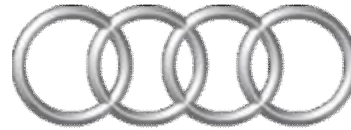






Audi

AUDI AG



Audi

Type	Private company, subsidiary of Volkswagen Group (FWB Xetra: NSU)
Founded	Zwickau, Germany 1909
Founder(s)	August Horch
Headquarters	Ingolstadt, Germany
Number of locations	<i>production locations:</i> Germany: Ingolstadt & Neckarsulm; Hungary: Győr; Belgium: Brussels; Brazil: Curitiba; China: Changchun; India: Aurangabad
Area served	Worldwide

Key people	Rupert Stadler Chairman of the Board of Management, Martin Winterkorn Chairman of the Supervisory Board (Volkswagen AG)
Industry	Automotive industry
Products	Automobiles, Engines
Revenue	▲ € 33.617 billion (2007)
Profit	▲ € 2.915 billion (2007)
Total equity	37.0%
Employees	53,347 (2007)
Subsidiaries	quattro GmbH, Lamborghini S.p.A., Audi Hungaria Motor Kft
Website	Audi.com

AUDI AG, (Xetra: NSU) is a German company which produces luxury cars under the **Audi** brand, (pronounced /a'ʊdi/). It is part of the Volkswagen Group. The name Audi is based on a Latin translation of the last name of the founder August "Horch", itself the German word for "listen!"

Audi is headquartered in Ingolstadt, Bavaria, Germany and has been a wholly-owned (99.55%) subsidiary of the Volkswagen Group (Volkswagen AG) since 1964. Volkswagen Group relaunched the Audi name when it was acquired as part of Volkswagen's purchase of the Auto Union and NSU Motorenwerke AG (NSU) assets.

Audi's corporate tagline is *Vorsprung durch Technik*, meaning "*Advantage through Technology*". The German-language tagline is used in many European countries, including the United Kingdom, and in other markets, such as Latin America, Oceania and parts of Asia including Japan. A few years ago, the North American tagline was "*Innovation through technology*", but in Canada the German tagline *Vorsprung durch Technik* was used in advertising. More recently, however, Audi has updated the tagline to "Truth in Engineering" in the U.S.

