

Smoothly



Does it

Ian Lamming drives the new Audi A3

Fact File

Audi A3 saloon
TFSI
Engine: 1.4 litre
Power: 140PS
0-62mph: 8.4 secs
Top speed:
134mph
Combined miles
per gallon: 60.1
Transmission:
seven-speed auto
CO2 g/km: 109

AS SMOOTH as...a baby's bottom? How about ice? What about a freshly shaved chin?

Audi might say, and I would have to agree, as smooth as a TFSI motor. Granted, it is never going to catch on as a saying but it is true.

The TFSI petrol engine is automotive cream, velvet, mohair. It seems strange that it is only a four cylinder and with the new on-demand technology, only half of them work half of the time, because this cutting edge is a real smoothie.

It delivers its power in a flawless fashion and in a way that rewrites expectations. The tidy little A3 saloon packs this startling engine, all 1.4 litres of it.

Turbo technology, supported by an inter-cooler, allows it to produce an impressive 140PS, which is more than enough to make the Audi spirited to drive. Look at the figures. A sprint to 60mph time of just over eight seconds and a top speed of 134mph – from a 1.4? Crazy.

The cylinder-on-demand means that all the clever stuff under the hood decides what is needed for the exact driving condition of the moment. So if you are idling along, cruising down the highway, then it shuts things down that aren't required ensuring the very best economy. It's all managed by a drive-by-wire throttle and again a glance at the tech panel reveals more than 60mpg on the combined cycle.

But it is also the way it delivers this power, this performance, that is so impressive. There is no noise, no harshness, no vibration. This A3 just goes and goes, then goes some more. Then it cruises off, then it comes back and it still doesn't need to visit the fuel station.

Sounds good? Well, it gets even better as this particular A3 comes with the superb seven-speed S-tronic automatic gearbox. What a combination this makes, especially on the Dales roads.

The auto switches quickly and, of course, smoothly between ratios keeping the fabulous motor right in the meat of the power band. But if you aren't in the mood then it will engage top gear, drop the revs to a minimum and make the A3 as relaxed as relaxed can be.

Steering, ride, handling and traction are supremely able too. It is comfortable yet precise and controlled; the perfect combination once again.

The interior is plush combining Germanic efficiency with some very nice design cues and high quality materials. A3 is also a bit of a looker, similar, but even better than its slightly bigger brother the A4. It is low-slung and smart, with clean lines and the telltale Audi aesthetic.

Whichever way you look at the new A3, it is very much a smooth operator.