



TEST DRIVE

GUILTY PLEASURE

A drive in the Audi S5 is way too good to pass up

This is wrong. It's just so wrong. Before I start in on the usual guff about engine this and torque that; before I even dare mention white leather bucket seats and alloy wheels, I should just apologise now. If you want to know about a sensibly priced sports car, go back a page, where my colleague Aaron, a less greedy, more economic climate-controlled man than me, offers you the Mazda RX-8. If you want to know about some bloke having a drive in dreamland, read on.

Nice car, that Mazda: bit of fun, good performance, and the wife won't stab you for buying it. No harm done. The Audi S5, though, I actually had to lie about. When the editor asked how much a luxury German touring sports car might be, I said, "about \$90,000". Nonsense. The Audi S5 4.2 FSI quattro tiptronic will set you back \$138,600. Only it won't, because you can't afford it. I can't afford it. I just wanted a go in it.

For a hundred and thirty thousand bucks plus, you get a car people actually turn their heads to look at. Perfectly normal men, minding their own business by staring at a girl down the street with a big chest, would look at my S5, instead. I took it to a barbie and friends stood around it saying, "Rev the engine again" and "Is it really only 90 grand?" Once, when parked in a posh area of Sydney,

a seppo waiting for my spot shouted "Nice car" out the window of his own, inferior, sports car. I'd come back to it and people would be peering in through the windows.

The experience of driving the S5 is like eating a third pie for lunch: 10 per cent guilt and 90 per cent pleasure. Part of me feels that I might as well be running down the street waving burning \$50 notes in the air. The rest of me is sitting in a white leather bucket seat, caressing the wheel, nurling the tiptronic gears and frightening the heck out of myself with the occasional burst of warping acceleration.

You can't do it too often, because the police don't like it, but give the accelerator a real poke and those eight cylinders

wake up and shout. It does 0-100km/h in 5.1 seconds.

Audi comes from a big country with fast roads, and they want drivers to travel it in roomy style; and not just you, but three happy passengers, as you navigate sweeping bends with an orgasmic smile on your face. And those passengers are presented with zoned airconditioning, a top-of-the-range sound system and power-controlled seating!

OK, look. By the time you read this, Kevin Rudd will have given us each about \$900 of our own taxes back to stimulate the economy with. If you and 154 of your best MySpace friends get together, this could happen. — **Ivan Smith**

"It's a car people actually turn their heads to look at."

ALTERNATIVES



AUDI A5 COUPE

The A5 is the S5's more sensible sister, and while still powerful, with a good range of on-board techno-goodies, it has a 3.2L V6 engine and will "only" cost you **\$98,500** Bargain, really. Ahem.



BMW M3

The Beemer gives you more power for more money, but might be a little less equally at home on local streets as big freeways. Audi might even have that edge in class, these days, although who's counting? **\$162,900**

STRAIGHT DRIVE

HYUNDAI I20

Hyundai's small i20 hatch gives people the chance to get German design with a Korean price tag. It's fuel-efficient and ideal for crowded city streets, while the interior has a roomier feel than most hatches. Out late this year, it will cost about **\$25,000**



PORSCHE CAYENNE DIESEL

Consumes, on average, 9.3 litres of fuel per 100km – marginally less than the latest petrol-powered Boxster – and the carbon dioxide emissions of 244 grams per kilojoule of energy spent are quite respectable. From **\$101,990**



AUDI R8 5.2 FSI QUATTRO

With a top speed of 316km/h and an ability to go from 0-100km/h in under four seconds, the R8 will be popular with the leaden of foot. The local price is not yet known, but the V10 will cost 142,400 euros (**\$282,000**) in Germany.



ON YA BIKE

HONDA CBR600RR

Honda has updated its powerful sports bike, with its kerb weight stripped back to 185kg thanks to weight savings in the engine, chassis and exhaust. But it still packs a mighty punch. **\$15,990**



KAWASAKI NINJA ZX-6R

Sits a powerful 636cc engine that gives 94kW of power at 13,000rpm into a lightweight 161kg body. Little wonder it produces the fastest lap times of any Ninja before it. From **\$17,500**



TRIUMPH DAYTONA 675

The Triumph Daytona 675 won all sorts of plaudits when it became the first three-cylinder machine to enter the supersport class. Now it's dropped 3kg and improved the brakes and tyres. **\$14,890**



WACKY RACERS

HIGGINS-AUBÉ ENERGIA

If they can get enough investors on board, the three-wheeled Energia sports vehicle will offer the comfort of a car, but only have to satisfy licensing requirements in many places for a motorcycle. Has a six-speed rear motorcycle engine. **\$TBA**



TERRAFUGIA TRANSITION

Never wait for a cab at the airport again. The Terrafugia Transition has wings that fold up after landing, allowing you to taxi it all the way home. Expected to be released by 2010, the vehicle is set to cost **\$295,000**



EDAG LIGHT CAR

It would probably make your wheelie bin strain a bit, but the Light Car from German outfit EDAG is planned to be 100 per cent recyclable. Electric-powered and made of lightweight basalt fibre, there's a rolling chassis for extra safety. **\$TBA**