History

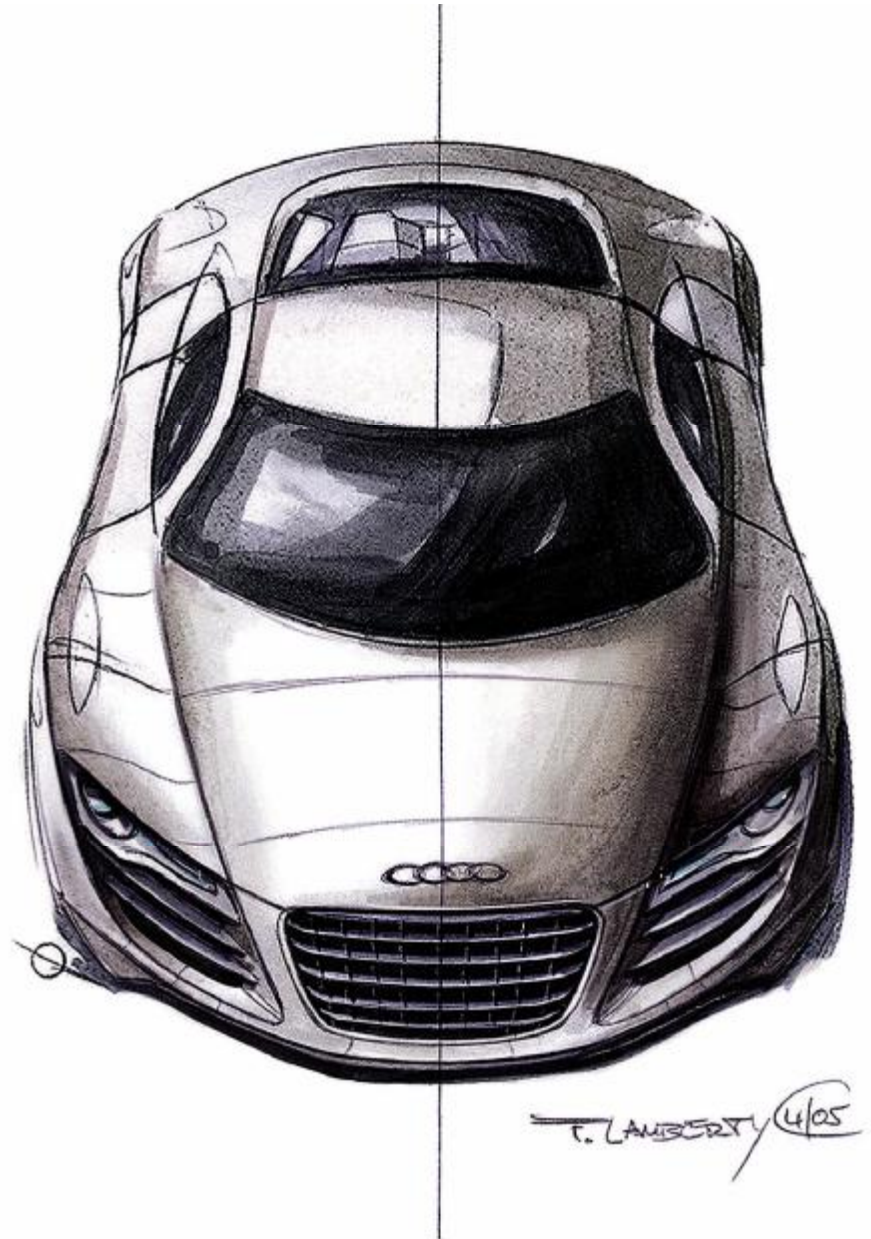
Birth of the company and its name

The company traces its origins back to 1899 and August Horch. The first Horch automobile was produced in 1901 in Zwickau. In 1909, Horch was forced out of the company he had founded. He then started a new company in Zwickau and continued using the Horch brand.

His former partners sued him for trademark infringement and a German court determined that the Horch brand belonged to his former company. August Horch was barred from using his own family name in his new car business, so he called a meeting at the apartment of Franz Fikentscher to come up with a new name for his company. During this meeting Franz's son was quietly studying Latin in a corner of the room. Several times he looked like he was on the verge of saying something but would just swallow his words and continue working, until he finally blurted out, "Father – *audiatur et altera pars...* wouldn't it be a good idea to call it *audi* instead of *horch*?". "Horch!" in German means "Hark!" or "hear", which is "Audi" in Latin (compare audible). The idea was enthusiastically accepted by everyone attending the meeting. It is sometimes (incorrectly) believed that AUDI is a backronym which stands for "Auto Union Deutschland Ingolstadt".

Audi started with a 2,612 cc (2.6 litre) four cylinder model followed by a 3564 cc (3.6 L) model, as well as 4680 cc (4.7 L) and 5720 cc (5.7L) models. These cars were successful even in sporting events. The first six cylinder model, 4655 cc (4.7 L) appeared in 1924.

August Horch left the Audi company in 1920. In September 1921, Audi became the first German car manufacturer to present a production car with left-hand drive, the Audi Type K. Left-hand drive spread and established dominance during the 1920s because it provided a better view of oncoming traffic, making overtaking maneuvers safer.



The Auto Union era

In August 1928 Jørgen Rasmussen, the owner of DKW, acquired the majority of shares in Audiwerke AG. In the same year, Rasmussen bought the remains of the US automobile manufacturer Rickenbacker, including the manufacturing equipment for eight cylinder engines. These engines were used in *Audi Zwickau* and *Audi Dresden* models that were launched in 1929. At the same time, six cylinder and four cylinder (licensed from Peugeot) models were manufactured. Audi cars of that era were luxurious cars equipped with special bodywork.

In 1932, Audi merged with Horch, DKW and Wanderer, to form Auto Union.

Before World War II, Auto Union used the four interlinked rings that make up the Audi badge today, representing these four brands. This badge was used, however, only on Auto Union racing cars in that period while the member companies used their own names and emblems. The technological development became more and more concentrated and some Audi models were propelled by Horch or Wanderer built engines.

