

Intuitive Technology

Ian Lamming revels in the abilities of the new Audi Q5

I CAN see my house from here; thing is, I'm in the car looking at the dash.

The new Audi Q5 has the cleverest satnav yet to be seen in a modern car. On the colour dash-mounted screen is no conventional map like we are used to. No, it's an aerial view, Google-Earth-like, of the countryside I'm driving through.

So there's a field, and there's a river, there's a lake and there's a town...and there's my house, looking good, by the way.

The roads are sort of drawn on and it works really well because you can actually see on the map an exact reproduction of where you are and where you are going. Genius.

I used to own a Q5, not long after the original was launched but long enough for the contract hire payments to drop from the initial soul-selling £900 a month to a still eye-watering £600. It never really lived up to the financial demands. It was ok, but for a veritable mortgage I always wanted more.

New Q5 is a revelation. It has moved the posts so far I can't even remember where they had been sunk into the earth.

New styling has made it look like a Q7 in

miniature and there's nothing wrong with that. It is smart with clean lines rather than flashy; what else would you expect from Audi.

Inside is similarly Teutonic with well chosen fabrics, plastics and fittings. The screen isn't touch sensitive, which I prefer, and there is a mouse pad to operate the various functions along with a hi-fi style knob. It's a great set up, as is the stubby little automatic gearbox lever – very neat and trendy.

Leather seats are superb. They are just so well shaped, supportive and comfortable making Q5 a car you can drive for miles.

And that's the other thing, new Q5 is a car that you will want to drive for miles and miles.

The 2.0 litre diesel pumps out 190PS, that's 50PS more than mine used to and you can tell, instantly. It is spirited, powerful and incredibly refined. It's also pretty frugal too and for all but the slow stuff, you can expect upper 40s to 50s in the miles per gallon stakes.

Somehow it feels so much smaller than my old Q5. That wasn't unwieldy but the successor feels smaller and so much more agile. The glorious, tiny, flat-bottomed, chunky steering wheel really helps matters and the

responses are sports car-sharp.

Ride is stunning as well. It glides around the bends on an even keel, like it is on rails, which is a boon for peerless handling. But it soaks up the bumps with long-travel ease and grip is far better than I remember mine ever was. Both Quattro but the new Q5 seems to work that much better.

This mid-size vehicle joins a family of very able Qs in an automotive world which can't get enough SUVs. The design Gods are definitely looking down on us humble motorists at the moment and with the new Audi Q5's latest satnav technology they are doing so quite literally.

Fact File

- Audi Q5 2.0 TDI
- Engine: 2.0 diesel
- Power: 190PS
- 0-62mph: 7.9secs
- Top speed: 135mph
- Combined MPG: 56.5
- Transmission: seven-speed auto
- CO2 g/km: 132

