



Jekyll & Hyde, that's what I call it. It's like when you go to your local shopping center and you see a very elderly citizen driving a serious sports car, you think what the hell! The fact is, your sixteen year old newly licensed and inexperienced kid, hardened and experienced track racer or even your grandmother can drive it and will love it.



Let's start with the looks. It's this that catches your attention at first. Perhaps I would not have chosen black, rather the Nogaro blue blue pearl, maybe I dislike the blue-light brigade affinity to black and thereby association. The look is a rather timeless sleek, refined and yet sporty, even subtly aggressive with the various spoilers and trim providing that RS appeal, but not overly so. Most certainly an outward appearance that is absolutely spot on for the car, giving a sense of purpose and balance. It is a car that to the uninformed, would probably simply be noticed as a beautiful car. To the knowledgeable, would spot the finer nuances such as the sills, spoilers, RS badging, drilled large discs, massive red calipers, discreet Quattro wording and the suede and squared race steering paired with the perfectly bolstered seats.



I definitely don't need to go on about the motor, it is unequivocally one of the smoothest force fed beasts around and is unquestionably the heart around which the car is built, paired with this sedan chassis is arguably a motor specifically built for the purpose. An incredibly wide range of usable RPM and torque, almost causing you to drive it like an old school rev happy screaming naturally aspirated motor. If you are pressing on, there is a green light indicator that appears on the RPM indicator prompting you to shift at the sweet spot. There is no doubt that the A3 as a sedan was meant to be, but as an RS with this motor, simply awesome.



The gearbox is almost precision geared to the motor, yet is not quite as refined as the car as a whole, with an occasional hesitation, perhaps simply as a result of the incredible motor demanding work, but nonetheless working more than appropriately. Using the full auto, or dynamic manual shifting on the paddles, takes a few minutes to settle into and produces an utterly exhilarating driving session, with the burble of the exhaust bringing a smile, if that's what you occasional feel like.



This is by no means a light car, as could be perceived by this being a somewhat smaller sedan. I would assume that for this reason and the almost insane acceleration and speed, the brakes are superb, with excellent feel.



Suspension and the Quattro drive train create an exceptionally stable feel and under all but very hard pushing into corners at high speeds, only then does one start to feel and have to get used to the dynamics of the Quattro, not something your average driver will likely experience. Ride quality at lower speeds is very good, and not as harsh as may be expected of an RS. Traditionally Quattro cars have had somewhat limited turning, the clever people have largely removed this; parking the car in rather restricted underground parking confines proved no worse than any other.

Luxury comes in the form of quite a few of the latest Audi gadgets as would be expected, with a very easy functional and falling to hand operating system. As is usual Audi procedure, the basic specification is very good, however the array of selectable trim and accessories is always there to spoil.

The Bang & Olufsen sound system, is more than adequate, especially when this includes the usual cell phone connection to allow communication and music choice from your own selection.

Servicing, maintenance and ongoing costs all form part of the standard Audi provided specifications in the purchase of the vehicle.

Leg room for the rear seated is surprisingly good, with only the much taller or inconsiderate front seated causing discomfort to those in the rear. The usual ISO fix facilities also available for special connections such as Junior`s seat.

Perhaps the only criticism would be the position of the volume dial alongside the left leg, occasionally bumped, the need for wider internal overhead cabin lighting and the lack of electronic seat movement at this price level, although the infinite range manual works just fine. Taller drivers may find the slightly restricted upper tilt angle of the steering taking a little getting used too.

It is simply impossible not to press on to some extent with the abilities of this machine and having done so, I can assure you that although I did not have time to complete metered test I have absolutely no doubt that even on standard pump fuel, the acclaimed sprint times and speeds would be reach. It would be a worthwhile exercise over a week or longer to see just how frugal the car could be, admittedly this would be difficult given the need to amuse with the cars natural talents.

At first glance, the cost of this RS3 at around a Million Rand is arguably astounding. Consider carefully the price of all vehicles at this stage in the economy and compare this against that of the comparative machines that you would be considering in this range and suddenly the price looks reasonable. There can be no doubt that unless you are intending to purchase an outright sports car for that specific purpose and that rather you are looking for a machine that can fulfill multiple roles, perhaps as an occasional track or gymkhana car, or even to uphold that image; then this will either be exactly what you are looking for or will at least be in the top contenders.

Truth be told, this is a slightly smaller supercar and daily commuter all-in-one, that is in fact insanely capable in every respect. It is incredibly difficult to find fault with this machine.

Safe Driving

Craig Proctor-Parker

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