The four-ring logo

The Audi emblem is four overlapping rings that represent the four marques of Auto Union. The Audi emblem symbolizes the amalgamation of Audi with DKW, Horch and Wanderer: the first ring represents Audi, the second represents DKW, third is Horch, and the fourth and last ring Wanderer.

Second World War period

The build up and onset of World War II encouraged the development and production of special vehicles for military purposes in the 1930s. The Auto Union became an important supplier of vehicles to Germany's armed forces. Following the outbreak of war, civilian production was interrupted in May 1940. After this, the company produced exclusively for military purposes.

During World War II, the Auto Union produced the Sd-Kfz 222 armored car, which was used in the German army during the war. It was powered by an 81 hp (60 kW) Horch/Auto Union V8 engine and reached a top speed of 50 miles per hour on the road.

Another vehicle which was used in World War II to shuttle German military officials safely was known as the Kraftfahrzeug (KFZ 11) or the Horch Type 80. The military used it as a light transport vehicle.

The Auto Union plants were heavily bombed and severely damaged within the last two years of the war.

Post-War period

The Saxonian plants of Auto Union was located in what was the Soviet occupied zone of Germany. In 1945 on the orders of the Soviet military administration in Germany, they were dismantled as part of war reparations. Following this, the company's entire assets were expropriated without compensation. On 17 August 1948 Auto Union AG of Chemnitz was deleted from the commercial register. These actions had the effect of liquidating Germany's Auto Union AG. The remains of the Audi plant of Zwickau became the VEB (for "People Owned Enterprise") Automobilwerk Zwickau, AWZ for short (which translates into English as Automobile factory Zwickau).

A new Auto Union was launched in Ingolstadt, Bavaria with loans from the Bavarian state government and Marshall Plan aid. The reformed company was launched 3 September, 1949 and continued DKW's tradition of producing front-wheel drive vehicles with two-stroke engines. This included production of a small but sturdy 125 cc motorcycle and a DKW delivery van, the DKW F 89 L, also known as DKW-Schnellaster. Many employees of the destroyed factories in Zwickau came to Ingolstadt and restarted the production.

In 1950, after a former Rheinmetall gun factory in Düsseldorf was established as a second assembly facility the company's first post-war car went into production: the DKW Meisterklasse F 89 P, available as a saloon and a four-seater Karmann convertible. The van and sedan were based on the DKW F8 and the DKW F9 pre-war constructions.

The former Audi factory in Zwickau, now under Soviet control, restarted assembly of the pre-war-models in 1949. Those models were renamed to IFA F8 and IFA F9 and were similar to the West German versions. West German and East German models were equipped with the traditional and renowned DKW two-stroke engines.

In 1958, Daimler-Benz acquired 87% of Auto Union and in the next year 100%.

In 1964, Volkswagen acquired the factory in Ingolstadt and the trademark rights of the Auto Union. Two-stroke engines became less popular towards the middle of the 1960s as customers were more attracted to the comfortable four-stroke engines. In September 1965, the last DKW model, the DKW F102, got a four-stroke engine implanted and some front and rear styling changes. Volkswagen dumped the brand DKW because of its two-stroke smell, relaunching the Audi brand. The new model was classified internally as the F103 and sold as simply the "Audi" (the name being a model designation rather than the manufacturer, which was still officially Auto Union) but later came to be known as the Audi 72. Developments of the model were named for their horsepower ratings and sold as the Audi 60, 75, 80, and Super 90. These models sold until 1972.

In 1969, Auto Union merged with NSU, based in Neckarsulm, near Stuttgart. In the 1950s, NSU had been the world's largest manufacturer of motorcycles, but had moved on to produce small cars like the NSU Prinz, the TT and TTS versions of which are still popular as vintage race cars. NSU then focused on new rotary engines based on the ideas of Felix Wankel. In 1967, the new NSU Ro 80 was a space-age car, well ahead of its time in technical details such as aerodynamics, light weight, and safety but teething problems with the rotary engines put an end to the independence of NSU. Today the Neckarsulm plant is used to produce the larger Audi models A6 and A8. The Neckarsulm factory is also home of the quattro GmbH, this subsidiary is responsible for development and production of the Audi high performance cars: the R8 and the "**RS**" model range.

