

A Buyer's Guide to Used Audi TTs

By Larry Brickner

About ten years ago I was having dinner with two clients and their wives. Both couples had recently started their second marriage and most of the dinner conversation was sharing horror stories about their ex-mates. One woman complained "If I had known he was having a mid-life crisis, I'd have left him buy the sports car." At some point they asked about my marriage which has lasted longer than both of their first marriages combined. They asked me the secret to my longevity and I said "I bought the sports car."

The Audi TT arrived in the United States in 1999 as a 2000 Model Year (MY), and while rumors persisted over the past few years that "This is the last year", it is still for sale. Over those 20+ years there have been three major iterations. The Mk 1 covers MY 2000 to 2006. The Mk 2 covers MY 2008 to 2015 (there was not a 2007 MY sold in the US). The Mk 3 covers MY 2016 to present. In addition to styling changes, the overall performance of each generation was significantly better than the previous.

For those of you who are considering "buying the sports car", this article will provide you with some information to help you make your decision. A friend of mine recently purchased a running 2001 TT Quattro roadster with 120,000 miles on the ticker for \$500 so there are bargains to be had. (My friend is a shade tree mechanic and has already spent several hundred dollars in parts to freshen his new baby.)

For more detailed information than can be provide here, I suggest following several internet forums for a while to get a feel for these wonderful cars. The AudiWorld TT forums are presently the most active while the stickies at the top of the VW Vortex TT forums have very useful FAQs and DIY information. Happy hunting!!!

The Genesis of the TT

I was walking in downtown Amsterdam in January of 1999 when I had a "What is THAT!!!" moment. Parked on the street was an Audi with a strikingly novel design that reminded me of the old "bathtub" Porsches. Pure German Bauhaus! It was one of the first production Audi TTs. I never thought I'd see that car again since Europe had many interesting car designs that never made it to the States.

As it turned out, I was totally wrong on many fronts. The design was, in fact, started at the VW Design Center in California, not Germany. The TT coupe Concept Car was first shown at the 1995 Frankfurt Motor Show. Not surprisingly, the car has won many awards for styling and performance over the years in its many iterations. And the car did come to North America beginning in 1999 as a 2000 Model Year.



TT Concept coupe revealed at the Frankfurt Motor Show in 1995



The TT Concept roadster with its baseball interior shown at the 1995 Tokyo Auto Show

The TTS roadster Concept Car debuted a few months after Frankfurt at the Tokyo Auto Show and featured the jaw-dropping amber optic baseball interior. Note the dimpled rings of the air vents which would become a major styling cue used throughout TT production.

The original TT was based on the Volkswagen a4 platform used by the VW Golf Mk IV and the A3. This led to a popular misconception that the TT was merely a Golf with a different skin.

The Mk 1 TT comes to the USA

To introduce the TT to the United States, Audi pulled out all the stops and partnered with luxury retailer Neiman-Marcus to offer a special N-M edition TT coupe on the cover of its 1998 Christmas Catalog. It was a limited edition of 100 coupes to be delivered in 1999 as 2000MY cars. All were Nimbus gray with what was called Moccasin Red interiors which was the same leather later called Amber Optic in the baseball equipped roadsters. The N-M edition did not have the thick yellow leather baseball seat stitching however. All were front wheel drive (FWD), 4 cylinder turbo 1.8L 180 HP 173 ft-lb. engines with a manual 5 speed transmission. The N-M interior was never offered on another coupe.

For the 2000MY in the US, the TT was offered only as a 180 HP 5 speed coupe in FWD and Quattro versions. 0-60 time was 7.4 seconds and the quarter mile in 16.1 seconds. The original MSRP for the FWD version started at around \$31,000. The FWD versions were a lot of fun for the money. They had no trouble keeping up with later higher powered models on road trips. They did exhibit some mild torque-steer.

In the early years, almost all TTs were imported to the US with the Premium Package which had 17" rims, Xenon self-leveling headlights, and heated seats. A Guidance Package was offered but rarely ordered that included a CD-based navigation system and a (now virtually useless) hands-free interface to Motorola cell phones. Most folks assume the stub antenna on the rear of the Mk 1 TT is for the radio but, in fact, it is for the cell phone. The radio antennae are imbedded in the rear window as folks who tinted their rear windows with metallic tint found out when they lost reception.

