

# Audi Q7



By Godfrey Castle, photos by Mark Samuel.

*If ever there was an Audi suited to towing caravans or boats, it must be the all-wheel-drive Q7!*

**F**or us at *Caravan and Outdoor Life* magazine and those Audi owners who constantly request Audi tow tests, the Q7 represents something of a breakthrough as it is the first Audi that we have managed to get for tow testing in decades.

**"capable of towing any of the Cunard line of luxury ships"**

## As a towcar

Imagine 500 N.m of engine torque at only 1 750 rpm and 171 kW at 4 000 rpm at the beck and call of your accelerator pedal, and all this turbo-charged performance coupled with fuel-sipping diesel economy.

Although the Q in Q7 stands for Quattro, this 3-litre should be capable of towing any of the Cunard line of luxury ships containing the word 'Queen'. However, before the

guys at Audi start breaking out in a sweat, their saving grace is that the Q7 would be restricted by law to its Tare weight, which is a hefty 2 260 kg. It has a substantial weight for a family car – it's heavier than the Ford Territory ST at 2 085 kg and the Toyota Fortuna at 1 895 kg.

Audi gives this vehicle a maximum tow rating of 3 500 kg and a maximum drawbar load of 140 kg, both very generous weights and



With significant power underfoot, the Q7 easily towed the Gypsy Rascal through the country gravel roads.



at higher speeds as wind pressure becomes too great, however in this case this was probably due to the fact that the engine produces maximum kilowatts at 4 000 rpm.

Brakes were average, 3.35 seconds from 100 km/h to standstill, but one could do this with hands off the steering wheel if need be, as the Audi's braking system takes full control in providing maximum braking forces for straight line stopping. The fuel consumption at a steady 100 km/h was 13.3 l/100 km.

Could you tow a bigger caravan? Yes, very much so, and we would suggest up to 1 490 kg, which would be a Jurgens Classique, so as to retain that solid- as-a-rock stability that the Audi Q7 exudes.

### Some features

One particular feature I liked was the TV video camera built into the rear of the car. It allows you to reverse up to the caravan, and displays in full colour on a screen on the dashboard your intended path and your distance away from objects - you can judge quite precisely how close you are to the caravan coupling.

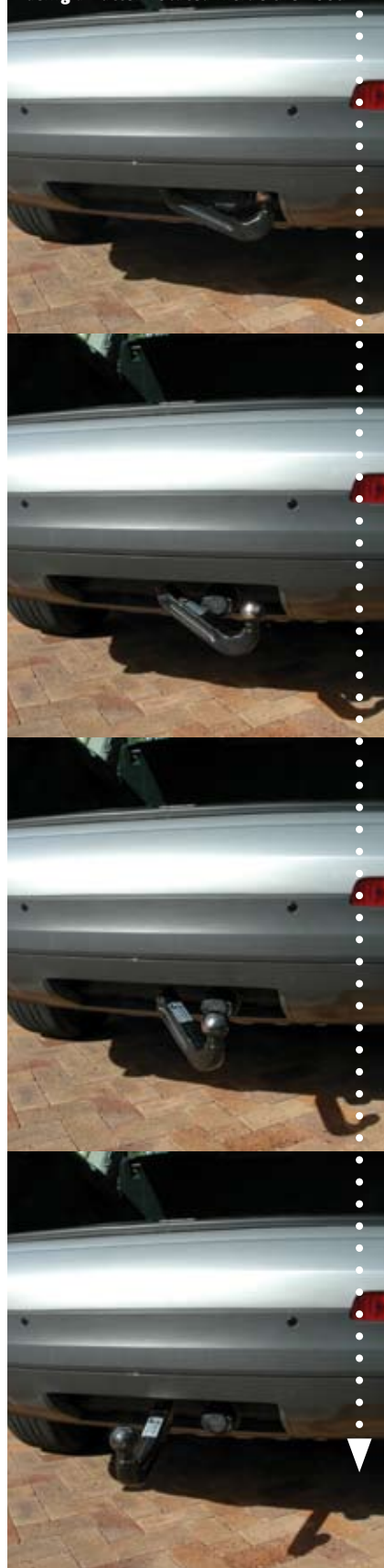
In spite of its immense size, the all-round visibility from within the vehicle is excellent. The windows on all the doors are very large, as are the side mirrors, and not once did I feel as though there were significant blind spots.

Seats are comfortable, and if you're an electronics fundi, the on-board control-centre in the middle of the dash can keep you entertained for hours. From here you control the ride-height of the vehicle, the optional navigation system, the sound system, and various other systems too numerous to list.

Separate air-conditioning controls for the second row of seats means passengers won't keep asking you to make adjustments from the front. This part of the cabin also features extra air-vents, keeping everyone in the vehicle cool and happy.

This is a big vehicle, and probably won't suit someone wanting a car you can parallel park in a jiffy. On the other hand it'll tow most caravans or off-road trailers without so much as breaking a sweat.

The towbar is extended electronically using a button located inside the boot.



well over our legal limits, but it's somewhat satisfying to know that this vehicle has been engineered with towing heavy weights in mind.

So perhaps the Q7 needs all that engine power to lug its generously proportioned body around? With new, large, heavy caravans in short supply, we hitched up our Gypsy Rascal that weighs in at 1 100 kg and set off for a weekend in the country to get to know this vehicle better.

### " it'll tow most caravans without so much as breaking a sweat"

Some towing statistics: Our standard hill climb was not as fast as we expected: 1 minute 29 seconds from the bottom to the top of the Ou Kaapse Weg mountain pass. However, on the flat it returned quick acceleration time of 5.33 seconds from standstill to 60 km/h and 13.3 from standstill to 100 km/h. Not unexpectedly we found that we could easily reach a top towing speed of 150 km/h over a set distance and this combination felt as solid as a rock at this speed.

For overtaking purposes it would take only 5.47 seconds from 80 to 100 km/h and 6.13 seconds from 100 to 120 km/h. As you know it becomes more difficult to accelerate quickly