The mid-sized car that NSU had been working on, the K70, was intended to slot between the rear-engined Prinz models and the futuristic NSU Ro 80. However, Volkswagen took the K70 for its own range, spelling the end of NSU as a separate brand.

The modern era of Audi

The new merged company was known as **Audi NSU Auto Union AG**, and saw the emergence of Audi as a separate brand for the first time since the pre-war era. Volkswagen introduced the Audi brand to the United States for the 1970 model year.

The first new car of this regime was the Audi 100 of 1968. This was soon joined by the Audi 80/Fox (which formed the basis for the 1973 Volkswagen Passat) in



1972 and the Audi 50 (later rebadged as the Volkswagen Polo) in 1974. The Audi 50 was a seminal design in many ways, because it was the first incarnation of the Golf/Polo concept, one that led to a hugely successful world car.

The Audi image at this time was a conservative one, and so, a proposal from chassis engineer Jörg Bensinger was accepted to develop the four-wheel drive technology in Volkswagen's Iltis military vehicle for an Audi performance car and rally racing car. The performance car, introduced in 1980, was named the "Audi Quattro," a turbocharged coupé which was also the first German large-scale production vehicle to feature permanent all-wheel drive through a center differential. Commonly referred to as the "Ur-Quattro" (the "Ur-" prefix is a German augmentative used, in this case, to mean "original" and is also applied to the first generation of Audi's S4 and S6 sport sedans, as in "UrS4" and "UrS6"), few of these vehicles were produced (all hand-built by a single team), but the model

was a great success in rallying. Prominent wins proved the viability of all-wheel drive racecars, and the Audi name became associated with advances in automotive technology.

In 1985, with the Auto Union and NSU brands effectively dead, the company's official name was now shortened to simply **Audi AG**.

In 1986, as the Passat-based Audi 80 was beginning to develop a kind of "grandfather's car" image, the *type 89* was introduced. This completely new development sold extremely well. However, its modern and dynamic exterior belied the low performance of its base engine, and its base package was quite spartan (even the passenger-side mirror was an option.) In 1987, Audi put forward a new and very elegant Audi 90, which had a much superior set of standard features. In the early 1990s, sales began to slump for the Audi 80 series, and some basic construction problems started to surface.

This decline in sales was not helped in the United States by a *60 Minutes* report which purported to show that Audi automobiles suffered from "unintended acceleration". The *60 Minutes* report was based on customer reports of acceleration when the brake pedal was pushed. Independent investigators concluded that this was most likely due to a close placement of the accelerator and brake pedals (unlike American cars), and the inability, when not paying attention, to distinguish between the two. (In race cars, when manually downshifting under heavy braking, the accelerator has to be used in order to match revs properly, so both pedals have to be close to each other to be operated by the right foot at once, toes on the brake, heel on the accelerator; a driving technique called heel-and-toe). This did not become an issue in Europe, possibly due to more widespread experience among European drivers with manual transmissions.

The report immediately crushed Audi sales, and Audi renamed the affected model (The 5000 became the 100/200 in 1989, as it was elsewhere). Audi had contemplated withdrawing from the American market until sales began to recover in the mid-1990s. The turning point for Audi was the sale of the new A4 in 1996, and with the release of the A4/A6/A8 series, which was developed together with VW and other sister brands (so called "platforms").

In the early part of the 21st century, Audi set forth on a German racetrack to claim and maintain several World Records, such as Top Speed Endurance. This effort was in-line with the company's heritage from the 1930s racing era "Silver Arrows".

Currently, Audi's sales are growing strongly in Europe. 2004 marked the 11th straight increase in sales, selling 779,441 vehicles worldwide. Record figures were recorded from 21 out of about 50 major sales markets. The largest sales increases came from Eastern Europe (+19.3%), Africa (+17.2%) and the Middle East (+58.5%). In March 2005, Audi built its first two dealerships in India following its high increase in sales in the region.

Their 2007 worldwide sales have been released as 964,151 vehicles sold, yet another record for the brand. In 2008, Audi has achieved the 13th record year in a row passing the 1 million unit mark with 1,003,400 sold units.

