



## Audi RS 5 a driver's delight

If you've ever put on an article of clothing and thought "This fits perfectly, I feel like a million bucks," then you know what awaits when driving an Audi RS 5 Coupe.

It is a car of physical beauty and sensual delight, so compelling it convinced me that its price tag of \$114,000 is perfectly reasonable. And if money is tight, then take a scalpel to the \$31,500 worth of options that were included in my test car and whittle it back to the \$82,500 base price.

The RS 5 was reinvented in 2018. A tearful goodbye was said to its wonderful V8 engine, and the new model was fitted with a 2.9-litre twin turbo V6. Those sorts of changes make enthusiasts fretful, but really there is nothing to mourn here. The V6 got a torque boost, trimmed weight and posts a zero-to-100 km/h sprint in 3.9 seconds. In performance talk, the changes improved the gold standard of power to weight ratio. The RS 5 is lighter and makes better use of its 444 horsepower.

Those are some specifics, but let's step back to the basics. The Audi RS 5 is a car



Kathy  
Renwald

with great looks and gorgeous feel. That's what you want for the price, not a car that "grows on you."

My tester came in Nardo Grey, a slightly matte, non-colour that emphasizes the body shape and the few – but essential – design enhancements that bless the RS 5. Signature work is at the front, where the grille, bumper and lights add up to a 1,000-watt smile.

Inside is bliss. Executed with a watchmaker's precision, the details are entrancing – the red stitching on the leather quilted seats, carbon-fibre inlays, and the Alcantara steering wheel and shifter so lovely to caress.

Of all the beautiful Audi things, the best is the feeling in the driver's seat. The centre console controls, the gorgeous graphics on

### 2018 Audi RS 5 Coupe

**Base Price:** \$82,500

**Price as Tested:** \$114,000

**Engine Type:** Twin turbo V6

**Power:** 444 hp

**Torque:** 443 lb.-ft

#### Fuel Consumption

**City:** 12.9 L/100 km

**Highway:** 8.9 L/100 km

**What's Best:** Exciting but refined looks, interior design, driver position

**What's Worst:** Small back seats, small trunk, expensive options

**What's Interesting:** The V6 sounds as good as a V8

the virtual displays, everything defers to the driver. When you shift up through the eight-speed automatic, the rings around the tachometer light up in green, yellow and red. The cockpit looks like a crazy Moog synthesizer ready to be played.

Best of all is the visibility. The windowsills are low, there's a gap between the side mirror and A pillar, and the dash is low, so you can see unobstructed when turning. These critical dimensions also enhance the sense of speed and connectedness to the road.

It's clever that the RS 5's beautiful but restrained styling disguises what a rocket it is to drive. When the torque performance was improved for 2018, it gave the RS 5

wicked speed and pulling power from a relatively low r.p.m. The delivery of speed and the ride quality are totally customizable through the Dynamic Ride Control. Make it hard, make it soft, it's your choice – though no setting is soft enough to absorb the worst of our beaten-up roads.

In everyday driving, the RS 5 is a delight, but gives you very little understanding of what it could really do on a smooth, challenging road. It shifts quickly, emitting a little snarl if it's in the right dynamic setting, and feels flat and controlled in hard cornering. The steering is sharp, maybe not as distinct as Alfa Romeos with their paper-cutter precision, but sharp enough for most drivers. The steering also tends to be on the light side, which sparks some criticism, but I like it. It is effective when parking and squeezing around obstacles in the city.

My tester was outfitted with the optional \$6,000 carbon ceramic front brakes. They need finesse and a delicate touch, and really aren't vital unless your RS 5 will be spending a lot of time at the track. So there's the first place the price could be trimmed.

No entertainment is needed to improve the driving experience of the RS 5 but, if tunes are desired, the stereo is spectacular. Put on some Kendrick Lamar and the bass will practically vibrate the paint off the body.

There are a few deficiencies to mention. Getting into the backseat of the coupe is a challenge, and most passengers will want to get out sooner rather than later. The trunk is adequate, but has a small opening that limits cargo hauling.

Ultimately, the Audi RS 5 is a driver's car – a nearly perfect one. With its thrilling performance and exquisite interior, the memory of driving it lingers for a long time. 📍

*Kathy Renwald is an award-winning automotive writer, photographer and videographer.*

WHERE TO GET IT: PAGE 134

## Way More Than Skin Deep

Beauty attracts.  
Beauty takes effort.

Your fine car deserves our fine care

# Mitek

Fine Automobile Body and Paint

[mitekautobody.com](http://mitekautobody.com)

519-578-2052 • 207 Centennial Court, Kitchener

OEM Certified Approved



## SUBSCRIBE TO GRAND MAGAZINE



6 issues for just \$33.76 (incl. tax)  
[grandmagazine.ca](http://grandmagazine.ca) or call 519 • 895 • 5214

Connect with us on social media

✉ email Brian Williams at [bwilliams@grandmagazine.ca](mailto:bwilliams@grandmagazine.ca)

🐦 @Grand\_Magazine 📘 facebook.com/GrandWaterlooRegion 📷 instagram.com/grandmagazine.ca