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Motoring New Car Road Test

Audi's e-tron Sportback is a sleek

Audi has given its e-tron a dynamic makeover in the form of the e-tron Sportback. But is it any good? **Jack Evans** finds out

AUDI has a bit of a knack for filling a niche. If you take a look at its current lineup of cars, you won't see all that many gaps in between the models – and to ensure that remains the case with the e-tron, it has introduced this: the e-tron Sportback.

Essentially a sleeker and more dynamically-styled version of Audi's latest fully electric SUV, the Sportback aims to broaden the appeal of the e-tron in general by giving buyers a slightly more coupe-like option. We've been behind the wheel to find out what it's like.

What's new?

the still-quite-sleek-looking e-tron. But of course, there's a hugely impressive electric powertrain pushing the whole affair box takes around 14 hours.

relatively subdued shade of silver, turned heads wherever it went. That could be falls slightly behind the regular car's. tric powertrain pushing the whole affair onwards - which we'll get to in a little more detail shortly – as well as a whole host of technological innovations which combine to make the e-tron feel exceptionally cutting-edge.

every angle.

What's under the bonnet?

the most powerful version. There is an full bursts of acceleration delivering genu-

set-up – one on each axle – which when touch unsettled by larger bumps. combined with a 96kWh battery pack, proreaching 60mph from a dead stop in under but your forward view is excellent. 6.5 seconds, while an extra 'boost' mode selectable by putting the gear selector in **How does it look?** 'S' – shaves a second off that time.

Audi claims a total combined range of



The greatest change here is the styling, which brings a more raked roofline to

What's it like to drive?

little difficult – but the car's large propor- square proportions. tions and imposing nature will make it feel quite familiar to anyone used to driving looks particularly striking, while the new

is impressively silent, with little whine the sun sets. from the motors nor wind or tyre noise. The launch-spec e-tron models come in 55 quattro flavour which is, essentially, from EVs, is immediate and sharp, with even more focused 'S' version set to arrive inely impressive pace for such a large car. later, but this is definitely seen as a sepa- The steering does lack any real feel but a high-tech powertrain with an equally Door Mirrors - a £1,095 option on other trim For now, this 55 model uses a twin motor isn't too bad either - though it does get a tling with features and a variety of screens mirrors in favour of cameras which then

As a result of that more sloped roofline space-age. However, Audi hasn't forgotten on either side of the cabin. They take some duce 402bhp and an impressive 664Nm visibility out of the back of the car is some- the basics, with a good degree of space for getting used to and, though working well of torque. All-wheel-drive, it's capable of what diminished over the standard car, those sitting in both the front and back of in the rain, might not be worth the outlay

due to the alien lack of engine noise, but we'd put some of the attention down to the What's the spec like?

However, it doesn't look so out-there that Get behind the wheel of the e-tron Sport- those who like their EVs a little more un-According to Audi, the Sportback of-back and, initially at least, you could be sat derstated will be put off. Certainly, you cation, which is a trim level at the very top fers a slightly 'bolder' take on the regu- in any other Audi SUV. The bonnet feels can see the linkage between the e-tron of those available with the e-tron Sport lar e-tron's design, which is why it's been slightly more scalloped, that's for sure - and the rest of the Audi line-up of SUVs back. As a result, it was kitted out with all formed to look as striking as possible from and this can make judging your corners a through its large grille and relatively manner of bells and whistles - while a host

Waft away and the electric powertrain give it a particularly striking 'face' when seen in cars like the A6 and A7 is intuitive

What's it like inside?

It's fair to say that Audi has matched it's solid and well weighted, while the ride technological interior. It's practically bris-levels – which replaces the traditional door help to make the cabin feel particularly transmit a picture to small screens placed the car. There are plenty of storage areas They're a clever technological feature and, too, with a huge central 'bin' proving a for those with a keen want for the very latest very useful addition.

The Sportback is exceptionally practical too. Its long wheelbase means you get a Verdict 241 miles, while thanks to 150kW charging Sleek, dynamic and imposing, the e-tron 615-litre boot which can be increased to 1,665 capacity, an 80% top-up can be achieved in Sportback sure is a car which likes to litres by folding the rear seats down. Though around half an hour. Fully replenishing a make an entrance. Even our test car, in a that first figure is slightly more than you get

of optional extras boosted the car's price

digital LED matrix headlights up front ment system - which is the same as that and responsive while being well positioned for use on the move. The Digital Cockpit which we've seen become a regular feature in Audi models – remains clear and a great alternative to traditional dials.

Our test car also came with clever Virtual kit, they'll likely be a ticked options box.

The e-tron Sportback might be the latest



■The interior is bristling with features but still maintains a good degree of space



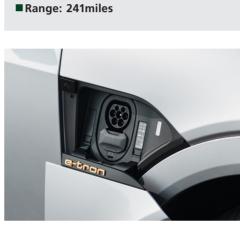
■There are a variety of screens to make the cabin feel 'space-age'

Motoring New Car Road Test

new take on their electric SUV

Fast facts

- Model: Audi e-tron Sportback
- ■Base price: £69,850
- Model as tested: e-tron Sportback 55 **Quattro Vorsprung**
- Price: £85,050 from Jacksons Audi
- ■Engine: Dual electric motor
- ■Power: 402bhp
- ■Torque: 664Nm
- ■Max speed: 124mph
- ■0-60mph: 6.3 seconds
- ■MPG: N/A
- ■Emissions: 0g/km CO2





■Thanks to 150kW charging capacity, an 80% top-up can be achieved in around half an hour

Of course, its basis on the standard eral fit-and-finish all feel well rounded, and wish it had a little more drama, then bill.

example of Audi's niche-filling abilities, - and very good - e-tron means that it just as you would expect from an Audi the Sportback will likely be a hit. For but it's certainly an admirable and accom- has a great place from which to start, product. while the powertrain, technology and gen- For those that look at the standard e-tron the standard e-tron will more than fit the

everyone else, there's a good chance that