Technology

Bodyshells

Audi produces 100% galvanized cars to prevent corrosion, and was the first mass-market vehicle to do so, following introduction of the process by Porsche, c.1975. Along with other precautionary measures, the full-body zinc coating has proved to be very effective in preventing rust. The body's resulting durability even surpassed Audi's own expectations, causing the manufacturer to extend its original 10-year warranty against corrosion perforation to currently 12 years (except for Aluminium bodies which don't rust).

An all-aluminium car was brought forward by Audi, and in 1994 the Audi A8 was launched, which introduced aluminum space frame technology (called *Audi Space Frame*). Audi introduced a new series of vehicles in the mid-nineties and continues to pursue leading-edge technology and high performance. Prior to that effort, Audi used examples of the Type 44 chassis fabricated out of aluminum as test-beds for the technique.



Drive layout

In all its post Volkswagen-era models, Audi has firmly refused to adopt the traditional rear-wheel drive layout favoured by its two arch rivals Mercedes-Benz and BMW, favouring either front-wheel drive or four-wheel drive. To achieve this, Audi has usually engineered its cars with a longitudinally front mounted engine, in an "overhung" position, over the front wheels – in front of the axle line. While this allows for equal length driveshafts (therefore combatting torque steer), and the easy adoption of four-wheel drive, it goes against the ideal 50:50 weight distribution (as do all front wheel drive cars).

Audi has recently applied the *quattro* badge to models such as the A3 and TT which do not actually use the Torsen-based system as in prior years, with a mechanical centre differential, but with the Swedish Haldex Traction electro-mechanical clutch 4WD system.

Engines

In the 1980s, Audi, along with Volvo, was the champion of the inline 5 cylinder, 2.1/2.2 L engine as a longer lasting alternative to more traditional 6 cylinder engines. This engine was used not only in production cars but also in their race cars. The 2.1 L inline 5 cylinder engine was used as a base for the rally cars in the 1980s, providing well over 400 horsepower (298 kW) after modification. Before 1990, there were engines produced with a displacement between 2.0 L and 2.3 L. This range of engine capacity was a good combination of good fuel economy (which was on the mind of every motorist in the 1980s) and, of course, a good amount of power.

Luxury competitors

Through the early 1990s, Audi began to move more towards the position of being a real competitor in its target market against global luxury leaders Mercedes-Benz and BMW. This began with the release of the Audi V8 in 1990. It was essentially a new engine fitted to the Audi 100/200, but with noticeable bodywork differences. Most obvious was the new grille that was now incorporated in the bonnet.

By 1991, Audi had the 4 cylinder Audi 80, the 5 cylinder Audi 90 and Audi 100, the turbocharged Audi 200 and the Audi V8. There was also a coupe version of the 80/90 with both 4 and 5 cylinder engines.

Although the five cylinder engine was a successful and very robust powerplant, it was still a little too different for the target market. With the introduction of an all-new Audi 100 in 1992, Audi introduced a 2.8L V6 engine. This engine was also fitted to a face-lifted Audi 80 (all 80 and 90 models were now badged 80 except for the USA), giving this model a choice of 4, 5 and 6 cylinder engines, in saloon/sedan, coupé and Cabriolet body styles.

The 5 cylinder was soon dropped as a major engine choice; however, a turbocharged 230 hp (169 kW) version remained. The engine, initially fitted to the 200 quattro 20V of 1991, was a derivative of the engine fitted to the Sport Quattro. It was fitted to the Audi Coupé, and named the S2 and also to the Audi 100 body, and named the S4. These two models were the beginning of the mass-produced S series of performance cars.

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5,2 Liter V10 FSI im Audi R8

mit FSI® Benzin-Einspritzung, kontinuierlicher Nockenverstellung und Nachverlebenschnitt per Kette

5.2 liter V10 FSI engine in the Audi R8 with FSI® Fuel direct injection, variable camshaft timing and chain driven camshaft

5,204 cm³
306 kW (525 PS) @ 5.000 min⁻¹
530 Nm @ 3.300 min⁻¹
51/09



© Audi AG



Audi Space Frame

The Audi A8 replaced the V8 in 1994, with a aluminium space frame, known as the "Audi Space Frame" (ASF), to save weight. The weight reduction was offset by the quattro four-wheel drive system. It meant the car had similar performance to its rivals, but superior roadholding. The Audi A2 and Audi R8 also use Audi Space Frame designs.

