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Audi TT Roadster (2007 - 2014)

A Pleasant Encounter

review | Taut, clean lines. A simple set-up without superfluous fuss. Lightweight bodywork and a very strong engine. The Audi TT excels in its simplicity and as a consequence drives like a true sports car. Moreover the TT is now available as a convertible. Has Audi exceeded itself with this Roadster?

The first encounter is particularily pleasant. The new TT is even more beautiful and even tauter in design than its predecessor. It is an honour to be able to test drive this car for a whole week. The convertible TT looks just as good as the coupé.

Privilege

Settling into the car, the privileged feeling is further enhanced. The seats are excellent. As is the case in a sports car, the driver is seated low with metal up to the shoulders. What is quite unusual is that this snug interior offers sufficient room to the taller driver. The chair and steering wheel have a wide adjustment range, which means that everyone immediately feels at home in the TT. The small sports steering wheel with a flat underside sits perfectly in the hand. The short gear stick is within easy hand reach.

The dashboard is just as tight as the rest of the car: no excessive lines and those shapes that are present are extremely elegant. Given the price tag it is pretty sparsely equipped: a common ailment of many Audis. The test car was kitted out with around £ 5.000 worth of optional extras. It is the extras that make the TT Roadster complete and a car to be enjoyed.

As standard, the convertible roof is manual; for an electric roof it will cost you extra. Again you will have to dig into your wallet for the electric wind deflector, a radio, an alarm and even the necessary storage compartments. It would be better to forget the radio, as the Bose system that Audi provides sounds awful - bombastic, tiring disco-noise.

Music

Fortunately the real music comes from the engine. In the first place, the double exhaust pipe seems to be designed as a musical instrument; the removal of exhaust fumes is definitely secondary. The test car was provided with the basic engine: a two-litre four-cylinder with TFSI technology. This technology gets not only reasonable results but also a beautiful sound from a relatively modest engine capacity.

The Audi TT Roadster was designed as a sports car, which also means that where ever possible weight has been saved. As a consequence, all the horsepower can be diverted effectively into its performance.

If you want to put in numbers, the difference is enormous between the four cylinder turbo engine and

the significantly more expensive six cylinder (200 hp/280 Nm against 250 hp/320 Nm). In reality the performance difference is negligible. The heavier engine is good for a great show of power. The basic engine, which was driven for the test drive, has in fact a significantly more lively character and so gives much more driving pleasure.

King of the Autobahn

From standstill, the manual TT Roadster sprints to 100 km/hr in 6.7 seconds. And after that it still has a lot more poke in it. During the test period, many miles were covered on the German Autobahn, where the TT driver feels like the king of the road. With mid-range accelerations from 180 km/hr, the TT still knows how to push its passengers further into their seats!

Moreover even at speeds like this the TT is still quite efficient. After a trip of nearly 1.000 km at high speeds, the average consumption was just 7.8 litres per 100 kilometres! Many other cars use more.

A much more gentle driving style on the British motorways delivered an average consumption of 6.5 litres per 100 km. It is more than justified that this 2.0 TFSI engine recently won "Engine of the Year" in its class.

Road handling

The 2.0 TFSI engine operates the front wheels, while the 3.2 engine has four-wheel drive. On curvy roads, the TT Roadster is a wonderful driver's car. The road handling is excellent, whilst twisting is unusual in this convertible. The TT feels well balanced, as Audi has done everything possible to distribute the weight evenly over the front and rear wheels. This minor weight makes the car extremely manoeuverable.

Due to the lightness in weight, the brakes are able to bring the car to a standstill in a staggeringly short distance. In every respect the TT Roadster feels and behaves just like a true sports car.

At the same time, it has to be said that it could still be even better. When the limits were deliberately pushed, it was obvious that the front wheels had some difficulty in determining the route and operating the car. Rear wheel drive or Audi's Quattro four wheel drive is far superior.

Convertible roof

The real attraction of the TT Roadster is of course the convertible roof. In order to keep the car light and pleasing, Audi chose to use a traditional cloth roof. This can be opened or closed in 12 seconds if required at speeds up to 30 km/hr.

When closed the roof is 100% watertight (car washes and rain storms pose no problems), however it is not entirely soundproof. The driving noise from other cars leaks into the interior quite noticeably, so that it sometimes seems as if there is a window open. Eventually you get used to this, but it is little bit boring over long distances.

Whenever it is possible, the roof does have to be down. Driving with the roof opened or closed can be likened to watching colour as opposed to black & white TV. The experience of an open roof is more complete because the world doesn't pass by behind a window, but it is possible to see, smell and hear everything.

The comfort while driving with an open roof is slightly less than average. Up to speeds of 100 km/hr the driver and passanger are protected from the wind; hair stays in place as do any hats or caps. The wind deflector plays a considerable role in this equation. Over this speed, the fun starts to disappear a little as the driving wind gets the upper hand.

At speeds above the 170 km/hr mark it is difficult to keep your head straight and your eyes from drying out. This is partly due to the driving wind and also the pure sensation!

Conclusion

Has Audi exceeded itself with the TT Roadster? This first encounter was in any case particularly pleasant. The successful design, the comfortable seats and the handsome interior ensure that time and time again the driver feels privileged to set off in this car.

Thanks to the light weight, the TT Roadster steers breaks and performs more than marvelously. The four-cylinder which was driven for the test drive gave a lot more pleasure than the six-cylinder.

The convertible roof was not quite soundproof when closed, which can be tiresome over long distances. When the roof was open, the passengers were subject to the driving wind at high speeds. The experience is more intense and more complete than that of the TT Coupé. In short: Audi has not exceeded itself, but it was certainly a very pleasant encounter with the new TT Roadster. ■

Specifications
Audi TT Roadster (2007 - 2014)

Size and weight

Length x width x height	418 x 184 x 136 cm
Wheelbase	247 cm
Kerb weight	1.295 kg
Trailer	unknown
Trailer - braked	unknown
Fuel capacity	55 l
Luggage space	250 l
Tyre size	225/55R16

Engine and performance

Capacity	1984 cc
Cylinders / valves	4/4
power	200 PS @ 5100 rpm
Max torque	280 Nm @ 1800 rpm
Drive	front wheels
Acceleration 0 - 62 mph	6.7 secs
Top speed	237 km/h
Average mileage	7.8 l / 100 km
Mileage urban	10.7 l / 100 km
Mileage extra urban	6.2 l / 100 km
CO2 emissions	186 gr / km

Price

Price	Â£ 26,940
Price base model	Â£ 26,940