For every MY of the TT, paints offered usually followed the same pattern – a red, a blue, a "special" color of the year (green in the 2000MY), and the rest were monochromatic shades from white to black which in 2000 were two blacks, a gray, and silver. In the early years it seemed like half the TTs sold in the US had Lake Silver paint.

The 2001MY brought forth a full stable of TT models and another 1.8L engine option with 225 HP and 207 ft-lbs which was always mated with a 6 speed Quattro manual tranny. In the coupe, the 225 engine reduced 0-60 to 6.3 seconds and 14.2 seconds for the quarter mile. As in the 2000MY, the coupe with the 180 HP engine could be mated with FWD or Quattro but in the newly introduced roadster the 180 HP engine was always to be FWD only (which became the first of the four TTs I was to own) or you could get the 225 Quattro. The roadster is about 150 pounds heavier than the coupe which reduced 0-60 and quarter mile times slightly.

Again, pulling out the stops, Audi bought placement rights for its new roadster in the major car chase scene in the "Mission Impossible 2" movie released in 2000. This created quite a buzz

for both the 2001 MY TT roadster and the coupe. At the time I had several people stop me to ask if my TT roadster was the same car used in the movie.

The roadster had a starting MSRP of about \$33,000 and in the bone-stock 180 HP FWD version, the top was manual. Options mirrored those offered in the coupe and, again, most roadsters imported to the US had the Premium Package. However, to the surprise of many auto experts, the incredible amber optic baseball interior of the Concept roadster was improved and offered as a \$1000 option. It is certainly the most unique and striking seating ever offered on any car. However the cost of the option, coupled with the inexplicable fact that it could only be ordered with a few select paint colors, and only on roadsters, makes this a rare find in the used TT market. My unofficial estimate is that only about 10% of Mk 1 TT roadsters have this interior.

Audi offered an expensive optional hard top for the roadster in the European market but it was not officially sold in the US. A few were imported into the US on the gray market.

The Mk 1 TT came with a compact spare tire, a rarity for sports cars. Also, for the roadster, the trunk was significantly larger for the FWD model as compared to the Quattro. For example, a FWD roadster can fit a flat tire in its trunk. For the Quattro roadster you either need to leave the trunk lid open or put the tire on the passenger seat (a tire bag was provided).

In the first years of the TT, it received numerous accolades and awards based primarily on its unique sheet metal design. The TT was recognized as a car that was fun to drive yet comfortable enough for extended trips. However, some critics pointed out that it could not compete with "true" sports cars like the Porsche (despite that it bested Tom Cruise's Porsche in MI2) that cost almost twice as much. The front-heavy balance of the TT caused understeer and the Quattro was heavily FWD biased. The critics called it a "hairstylist's car", great looks but performance on the track that did not match its looks. Audi seemed to confirm the critics' comments when they later bought the placement of a powder blue TT roadster as Reese Witherspoon's car in Legally Blond 2 in 2003.

The 2000MY and 2001MY TT had its share of new model bugs as production and parts quality issues emerged and were solved. However, this should not be a concern to someone shopping today as those issues had been resolved by warranty maintenance early in the life of the TT.

In that regard, early in the 2001 MY there was a recall of all TTs because of several European accidents at autobahn speeds. A major contributor was the clean aerodynamic lines of the TT which caused lift of the rear wheels at high speed. The recall added a fixed rear spoiler which many saw as destroying the clean lines of the car, adding electronic stability, and making suspension changes. A few owners chose to ignore the recall and thus "unspoiled" examples of the original TT design remain but are very rare.

For the 2002MY there were no significant changes. Homelink was offered for the first time in the TT as part of the Premium Package. The 180 engine went to "wideband" with an engine code change but the official Audi specs remained the same. This is the last year a 180 engine could be ordered with a manual tranny. An American Le Mans Series (ALMS) special edition coupe was offered. It had unique paint and interior colors and ALMS badging but no unique performance features. ALMS production was limited to 1000 coupes.

