



2009 MTM AUDI S3

HATCH JOB

MTM BRINGS US THE S3 WHEN AUDI WON'T

BY NATALIE NEFF

■ BY THIS TIME NEXT YEAR, 10, MAYBE 15, of the most eager Audiophiles in America will count themselves among the luckiest folks alive. The rest of the world will yawn at their good fortune, if it notices at all.

Those lucky few will be the sole owners of Audi S3s in the United States, but because Audi refuses to export its hotted-up hatch to our shores, buyers instead will have MTM to thank.

German tuner MTM starts with your basic \$32,000 S-Line-equipped A3, complete with 2.0-liter turbocharged and direct-injection inline-four mated to the sharp-shifting S-Tronic transmission and quattro all-wheel drive. It then adds factory S3 front and rear bumpers, side skirts and exterior mirrors. The look is tight and clearly not an aftermarket glue-on parts job.

From there, the A3 conversion gets original S3 front brakes, 13.6-inch ventilated discs in place of the A3's stock 12.3-inchers. Unique 19-inch MTM-designed nine-spoke wheels sit at the corners, wrapped in sticky 235/35R Pirelli P Zeros, while an MTM lowering kit finishes off the look, lowering the springs by an inch and completely filling the wheel wells.

The power end of things is addressed with a turbo-back exhaust system of MTM's own design, the engine exhaling

through 2.75-inch stainless steel to twin pipes out back, as well as proprietary chip tuning. The 2.0-liter's original 200 hp jumps to a full 272 hp.

When you stomp on the throttle, there is a bit of turbo lag at the bottom end of the tachometer, but boost builds quickly, and the car launches in rocketlike response, pulling nonstop to its 7,200-rpm redline, with the dual-clutch gearbox cracking off crisp, instant shifts.

Hustle hard around the turns, and the car responds, sticking like mad to the asphalt, but the ride never feels the least bit harsh.

In fact, it maintains all the composure of a standard A3 when subjected to more sedate commutes, but any time the road opens up, the temptation to mash the gas is quickly rewarded.

With all of that power and grip on tap, we would prefer more high-performing buckets. The light bolstering of the A3's stock seats didn't hold up to the increased

cornering ability of this car. Of course, sourcing the S3's more sport-oriented seats would only add to the car's already monstrous tab, as prices for the MTM Audi S3 start at—*EEK!*—\$55,000. Of course, that's roughly what the factory ride would cost you in Germany.

Those lucky few won't even blink.

Find out more at www.mtm-online.de. 🗺

2009 MTM Audi S3

ON SALE: Now

BASE PRICE:
\$55,000

DRIVETRAIN: 2.0-liter, 272-hp, 274-lb-ft turbocharged I4; AWD, six-speed sequential manual

CURB WEIGHT:
3,300 lb (est)

0-60 MPH:
5.6 sec (est)

FUEL ECONOMY (AW): 19.5 mpg