

AUDI DRIVERS



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NILESb Ram-rattan's passion for Audis began before he was old enough to drive, when his uncle had a 1983 Audi 100 CC. Nilesb decided then that when he bought his first car it would have to be an Audi. What he acquired at the age of 17 was a 1.8-litre base model 100, which he bought as a write-off and repaired himself.

Eleven years later he is a computing and IT consultant, and he now owns a trio of Audis to make any enthusiast envious: an S2 Coupé, an S4 Saloon and an A4 Avant 2.5 TDI quattro.

Nilesb's father, a teacher who came from British Guyana, bought and sold cars and Nilesb remembers "helping" his father work on a Morris Oxford when he was only two years old. Later, before beginning his career with an insurance company, he completed an apprenticeship in panel-beating, good preparation for when he needed to repair not only that first Audi 100 but also his second car, a B-reg 200 Turbo quattro, which he bought as a recovered but damaged stolen car. He was 19 years old and the insurance cost almost as much as the £2,000 he paid for the car.

After repair, it was a fantastic car. It handled superbly on the

slippery lanes near his home at Bristol and his friends with "hot" hatchbacks were jealous because they couldn't keep up with the Audi.

In two years he covered 30,000 miles in the 200 Turbo quattro but then the insurance became prohibitive and he had to make do with lesser cars for a couple of years until he was 25.

Still keen on the 200, he spotted an advertisement for a 1986 200 Turbo and discovered that it had a prototype V8 bodysell with round rear wheel arches, possibly one of only four made.

HE bought his present J-reg S2 Coupé in 1996, when it had done 45,000 miles. After repairing the scratched Emerald green paintwork and fitting RS2 wheels, he took it to a local tuning firm to be re-chipped. This was a disaster. Nine months of poor performance culminated in a wrecked engine because the cambelt pulley on the crankshaft had not been tightened. After legal action, Nilesb went to Kim Collins, who helped him rebuild the engine with a gasflowed head, and the car is now perfect.

In 1998, he ordered an S4, in Nogaro blue with every available extra except the ski bag, from Motorworld, the Audi Centre

closest to his present home in Oxfordshire. As his IT consultancy work involved travelling all round the country, he decided that he also needed a more economical car so, in December 1998, he bought an Azure blue A4 Avant 2.5 TDI quattro ex-demonstrator from Motorworld.

The A4 and S4 both have MTM remapped ECUs, supplied by Kim Collins, the 2.5 TDI uprated from 150 to 180bhp and the S4 now with 306bhp.

Nilesb says he is good at finding faults in cars but it is hard to find many in Audis. The A4 did develop one — it began pulling to the left when accelerating. This was cured by replacing the bushes in the four-link front suspension. The S4's only problem was when the rubber seal came away from the bonnet and fell into the fan, both replaced under warranty.

The S4 is obviously the fastest of the trio and he said it was ideal when he and his partner, Kay, went to visit friends in Switzerland, a journey that took only 10 hours, but he prefers the seating position in the S2 because headroom in the S4 is restricted by the sunroof.

Kay, who is shorter, finds the S4 easier to drive — its performance is more user-friendly than the S2's.

NILESb's favourite, perhaps surprisingly, is the A4 Avant 2.5 TDI quattro, his everyday car which has already covered 30,000 miles. He prefers the more supple seats in the A4 and it also has the advantage of doing 45mpg, whereas the S4 only does about 20mpg, "if you're lucky".

He intends to keep the A4 Avant "indefinitely" but might swop the S2 and S4 for an RS4. He might not need two Avants, and even more power, but one senses that, as a lover of Audis, his life will not be complete until he has owned an RS4.

**S2 Coupé,
A6 Avant 2.5
TDI quattro
and S4
Saloon.**