For the 2003 MY and beyond, all 180 TT models were FWD and mated to a 6 speed Tiptronic automatic transmission. The 225 engine also went “wideband” with an engine code change but no change to its performance specifications. Black baseball seats were added as an option on roadsters. The black baseball seats had leather stitching the same color as the seats so they did not have the visual pop of the amber baseball. It was a seldom ordered option and is extremely rare. My estimate is about 1% of roadsters have black baseball seats.

The various manual drivetrains offered on the Mk 1 have a reputation for being “bullet-proof” with many examples of 150,000+ miles without so much as a clutch change. The valve body on the Tiptronic is a weak spot with more than expected failures starting at about 70,000 miles.

In the 2004 MY Audi managed to shoehorn a normally aspirated 3.2L 6 cylinder engine into the TT, rated at 250 HP and 236 ft.-pounds. The battery was moved to the trunk to save room under the hood and add more weight to the rear for balance. As a result, TTs with the 3.2 do not have a spare tire. The 3.2 TT had a distinctive rear valence, a different front spoiler, and a larger rear spoiler in what was called an S-line package that was standard on the 3.2. The 3.2 was mated to the first-ever dual-clutch automatic transmission, DSG, and a Quattro drivetrain. There were some early reports of DSG failures but most were attributed to abuse of the DSG’s “launch feature” from a standing start. The 3.2L version of the coupe and roadster sold for about \$3,300 more than the comparable 225 version. The 3.2L did a 0-60 in 5.7 seconds in the coupe and 6.0 seconds in the roadster

There were no significant changes in the 2005 and 2006 MY. There was a Special Edition 3.2 TT coupe that was the only production TT in the US to have two-tone paint with the top being black. In 2006, a 180 TT coupe had a base MSRP of 33,990, less than a 10% increase from the original 2000MY TT.

Worldwide Mk 1 TT sales ranged from 56,800 in the 2000 Calendar Year (CY) to 12,300 in CY 2005. US sales ranged from over 12,000 in CY 2000 and CY 2001, to 2800 in CY2005. These sales numbers in the US give an exotic car feel to TT ownership since you rarely see another TT on the road. When you stop at a gas station people will come up and ask “What’s that?” In the early years a frequent complaint among TT owners was the hand and nose prints on the windows if you left the car in a parking lot.

Buying a Used Mk 1

So what do you need to look out for when buying a Mk 1 TT? The most important issue is regular service of the timing belt and all associated parts like the tensioner and water pump on the 1.8L engines. All TT engines are “zero clearance” which means if the timing belt fails, the pistons collide with the valves and you have a \$5,000+ repair. The original TT service manuals specified changing the belt and parts at 100,000 miles. However, it wasn’t the belts themselves that were failing but the tensioner and/or plastic parts in the water pump impeller were breaking off and jamming. Lawsuits were filed and won. The generally accepted recommendation for replacement is now 5 years or 60,000 miles whichever comes first. While the timing belt can be visually inspected, there is no easy means to inspect the tensioner and water pump.

The second thing to observe is the proper operation of all the dash gauges and the driver alert screen in the center of the dash. Bad gauge readings or missing pixels in the alert display are a

common problem. A properly operating TT will have the temperature gauge at dead center when warmed up. There are multiple sources for rebuilding your dash to operate as new for a rebuild price a few hundred dollars plus the labor for removal and re-installation.

The third significant item is the glove box latch, particularly on early Mk 1s. Audi does not sell the glove box latch separately and the last time I checked on the price of a new glove box from Audi it was \$1000! There are work-around solutions to a broken latch on the internet.

Two common problems with the roadster are a false indicator that the top is not latched which can be fixed by adjusting the latch relay above the driver's head. The second is that the glass windscreen does not work due to a broken belt and/or gears. In my opinion it's not worth repairing the windscreen unless you are a skilled DIY mechanic with idle time.

As in most other 15+ year old cars you can expect to freshen items like water and vacuum hoses, suspensions, etc.

