

Living large going green

2012 Audi A8 Hybrid – long, black, green

Germans know their stuff when it comes to engineering efficiency, efficiently. Blame their lack of humour or refer to their rocky history of trying to take over every country in sight. Nowadays they take over

from a high end luxury car, massive amounts of rear legroom, five passengers sitting in complete comfort; and does it all in a sleek, muscular body that hides the true bulk of the car. Powered by a measly

the following facts. Peak power is 211 hp and torque is 258 lb-ft, available at your right foot from just 1500 RPM, and in Dynamic mode the throttle response is spiked up by the Audi Valvelift System (AVS),

on efficiency and the carbon footprint. The rear thrones feel plush and padded, made for pampering your backsides. You're bombarded by cold air from every direction, and the legroom is enough for a couple of Jeremy Clarksons to stretch out fully and relax. Audi offers a huge list of options, and depending on which boxes you tick on the options list, you can keep the car basic and functional, or an over the top living room/bedroom on four wheels. Our particular test car was well equipped, but none of the fancy equipment you have access to if you go for the long wheelbase A8 L.

Its massively quiet. When running on Hybrid mode, its practically noiseless, even when the petrol engine is engaged, only the quietest of hums permeate the cabin. The credit goes to the Active Noise Control system, which uses a neat interference system to cancel out the sounds from the engine and the

drivetrain. Liberal use of sound deadening limits exterior noise from reaching the occupants. Luxury car equals quietness, and the Audi is a silent black giant.

Fuel efficiency is a huge deal for this car. The biggest mistake most people make is in thinking the Audi will be better than all other petrol cars in terms of fuel efficiency since it's a Hybrid and Hybrids are magical unicorns capable of running for miles without stopping for a drink.

The truth: they aren't. You compare only with cars in the same class. You can't complain that your Corolla gives you better mileage than your Audi A8 Hybrid, because there simply is no basis for comparing the two. For the level of equipment, comfort, performance and prestige

you get from the Audi, it gives really good mileage and is not as damaging to the wallet as a petrol driven rival luxury car. On our

drive, we got an average of 4.5 mpg driving around medium traffic laden roads, as touted by the (very cool) heads up display nestled between the speedo and the hybrid power/tacho meter.

Speaking of HUDs, one complaint about the cabin would be the sheer amount of buttons and trackpads to play around with and screens to look at. Frankly, its quite distracting, which is actually the intended purpose. You can stare for hours at the Audi MMS screen and watch an animated A8 display whether the car is charging the hybrid system or running on the petrol engine, without being bored.

Is it worth it, though? Probably not, unless you own several industries and you can buy this land yacht and maintain it. To fix it is going to be a bit of a problem given the lack of after sales support in the country (all of these are grey market imports), but have faith in German engineering to

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countries by selling their products, like this brilliant Audi.

Smart packaging is a hard thing to pull off, but the Audi A8 Hybrid is a success story. It packs in a hybrid drivetrain, tons of equipment as expected

sounding 2.0 litre turbocharged four-cylinder TFSI engine and combined with the hybrid powertrain, the A8 is surprisingly rapid for a car of its size. If you think 2.0 litres is too small an engine for you, look at

making sure your driving experience isn't dull, even if it is a fullsize luxury sedan.

This car is less about the driving experience and more about the comfort of the passenger, while keeping a keen eye



Silver screen Bullits

We all love movies. Some of us love cars. What happens when the two worlds collide? (Ans: explosive chase sequences).

Vanishing Point (1971): Widely regarded as one of the best car chase movies of all time (and my personal favourite), this movie would go on to inspire countless Hollywood cop chases. With Steve McQueen's Le Mans coming out in the same year, the unlikely cult star in Barry Newman had a lot going against his first major role in a movie. Vanishing Point depicts an ex-cop turned car delivery driver, Kowalski, as he takes a white Dodge Challenger from Colorado to San Francisco, his body loaded up with drugs. In his drug-induced stupor, he takes a bet that he'll get there in 15 hours. Alongside him in his drug and gasoline fueled journey on the open tarmac is a blind RJ called Super Soul, the radio breaking the silences in between the blare of cop sirens. The chases are epic, the characters random in that 70's Americana way, and the car itself was enough to make this movie a cult hit.

