

From bestseller to legend

- **Stephan Reil, former Head of Technical Development at quattro GmbH: “It remains a unique feeling to have been responsible for such a high-performance car, quattro GmbH’s first RS model, and to have realized it with a small team. When twice as many units are then sold than what was originally planned, you have created an icon.”**

Ingolstadt/Neckarsulm, May 15, 2023 – One of quattro GmbH’s most important milestones is the Audi RS 4 Avant. Offered exclusively as a station wagon variant, this high-performance model based on the then Audi S4 from AUDI AG is the first complete vehicle to be entirely independently designed and put on the road by quattro GmbH. From the beginning of 2000, the Audi RS 4 Avant – advertised and sold at the time as the Audi RS 4 and as the special Audi RS 4 Sport model – became the new spearhead of the Audi A4’s B5 generation. And an absolute sales hit: instead of the planned 3,000 units to make the project profitable, just over 6,000 Audi RS 4 Avant examples find highly enthusiastic, as well as highly satisfied, buyers. The special edition RS 4 Sport features a chassis lowered by a further 10 mm, a reinforced rear axle stabilizer, perforated brake discs and sports brake pads, and a sports exhaust system. Racing bucket seats with a yellow center track and a steering wheel and shift knob covered in suede leather round out the sport package.

The Audi RS 4 Avant is a pioneer in its market segment, bringing a new dimension of power to the midsize class. As in the Audi S4, a V6 engine with a displacement of 2.7 liters, five valves per cylinder and a biturbo is under the hood. quattro GmbH makes the engine, which is already very powerful as standard, even more powerful and torquey for use in the RS 4 Avant.

In collaboration with Cosworth Technology, the cylinder head, engine block and crankshaft are redesigned in line with the higher loads. A new design, also with stronger dimensions, replaces the regular crankshaft. Larger flow-optimized intake and exhaust ports ensure lower charge exchange losses. The cross-sections of the air ducts on the intake and discharge sides are enlarged, the turbochargers are bigger, and the boost pressure is increased. In this way, the S4 engine is effectively a new powerplant. Instead of 195 kW (265 hp), it develops a maximum output of 280 kW (380 hp). The third and fourth gear ratios in the six-speed transmission are shortened. The result: the Audi RS 4 Avant completes the 0–100 km/h sprint in 4.9 seconds. The high-performance station wagon that was unique at the time in was launched, was on par with sports cars.

Production of the Audi RS 4 Avant presents quattro GmbH with entirely new challenges. The extensive modifications required for its body and powertrain are not feasible on the assembly

**The collective fuel/electric power consumption and emissions values of all models named and available on the German market can be found in the list provided at the end of this text.*

line of the tightly timed mass production of the A4. “We only had the RS 4 Avant and our subsequent vehicles built as so-called three-quarter cars at AUDI AG’s production lines during the first ten years,” explains Stephan Reil, the head of development at quattro GmbH at the time. In the case of the Audi RS 4 Avant, that meant: The new spearhead of the A4 range arrived at quattro GmbH in Neckarsulm without bumpers, sills and intercooling. Instead of its standard 255 tires and 18-inch rims, the base vehicle rolled in on narrow “rotating wheels.” For production of the vehicle base in Ingolstadt, the widened fenders for the Audi RS 4 Avant come from a supplier. In the run-up to base assembly, the standard A4 sidewall frames were also widened by three centimeters to RS 4 size in the area of the rear wheels.

“We at quattro GmbH then completed the remaining 25 percent of the production for the Audi RS 4 Avant exclusively by hand on our lifting platforms,” says Stephan Reil. This was done with 50 new assembly employees who were specifically hired for this premiere project. “It remains a unique feeling to have been responsible for such a high-performance car, quattro GmbH’s first RS model, and to have realized it with a small team. When twice as many units are then sold than what was originally planned, you have created an icon,” emphasizes Reil. During the 15 months of production of the Audi RS 4 Avant in Neckarsulm, around 25 units per day were ready to be delivered to customers. In addition to the development and production areas, quattro GmbH also established its own sales and marketing departments at the turn of the millennium.

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The Audi Group is one of the most successful manufacturers of automobiles and motorcycles in the premium and luxury segment. The brands Audi, Bentley, Lamborghini, and Ducati produce at 22 locations in 13 countries. Audi and its partners are present in more than 100 markets worldwide.

In 2022, the Audi Group delivered 1.61 million Audi vehicles, 15,174 Bentley vehicles, 9,233 Lamborghini vehicles, and 61,562 Ducati motorcycles to customers. In the 2022 fiscal year, AUDI Group achieved a total revenue of €61.8 billion and an operating profit of €7.6 billion. Worldwide, more than 87,000 people worked for the Audi Group in 2022, over 54,000 of them at AUDI AG in Germany. With its attractive brands, new models, innovative mobility offerings and groundbreaking services, the group is systematically pursuing its path toward becoming a provider of sustainable, individual, premium mobility.

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