The Mk 1 TT has, by far, the widest support for tuning and customization. Virtually every tuner wanted their product on this classic car and the Mk 1 had the largest US sales base of all the TT models.

Many folks ask if the Mk 1 TT will be a valuable collectable someday. Results from classic auto auctions to date say "no". While some TTs are scarce, like the Neiman-Marcus edition, lots of people must want one badly to make it valuable. In my opinion, the TTs with the highest potential of appreciating are the Neiman-Marcus edition although the 180 FWD drive train is a significant negative factor. An "unspoiled" early TT might be of interest, or a roadster with the amber baseball interior.

What would I recommend? Given their age, there is not a lot of cost difference between models today. I think the 225 Quattro is the sweet spot for the Mk 1. It has lots of power, a stout manual drive train that purist love, has lots of tuning and customizing support, and has a compact spare tire. If you lust for a roadster and need a lot of trunk room for trips, consider the 2002 180. It was the last year for the stout manual tranny 180 roadster and was the first year for Homelink. Folks who have the 3.2L engine love it. It has a unique sound and is normally aspirated so there is not even a hint of turbo lag. Its automatic DSG tranny has weathered well but it is a tight fit working on the engine.

Owning a TT is a social experience

It seemed like as soon as the first TT was sold, local TT clubs sprouted up everywhere. Everyone wanted to meet driving enthusiasts that were as smart as they were in selecting this strikingly different sports car. They fostered regular gatherings and day-trips. These, in turn, spawned TT West and TT East events that continue today which are annual week-long 800 to 1,000 mile drives over the most beautiful and challenging roads in the United States.

The Mk 2 TT arrives in the 2008MY

While the rest of the world enjoyed the first year of the Mk 2 in 2007, delays caused by required Federal and State new vehicle testing delayed the debut of the Mk 2 in the US until the 2008 MY. There was significant styling change in the sheet metal and many purists felt it strayed too far from the original design. It is based on the Volkswagen a5 chassis that was also used by the Mk 2 A3 and the Mk 5 and 6 VW Golf.

When compared to the Mk 1 TT the Mk 2 is 5.4" longer, 3.1" wider, about 1.5" wider track, and has a 1.6" longer wheelbase. Serious weight watching allowed Audi to add this extra size while shedding almost 200 pounds compared to the comparable Mk 1 weight. Handling was improved by a better Quattro system, a much stiffer frame, and a redesigned suspension. A speed-activated spoiler replaced the fixed spoiler of the Mk 1.

For the 2008 MY the least expensive Mk 2 coupe was offered with a 2L 4 cylinder turbo engine that delivered 200 HP from 5100 to 6000 rpm and 207 ft-lb from 1800-5000 rpm. 2008 MY 2L engines were FWD-only paired to a dual clutch S-tronic automatic transmission. For the coupe 0-60 took 6.1 seconds. The ¼ mile was clocked at 14.8 seconds. EPA mileage estimates were 23/31mpg. The base MSRP was \$34,800.

The other drivetrain option was the 3.2L 6 cylinder engine used in the Mk 1 which produced 250 HP at 6100 rpm and 236 ft-lb from 2500 to 3000 rpm. As in the Mk 1, the 3.2L engine was Quattro-only with a choice of a 6 speed manual tranny standard and S-tronic optional. The manual gearbox was seldom ordered and is very difficult to find today. The coupe went from 0-60 mph in 5.3 seconds for the S-tronic and 5.5 seconds for the manual. ¼ mile times were 14.1 seconds for S-tronic and 14.3 for manual. EPA mileage estimates were 18/24 mpg for the S-tronic and 17/24 for the manual. The \$41.5K base MSRP included heated power seats. The 3.2 engine added about 150 pounds on the nose of the car for automatic, giving it more understeer than the 2.0. The manual tranny reduced that added weight by about 35 pounds.

For the 2L roadster, 0-60 took 6.3 seconds and the ¼ mile in 14.9 seconds. The bone stock roadster had a manual top at a base price of \$36,800. For the 3.2L roadster, 0-60 took 5.6 seconds for the S-tronic and 5.8 for the manual. A power top was standard on the 3.2L for the \$44,500 base price.