Bullit (1968): Steve McQueen's most famous movie to date, this was revolutionary in the way car chases play roles in a movie. McQueen, a massive car enthusiast himself, almost immortalized the green Ford Mustang GT 390 fastback, chasing a Dodge Charger R/T 440 in the most memorable scene from the movie: a 10 minute and 53 second long chase in the streets of San Francisco. The jumps were breathtaking, the burning rubber incessant. This was almost a last hurrah for the hooliganism inspiring American muscle car. In a few short

years, the oil crisis would hit, and the muscle car would die. Gearheads all around the world would have to re-watch Bullit as the American car industry started to slip into a 40 year long decline.

The Cannonball Run (1981): Burt Reynolds. Roger Moore. Farah Fawcett. Jackie Chan. Dean Martin. Peter Fonda. Need I go on? These superstars were all bunched into a movie about a wild and illegal cross country race. Fast cars, insanely hot women, cool dudes, great songs. What else would you need for a great movie? Adrienne Barbeau and Tara Buckman in a red Lamborghini Countach. If that isn't enough to get you to watch the movie, then we have nothing else to say.

Gone in 60 Seconds (1974/remake in 2000): Everyone has seen the Nicholas Cage remake (and rightly so, Angelina Jolie as a leather-clad, bike riding, Ferrari stealing gearhead would make anyone want to see it), but not a lot of people know about the original. With a different storyline, more car scenes and slightly better storytelling, many say the original is better than the remake. Instead of comparing the two, watch both. Because both films have "Eleanor", the original being a 1973 Ford Mustang Mach 1, the remake using a 1967 Mustang Shelby Cobra GT500. The Eleanor in the remake is admittedly more famous, having distinctive bodywork and paint. Both movies should be on everyone's list of what to watch before you die.

The Blues Brothers (1980): No one expects to see car chase scenes in a movie about a band. This movie blew it all out of the water. People were still whispering excitedly about the massive pile up of cop cars this movie had. No other movie made fugitives look so damn cool. By the time The Blues Brothers came out, car chases were commonplace in almost all Hollywood mainstream movies, but this one will always be remembered for the over the top action accompanied by absolutely brilliant music.

The Fast and the Furious



(2001): There are very few men on this planet who hasn't seen or at least heard about the Fast and the Furious. Dominic Toretto and Brian O'Connor's characters launched the most successful car movie franchise in the world with this movie, not to mention several billion dollars' worth automotive aftermarket parts industry worldwide. Many (misinformed) people will think spoilers, bodykits and nitrous tanks didn't exist before this movie came out, and we can see why. The movie took California's underground street racing scene and held it up for the world to see. "Ask any racer. Any real racer. It don't matter if you win by an inch or a mile. Winning's winning." Dominic may have inspired a whole generation of street ricerzzzz, but we still love him to bits.



Useful tip: avoid picking through the details if you're a car nut, they have very little to offer you because the movies are filled with factual errors and impossibilities. Just enjoy them.

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Tax Structure Killing Hybrids

Is the government raising the tax on Hybrids just to cash in on the hype?

Seems like it, yeah. If you want to own an Audi Hybrid, or any Hybrid which has a conventional internal combustion engine larger than 1.8 litres, the hybrid badge is ignored and the tax levied on the car is the regular tax placed on that displacement bracket.

Before the budget, the tax on all hybrid cars were 63% of the list price. A stream of Audi Hybrids came into the country in the grey market, sold for ridiculously low prices, wherein you could buy a fully specced Audi A8 for as low as 1.5 crore taka (cheap considering its class and rivals).

The government then realized they were losing out, and hiked up the tax on all hybrids powered by anything larger than a 1.8 litre conventional engine, and now a similarly specced Audi A8 Hybrid would cost you at least 3.5 crore.

This kind of strategy is beyond our logic, since governments worldwide try to promote greener cars, while ours actively tries to limit their entry into the market (dealers who sold Audi Hybrids, like RPM Motors and DHS Motors, will not be bringing in any Audi A8s in the near future due to their increased prices).



Mitsubishi's rally rocket for the road, the Lancer Evolution, is surprisingly common on Dhaka streets, with almost every iteration of the legendary mental family sedan in recent times being represented. A collection of about sixteen Lancer Evolutions, from generations VII to X,

along with their owners, had a get together in front of Bashundhara Convention Centre in Baridhara on Friday, November 8th, the first meet of its kind. We hope more of these meets happen soon. The organizers had big plans for the future, and we'd like to see what they come up with next.

