

AUTOMOTIVE

Audi expands racing-inspired sport brand to US market

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2018 Audi RS5 Coupe

By STAFF REPORTS

German automaker Audi is giving U.S. consumers greater access to its motorsport-inspired collection, with eight new Audi Sport model launches planned for the market in the near future.

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Audi Sport worldwide saw 18 percent sales growth last year, but the selection in the U.S. was previously limited compared to markets such as Europe. At the New York International Auto Show on April 12, Audi officially launched its sport brand in the U.S., bringing a greater variety of its racing-influenced vehicles to U.S. consumers.

Delivering on demand

In a presentation to launch the Audi Sport brand in the U.S., Audi of America president Scott Keogh said that it was the right time to bring these vehicles to the market. The executive had repeatedly heard requests regarding why the sport models were not available in the U.S.

Audi has a \$12 billion business in America. The brand has built a reputation through positive ratings by third-party reviewers Consumer Reports and J.D. Power, and it will be able to leverage its credibility established through racing to appeal further to the U.S. buyer.

Additionally, with the Audi Sport positioning, Audi is able to demand a premium pricing that is 60 percent higher. For instance, the R8 has a starting price of \$115,000 ([see story](#)).

Audi of America currently offers the sport models the RS7, R8 coupe and the R8 Spyder. Now, the brand will be launching eight new Audi Sport models over the next 12 months.

"Gone are the days of random offerings sprinkled here and there," Mr. Keogh said. "We are going to have a consistent product portfolio that's going to allow us to establish this opportunity, establish this brand, and get some real action done in the very receptive market in America."



Inside the 2018 Audi RS5 Coupe

When Audi asked its U.S. dealers to sign on, almost half were interested in selling Audi Sport vehicles. Wanting to present these pricier, technically-driven models in an appropriate environment, these dealerships will have a dedicated Audi Sport expert on staff and the cars will be showcased in a high-tech setting.

Audi Sport, which was renamed from quattro GmbH last year, dates back to the racetracks of the 1930s. Today, Audi Sport includes not just R and RS models but also products for corporate motorsports, performance parts and customer racing.

The sporting heritage also extends into lifestyle categories, with an Audi Sport collection of apparel, office supplies and miniature models of Audi Sport vehicles.

"Audi is a brand built on progress, and for us, racing has been the lab where so much of that progress has been made," Mr. Keogh said in a brand statement. "With the launch of Audi Sport in the U.S., we are excited to offer our customers even more products that benefit from the same developments and technologies first used in motorsport."

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