Options offered included mag ride, DVD-based navigation, 18" rims, Bose 255W stereo, Xenon lights, iPod interface, parking system, CD changer, Bluetooth telephone interface, Homelink, run flat tires, heated seats, and power seats. An S-line option included interior and exterior trim plus 19" rims. For roadsters additional options were a trunk load-through to the car interior for long items, baseball seats, and a power top. Unfortunately, the baseball seats in the Mk 2 were a poor imitation of that offered in the Mk 1. The leather was a pedestrian brown with matching brown stitching.

No Mk 2 came with a compact spare or jack. You were provided with an air pump, a canister of "goo", and roadside service if that failed. This caused a lot of backlash from the TT community and the compact spare returned in the Mk 3. If you are uncomfortable with the "pump and goo"

or run flats, the compact spare from a Mk 3 TT will work and other options are discussed in the Mk 2 TT forums.

The Mk 2 did not sell as well as expected. The gearing of the 2L model was such that it tended to lug while underway and acceleration felt inferior to the Mk 1 225 Quattro. Also, the cost of stepping up to a Quattro TT was now \$6,650 – almost doubles the jump from a Mk 1 180 FWD to a 225 Quattro. Thus many Mk 1 225 Quattro owners refused to upgrade to the Mk 2. US sales in CY 2007 and CY 2008 were only about 4,400 and decreased to 1,500 by 2010.

For the 2009 MY, Quattro became an option for the 2L engine. For the 3.2L TT, Xenon lights, Homelink, and cell phone Bluetooth became standard equipment.

The big news for the 2009 MY was the introduction of the first TTS. It had a 2L engine that produced 265 HP at 6000 rpm and 258 ft-lb at 2500 to 5000 rpm. On the negative side, it had a more pronounced turbo lag than the base TT 2L engine. It used the dual clutch S-Tronic automatic with Quattro. Standard equipment included mag ride, 245/40/18 tires, xenon headlights with LED running lights, painted brake calipers, and power seats with two tone Nappa leather. Its suspension was lowered 10mm compared to the base TT. It went from 0-60 in 4.9 seconds for the coupe and 5.1 for the roadster, with a ¼ mile of 13.5 seconds for the coupe and 13.7 seconds for the roadster. At a base MSRP of \$45,500 it was the TT of choice over the base TT with the 3.2.

For the 2010 MY, all TTs were now Quattro. The 3.2 engine in the base TT was dropped, thanks to the introduction of the TTS in 2009. A power top became standard on all roadsters. Bluetooth and Homelink became standard on all models. The navigation option now offered real time traffic in its routing. Auto-dimming rear view mirror and rain sensor wipers were added to the option list.

There was a major refresh of the TT for the 2011 MY that had a dramatic impact on the base 2L TT. A new direct injection 2 L engine was used with Audi advertising modest horsepower improvement to 211 HP from 4300 to 6000 rpm but a major increase in torque to 258 ft-lb between 1600 to 4200 rpm. Furthermore, dynamometer data from tuners showed that the engine was undersped by Audi and produced 220 HP and 275 ft-lb over a significant rpm range. 0-60 times were 5.3 seconds for the coupe and 5.6 seconds for the roadster with the ¼ mile in 14.1 seconds for the coupe and 14.3 seconds for the roadster. It drove like a totally different car than prior MY base TTs. Note that the acceleration performance numbers are identical to the departed 3.2L model but with better handling since this model was about 150 pounds lighter on the nose than the 3.2. It also got better gas mileage than the 3.2. (Which is why I selected a 2011 roadster as my third TT.)

Also, the front fascia was re-designed and many options in prior years now became standard equipment including xenon headlights, power seats, LED running lights, split dual tail pipes, rain sensor wipers, and an auto-dimming rear view mirror. Of the base Mk 2 TT models, the 2011+ MY are the best bang for the buck.

For the TTS refresh, the front fascia was re-designed. In addition to the new standard equipment identified above for the base TT that also carried over to the TTS, 19" rims were now standard equipment on the TTS.