A4

The next major model change was in 1995 when the Audi A4 replaced the Audi 80. The new nomenclature scheme was applied to the Audi 100 to become the Audi A6 (with a minor facelift). This also meant the S4 became the S6 and a new S4 was introduced in the A4 body. The S2 was discontinued. The Audi Cabriolet continued on (based on the Audi 80 platform) until 1999, gaining the engine upgrades along the way. A new A3 hatchback model (sharing the Volkswagen Golf Mk4's platform) was introduced to the range in 1996, and the radical Audi TT coupé and roadster were debuted in 1998 based on the same underpinnings. Another interesting model introduced was the Mercedes-Benz A-Class competitor, the Audi A2. The model sold relatively well in Europe, however, the A2 was discontinued in 2005 and Audi decided not to develop an immediate replacement.

The engines available throughout the range were now a 1.4L, 1.6L and 1.8L 4 cylinder, 1.8L 4-cylinder turbo, 2.6L and 2.8L V6, 2.2L turbo-charged 5 cylinder and the 4.2L V8 engine. The V6s were replaced by new 2.4L and 2.8L 30V V6s in 1998, with marked improvement in power, torque and smoothness. Further engines were added along the way, including a 3.7L V8 and 6.0L W12 engine for the A8.

DSG

At the turn of the century, Volkswagen introduced the Direct-Shift Gearbox, or DSG, an automated manual transmission, drivable like a conventional automatic transmission. Based on the gearbox found in the Group B S1, the system includes dual electrohydraulically controlled clutches instead of a torque converter. This is implemented in some VW Golfs, Audi A3 and TT models where DSG is called S-tronic.

FSI

New models of the A3, A4, A6 and A8 have been introduced, with the aging 1.8 litre engine now having been replaced by new Fuel Stratified Injection (FSI) engines. Nearly every petrol engined model in the range now incorporates this fuel-saving technology, including the following:

Petrol engines:

- 1.6 litre 4 cylinder 115 bhp (86 kW; 117 PS)
- 2.0 litre 4 cylinder 150 bhp (112 kW; 152 PS) (Slowly being phased out in order to make way for TSI engines – see section below)
- 2.0 litre turbocharged 4 cylinder 200 bhp (149 kW; 203 PS)
- 3.0 litre supercharged v6 300 bhp (224 kW; 304 PS) - 333 bhp (248 kW; 338 PS)
- 3.1 litre V6 265 bhp (198 kW; 269 PS)
- 4.2 litre V8 350 bhp (261 kW; 355 PS)
- 4.2 litre V8 414 bhp (309 kW; 420 PS)

- 5.2 litre V10 435 bhp (324 kW; 441 PS) - 450 bhp (336 kW; 456 PS)
- 5.2 litre biturbo V10 573 bhp (427 kW; 581 PS)
- 6.0 litre W12 331 kW (450 PS)

Other engines on sale and featuring in products of the Audi brand include:

- 1.6 litre 4 cylinder 102 bhp (76 kW; 103 PS)
- 1.9 litre TDI 4 cylinder 105 bhp (78 kW; 106 PS)
- 2.0 litre TDI 4 cylinder 141 bhp (105 kW; 143 PS)
- 2.0 litre TDI 4 cylinder 170 bhp (127 kW; 172 PS)
- 2.7 litre TDI V6 180 bhp (134 kW; 182 PS)
- 3.0 litre TDI V6 233 bhp (174 kW; 236 PS)
- 4.2 litre TDI V8 326 bhp (243 kW; 331 PS)
- 6.0 litre TDI V12 500 bhp (373 kW; 507 PS) 1,000 N·m (740 ft·lbf)/1750 rpm

(All TDI models are turbodiesels.)

Electric technology

Audi is planning an alliance with the Japanese electronic giant Sanyo to develop a pilot hybrid electric project for the Volkswagen Group. The alliance could result in Sanyo batteries and other electronic components being used in future models of the Volkswagen group.

