The 2019 Audi A7 might be all the car anyone ever needs



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- I apologize for the use of Audi’s stock images, but it rained a lot during my time with the A7 and none of the pictures I took were good enough to use.
- Audi calls the A7 shape a Sportback, but generically, the bodystyle is known as fastback. It looks good and is massively practical because of the rear hatch.
- Audi interiors are usually terrific, and the A7 is no exception. But beige carpets and muddy feet are not the best combo.
- One of the A7’s many good angles is the rear 3/4s. The LED taillights flash through an animated sequence when you lock or unlock the car.
- If you opt for the Prestige spec A7, you get matrix LED

headlights with laser high beams. These were previously not allowed in the US, and Audi did have to decrease their throw range to satisfy the NHTSA. But they work great for night driving.

- You can get quite creative changing the colors of the mood lighting.
- The bottom MMI screen is usually devoted to climate control or seat control.
- You can write on the lower screen, too. For some reason, it always thought I meant ı when I actually meant I; that got annoying.
- The 3D virtual car parking view is flashy but less useful than the top-down 2D view.
- Apple CarPlay will stretch out to fill the screen.
- There is a huge amount of cargo space available if you fold the seats flat.
- The A7 takes shape in clay
- An illustration of the A7 powertrain

High expectations can be a killer. We see this all the time—the let-down sequel to a great movie or the indulgent sophomore follow-up to a brilliant debut album. It also applies to cars; ask any fan of the Mk2 VW Golf for their opinion of the Mk3 as proof. As humans we fall in love, too easily perhaps, with inanimate objects. When a replacement shows up, and our expectations exceed its ability, the result is disappointment. Which is a long-winded way of saying I was actually a little scared when I fired up the 2019 Audi A7 for the first time.

The previous A7 was a delightful car, particularly if you had a long way to go and wanted to do it in comfort and style. Here was an Audi that looked as good on the outside as it did on the inside thanks to its fastback body style. Back in the days before we knew they were belching NOXious gases, the TDI version would happily deliver 40mpg all day long. If you wanted something less economical but a lot faster, the RS7 and

its snarling twin-turbo V8 offered close to the last word in all-weather, cross-country ability.

I first saw the second-generation A7 at last year's Detroit auto show. It follows the same script as before: lighter and less loaded down the A8 flagship, sleeker and more driver - ocused than the mainstream A6, but it's still built from the same toolbox and parts bin that Audi (and the rest of Volkswagen Group) call MLB Evo. It looks a lot like the car it replaces, but with sharper creases in the panels and some funky LED matrix headlights and LED tail lights that are meant to make it easier for you to see in the dark (as well as making you easier to see). That car is even available with a US-legal version of Audi's clever laser high beam headlights.

High speed low drag?

At 16.3 feet (4,969mm) long and 6.3 feet (1,908mm) wide, this is not a small car, but it's not very tall (4.7 feet/1,422mm) either. That gives the A7 a pretty good frontal area. Together with a drag coefficient, or Cd, of 0.27, it ends up with a pleasingly low CdA.

For now, the only powertrain option is a 3.0L V6 gasoline engine. The old car featured a supercharged TFSI engine; it's now turbocharged and delivers 335hp (250kW) and 369lb-ft (500Nm). You can only order it in all-wheel drive, and the only gearbox is a seven-speed S-tronic dual-clutch transmission. There will be no diesel version, either. However, all A7s are now equipped with a 48V "mild hybrid" system. All together, that adds up to a slight improvement in fuel economy at 25mpg combined (22mpg city, 29mpg highway).

The rakish good looks and 5.2-second 0-60 time might suggest sporting pretensions. The A7 is definitely more of a cruiser; those looking for more performance in the same attractive wrapper should wait for the more powerful twin-turbo V6 S7 or twin-turbo V8 expected in the RS7, although neither of those

cars is on sale yet. As a cruiser, it excels. The low-drag shape—and the acoustic double-paned glass that comes with the $76,300 Prestige trim—makes for a peaceful and quiet interior, and the ride quality was praised by both front- and rear-seat passengers when the car's electronic brains were set to Comfort mode. (Set to Dynamic mode, you can more easily feel things like highway expansion gaps as they pass by underneath.)

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