The refresh boosted total TT sales in the US to about 2,200 a year. As a point of reference, 2,200 cars a year meant that the average dealer in the US sold less than one TT a month so the “exotic” factor of driving an exclusive car remained.

For the 2012 MY there were no significant changes to the TT and TTS. However, the first TTRS was introduced - the ultimate Mk 2 TT experience. According to Car and Driver Lightning Lap (<http://www.caranddriver.com/features...o-2013-page-10>) the TTRS was comparable on a track to the V8 R8, and faster than the Cayman S, Carrera S, and 911 Turbo of that era. The TT had finally produced an unarguable kick-butt sports car! In addition to its incredible performance, it is still tame enough to use as a daily driver. With a base price of only \$56,850 it was hailed by many auto magazines as one of the best bang-for-the-buck sports cars ever produced.

The TTRS used a 2.5L 5 cylinder engine mated to a manual 6 speed tranny. The engine produced an amazing 360 HP from 5500 to 6700 rpm and 343 Ft-Lb of torque from 1650 to 5400 rpm giving 0-60 times of 4.1 seconds. The TTRS had mag ride, a selectable sport mode that changed throttle response and exhaust, unique front fascia and body trim, 19” rims, painted calipers, xenon headlights and LED running lights, fixed spoiler and a driver information system with lap timer. EPA mpg was 18/25. TTRS options included a retractable spoiler, heated seats, sport exhaust and adaptive headlights. Available in the US only as a coupe, it is the only car I have driven that made me seriously consider giving up my roadster.

For the 2013 MY there were no significant changes to the TTRS. The 2013 MY was the last year of Mk 2 TTRS production which was also the last manual transmission TT sold in the US.

For the 2013MY base 2L TT, a new S-line competition package option was offered which included a competition suspension that lowered the car 10mm. For the TTS, black and brown baseball seats were offered as options on coupes and roadsters.

The 2014 and 2015 MY had limited production with all models being built in CY2013 because the factory was re-tooled for the Mk 3 at the start of CY2014. Audi did not want to have another missing year of the TT in the US like the transition from Mk 1 to Mk 2 which missed the 2007 MY. So the last TTs off the line in CY 2013 were designated as 2015 MY.

The 2014 MY eliminated the different trim lines (like Premium Plus and Prestige) for the TT and TTS and lots of former options became standard equipment. For the TT and TTS this meant the Bose stereo was standard, as was the S-line exterior, 12 way power seats, and enhanced leather package. The S-line Competition package option for the base TT now included gray painted brake calipers and a fixed rear spoiler was a new option for the TT and TTS.

The 2015 MY base TT had a new optional S-line Plus carbon package that included a leather covered roll bar on the roadster. By the 2015 MY the MSRP of a base TT coupe had ballooned to \$40,350, with the TTS coupe MSRP at \$48,700. Even considering the addition of Quattro and several options, the price increase over the life of the Mk 2 was substantial which effected sales volume. For the 2015 MY The TTS had a new optional Competition package (cosmetic except for fixed spoiler) limited to 500 cars which came with a numbered badge. Also the 2015 MY was the last year a TTS roadster was sold in the US.

Buying a used Mk 2

For the base TT, clearly you would prefer a 2011 MY or newer if you can afford it. The Mk 2 TTRS has held its resale value well and are in limited supply but well worth the investment of fun per \$. (My personal favorite TTRS has red paint with red accents on black rims and red stitching on the black interior.) All TTRS came with a black interior. Front brake noise is a common issue.

The 2L TT seems to have avoided most of the problems associated with 2L engines on earlier Audis. Be advised that the 2008 and early 2009 MY 2L TT has a timing belt whereas later years have a chain. While Audi recommends changing the belt at 110,000 miles, I would not bet a \$5,000 repair on a 12 year old piece of rubber and would replace the timing belt on those MYs immediately. All Mk 2 TTS also have a timing belt.

For the 2L TT with a timing chain it is important that the oil be serviced at least every 10,000 miles with the proper grade oil. Timing chain failures have occurred when service specs were not followed and sludge developed which plugged the oiling ports to the timing chain.