Hybrid electric vehicles includes:

- Audi A1 Sportback Concept.
- Audi A4 TDI Concept E.

LED Daytime Running Lights

Since the end of 2006 Audi has started using the latest white LED daytime running light (DRL) technology as their new trademark for their new models. The style was first introduced in the R8, and is now being orientated to suit the whole Audi model range. As of 2009, LED DRLs are available throughout the current Audi model range.



Multi Media Interface (MMI)

Audi has recently started offering a computerised control system for its cars called Multi Media Interface (MMI). This comes amid criticism of BMW's iDrive control, essentially a rotating control knob designed to control radio, satellite navigation, TV, heating and car controls with a screen. MMI was widely reported to be a considerable improvement on BMW's iDrive, although BMW has since made their iDrive more user-friendly. MMI has been generally well-received, as it requires less menu-surfing with its mass of buttons around a central knob, with shortcuts to the radio or phone functions. The screen, either colour or monochrome, is mounted on the upright dashboard, and on the A4 (new), A5, A6, A8, and Q7, the controls are mounted horizontally. However, an "MMI-like" system is also available on the Audi A3 and A4 models when equipped with the optional Audi Navigation System Plus (RNS-E).

Motorsports

Audi has competed in numerous forms of motorsports. Audi's rich tradition in motorsport began with their former company Auto Union in the 1930s. In the 1990s, Audi dominated the Touring and Super Touring categories of motor racing after success in circuit racing in North America.

Rallying

In 1980, Audi released the Quattro, a four-wheel drive turbocharged car that went on to win rallies and races worldwide. It is considered one of the most significant rally cars of all time because it was one of the first to take advantage of the then-recently changed rules which allowed the use of four-wheel drive in competition racing. Many critics doubted the viability of four-wheel drive racers, thinking them to be too heavy and complex, yet the Quattro was to become a successful car. Leading its first rally it went off the road, however the rally world had been served notice 4WD was the future. The Quattro went on to achieve much success in the World Rally Championship. It won the 1983 (Hannu Mikkola) and the 1984 (Stig Blomqvist) drivers' titles, and brought Audi the manufacturers' title in 1982 and 1984.

In 1984, Audi launched the short-wheelbase Sport Quattro which dominated races in Monte Carlo and Sweden, with Audi taking all podium places, but succumbed to problems further into WRC contention. In 1985, after another season mired in mediocre finishes, Walter Röhrl finished the season in his Sport Quattro S1, and helped place Audi second in the manufacturers' points. Audi also received rally honors in the Hong Kong to Beijing rally in that same year. Michèle Mouton, the first and only female driver to win a round of the World Rally Championship and a driver for Audi, took the Sport Quattro S1, now simply called the "S1", and raced in the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb. The climb race pits a driver and car to drive up a 4,302 meter high mountain in Colorado and in 1985, Michèle Mouton set a new record of 11:25.39, and being the first woman to set a Pikes Peak record. In 1986, Audi formally left international rally racing following an accident in Portugal involving driver Joaquim Santos in his Ford RS200. Santos swerved to avoid hitting spectators in the road, and left the track into the crowd of spectators on the side, killing three and injuring 30. Bobby Unser used an Audi in that same year to claim a new record for the Pikes Peak Hill Climb at 11:09.22.

In 1987, Walter Röhrl claimed the title for Audi setting a new Pikes Peak International Hill Climb record of 10:47.85 in his Audi S1 which he retired from the WRC two years earlier. The Audi S1 employed Audi's time-tested 5-cylinder turbo charged engine, with the final version generating 441 kW (600 PS; 591 bhp). The engine was mated to a 6-speed gearbox and ran on Audi's famous all-wheel drive system. All of Audi's top drivers drove this car; Hannu Mikkola,

Stig Blomqvist, Walter Röhrl and Michèle Mouton. This Audi S1 started the S-series of cars for Audi which now represents an increased level of sports options and quality in the Audi line-up.

