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	5.7 secs
Top speed	250 km/h
Average mileage	9.1 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	12.4 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	7.2 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	217 gr / km

### Price

Price	Â£ 26,170
Price base model	Â£ 14,750