For all Mk 2 TTs, corrosion of the rear lights due to grounding issues is a common problem. If one side of the rear lights and/or brake lights seems brighter than the other, there is a corrosion problem. The solution could be as simple as cleaning the light assembly connectors but in some instances the connector actually melts and the entire assembly has to be replaced.

For base TTs with the mag ride option, and all TTS and TTRS models, leakage of the mag ride shocks is a common problem that must be checked before you buy. The leakage seems to start due to age rather than miles. Replacing all 4 mag ride shocks costs about \$3,000 at an indy shop which is why many are switching over to fixed suspensions.

For TT and TTS roadsters, flap motor faults are a common problem. The flap motor assembly uses optical view ports to determine proper positioning of the top. These ports get covered with grease and debris over time and send an alert that the top is not secured when it actually is. The problem can be solved by removing the motors and cleaning the ports but Audi Service folks just replace the motors. In most cases, the alert is merely a nuisance that is often cleared by partially raising the top and then lowering it again.

Also keep in mind that the parts in the 2014 and 2015 MY TTs are 1-2 years older than one would expect since they were actually built in CY2013. This would affect age-related parts like belts and hoses.

Tuning and customization support for the Mk 2 is not as widespread as the Mk 1 TT. Mk 2 TT sales in the US were very small compared to the Mk 1 and 4 different engines were offered.

The Mk 3 TT – The best of the breed

The Mk 3 TT uses Volkswagen's new modular MQB chassis platform. It arrived in the US mid CY2015 as a 2016 MY. When placed side by side with the Mk 2 they appear nearly identical from most viewing angles. In fact, the exterior dimensions are within an inch of each other. Wheelbase on the Mk 3 is 1.5" longer. Again, Audi did some serious weight reduction, trimming about 110 pounds from the comparable Mk 2. Handling was improved by Quattro improvement,

a stiffer frame, a redesigned suspension, and torque-vector steering. Yet it produces the smoothest cruising ride of any TT.

Electronics received major upgrades with the first Virtual Dashboard in a production car which allows drivers to customize what they see and places information such as maps, etc. in front of you rather than on an auxiliary side screen used in other cars. Safety items such as blind-side assist, front and rear proximity sensors, a back-up camera (that is displayed in the Virtual Dash) are available and eventually became standard equipment. The driver can select operating modes that include comfort, sport, and automatic that effect the performance of the TT. Some car magazine reviewers lamented that other electronic features like adaptive cruise control and seat position memory were not included.

The base TT 2L engine again had a modest horsepower improvement to 220 HP and the same 258 ft-lb of torque. While the 0-60 time remains the same as the Mk 2, the Mk 3 feels noticeably more agile. The TTS received a significant upgrade to its 2L engine, now producing 292 HP and 280 ft-lb of torque with 0-60 times for the coupe of 4.6 seconds. Both engines are mated to a six speed S-Tronic automatic transmission with Quattro.

The various TT models can be ordered with 18", 19", or 20" rims. The consensus is that 19" rims are the sweet spot between handling and ride comfort. Base MSRP was \$42,900 for the TT coupe and \$51,900 for the TTS coupe which was a substantial jump from Mk 2 prices.

There was little change for the 2017 MY with both the TT and TTS getting automatic folding side mirrors. Probably most important to technology users is that Apple CarPlay/Android Auto was added for the first time to the optional Technology Package with the information displayed on the Virtual Dashboard. Note that you can find Audi documentation on the internet that states that a CarPlay/Auto retrofit can be bought for 2016MY TTs that already have the Technology Package but very few dealers seem to be able to actually order and install it.