Motorsports in the USA

As Audi moved away from rallying and into circuit racing, they chose to move first into America with the Trans-Am in 1988. In 1989, Audi moved to IMSA GTO with the Audi 90, however as they avoided the two major endurance events (Daytona and Sebring) despite winning on a regular basis, they would lose out on the title.

Touring cars

In 1990, having completed their objective to market cars in the United States, Audi returned to Europe, turning first to the Deutsche Tourenwagen Meisterschaft (DTM) series with the Audi V8, then in 1993, being unwilling to build cars for the new formula, they turned their attention to the fast growing Supertouring series, which took place nationally, first in the French Supertourisme and Italian Superturismo. In the following year, Audi would switch to the German Super Tourenwagen (known as STW) and then to British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) the year after that.

The Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), having difficulty regulating the quattro four wheel drive system, and the impact it had on the competitors, would eventually ban all four wheel drive cars from competing in 1998, by then Audi switched all their works efforts to sports car racing.

By 2000, Audi would still compete in the US with their RS4 for the SCCA Speed World GT Challenge, through dealer/team Champion Racing competing against Corvettes, Vipers, and smaller BMWs (where it is one of the few series to permit 4WD cars). In 2003, Champion Racing entered an RS6. Once again, the quattro four wheel drive was superior and Champion Audi won the championship. They returned in 2004 to defend their title but a newcomer, Cadillac with the new Omega Chassis CTS-V, gave them a run for their money. After four victories in a row, the Audis were sanctioned with several negative changes that deeply affected the car's performance. Namely, added ballasts and Champion Audi deciding to go with different tires and backing off the turbos boost pressure.

In 2004, after years of competing with the TT-R in the revitalized DTM series, with privateer team Abt Racing/Christian Abt taking the 2002 title with Laurent Aïello, Audi returned as a full factory effort to touring car racing by entering two factory supported Joest Racing Audi A4s.

Sports Car racing

Beginning in 1999, Audi built the Audi R8R (open-top prototype) and the Audi R8C (GT-Prototype) to compete in sports car racing, including the Le Mans Prototype LMP900 class at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. For the 2000 season, Audi focussed mainly on the new Audi R8, due to favorable rules for open-top prototypes. The factory-supported Joest Racing team won at Le Mans three times in a row with the Audi R8 (2000 — 2002), as well as winning every race in the American Le Mans Series in its first year. Audi also sold the car to customer teams such as Champion Racing.

In 2003, two Bentley Speed 8s, with engines designed by Audi, and driven by Joest drivers *loaned* to the fellow Volkswagen Group company, competed in the GTP class, and finished the race in the top two positions, while the Champion Racing R8 finished third overall and first in the LMP900 class. Audi returned to the winner's circle at the 2004 race, with the top three finishers all driving R8s: Audi Sport Japan Team Goh finished first, Audi Sport UK Veloqx second, and Champion Racing third.

At the 2005 24 Hours of Le Mans, Champion Racing entered two R8s along with an R8 from the Audi PlayStation Team Oreca. The R8s (which were built to old LMP900 regulations) received a narrower air inlet restrictor, reducing power, and an additional 50 kg (110 lb) of weight compared to the newer LMP1 chassis. On average, the R8s were about 2–3 seconds off pace compared to the Pescarolo-Judd. But with a team of excellent drivers and experience, both Champion R8s were able to take first and third while the ORECA team took fourth. The Champion team was also the first American team to win Le Mans since the Gulf Ford GT's in 1967. This also ends the long era of the R8; however, its replacement for 2006, called the Audi R10 TDI, was unveiled on 13 December 2005.

The R10 TDI employs many new features, including a twin-turbocharged diesel engine. Its first race was the 2006 12 Hours of Sebring as a race-test for the 2006 24 Hours of Le Mans, which it later went on to win. Audi has been on the forefront of sports car racing, claiming a historic win in the first ever diesel sports car at 12 Hours of Sebring. As well as winning the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 2006 making history, the R10 TDI has also shown its capabilities by beating the Peugeot 908 HDi FAP in 2007, and beating Peugeot again in 2008.

Sponsorships

- Audi Medcup: sailing regatta located in Spain, France, Italy, and Portugal.
- Audi Sydney Harbour Regatta.
- Audi Hamilton Island Race.



























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