For the 2017 MY the black optic package for TT includes a black Singleframe® grille surround, black exterior mirror housings and unique 19" 5-double spoke titanium finish wheels. For TTS the black optic package also adds a black rear diffuser and unique 20" 5-V-spoke design titanium finish wheels. (My 2017 TT has the black optic package. I really like the 19" rims of this package and the ride is smoother than the 18" rims on my prior Mk 2)

The biggest news for the 2018MY was the Mk 3 TTRS. The Mk 2 TTRS was a beast and the Mk 3 is even better. Purists lament that it is only available with the 7 speed automatic S-tronic dual clutch transmission with Quattro. Horsepower is now 400 and torque is 354 ft-lb which results in a 0-60 of 3.6 seconds! ("Car & Driver" got 3.2 seconds in their testing.) Like the TTS, the TTRS comes with a mag ride suspension. A fixed sport suspension is optional but many reviewers believed it was too stiff for use as a daily driver. A Dynamic Package (\$6,000) was offered primarily for track use that included a carbon-fiber engine cover, OLED taillights, tire pressure monitoring with temperature sensors, the fixed sport suspension, carbon-ceramic front brakes, and an unrestricted top speed of 174 mph. Note also that there were some early reports of the ceramic brakes being virtually destroyed after a day on a track. This rarely selected Package is no longer offered on the TTRS. MSRP of the 2018 TTRS was \$64,900.

The 2019 MY received a refresh that included revised fascia on all models. Also some of the engine specifications changed due to the way Audi reports these numbers, not due to engine changes. The S-tronic in all models became a seven speed. The TT got an optional S line Competition Package with Aluminum S line door sills, 3-spoke S line flat bottom steering wheel, and 19" Audi Sport high-gloss anthracite wheels. A new Competition Package for the TTS included carbon fiber interior trim, leather sport seats, 20-inch black wheels, black exterior trim and red brake calipers. All TTs got an Audi phone box that includes wireless charging and signal booster. Finally, automatic engine start-stop was implemented for the 2019 MY.

A 2019 MY 20th Anniversary Edition was offered in both a coupe and roadster in either Aviator Gray pearl effect or Nimbus Gray metallic and limited to 40 roadsters and 40 coupes in the US. All models included a nice looking moccasin brown Fine Nappa leather seats with yellow contrast stitching that provided more visual pop than the Mk 2 baseball but still not as good as the original Mk 1. Also included in the \$4500 package are 19" gunmetal rims, OLED taillights, and "20 Years of TT" badging. My only quibble with the package is that one of the paints offered should have been Lake Silver which was so dominant in early Mk 1 production.

There were no significant changes to the 2020 MY TTs. For the 2021 MY most options are now standard equipment. These include: S sport seats in Fine Nappa leather, Audi smartphone interface, MMI Navigation plus, Audi Connect, Audi side assist, and a Bang & Olufsen sound system. Interiors of the TT and TTS now feature extended leather interior elements as standard. The TT roadster neck-level heating is now standard equipment. The TTS got 20-inch wheels as standard equipment. The optional Black optic package of the TTS now includes red brake calipers. It is rumored that this is the last year of the TT in the US but that rumor has surfaced annually for several years now.

Mk 3 TT sales in the US were 3,000 in 2016 and quickly shrunk to annual sales of about 1,300 before the Pandemic hit which is about 1 TT per dealer every 2 months.

Which one to buy? If money is no object, the TTRS is the obvious choice. Make sure you test drive it thoroughly if you are considering the fixed sport suspension option. I would avoid the Dynamic Package on a used TTRS even if I were not tracking the car since replacing the ceramic brakes is very expensive. Brembo, who designed the brakes, does not sell replacement brake parts. You can only get them from Audi. The base TT and TTS provide a lot of thrills for the \$. If you are married to a cell phone, don't consider the 2016 MY and find a newer version that has the Tech Package. If you are considering 20" rims, do a thorough test drive beforehand and be prepared for pot-hole issues in the winter. The jury is out on the reliability of mag ride shocks on the Mk 3 since not enough time has elapsed to see if the Mk 2 issues are repeated.

If you are a buyer of recent model used cars, please consider that most new car leases are for three years and off-lease cars are a major supplier to the late-model used car market, particularly Certified Pre-Owned. Therefore there will be a major drop in the supply of recent model used cars in the Spring of 2023, along with a likely increase in used car prices, due to the near shut-down of auto sales/leases in the US at the start of the Pandemic in Spring of 2020.

Note: The information and opinions expressed herein are the author's alone and are based on Audi published information and years of reading posts expressed on various TT internet forums.