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*Automotive Lighting*

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# *Supernova*

Aston ups the ante with more powerful V12 in limited DBS Superleggera

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**3 8 track**  
Audi channels the past with 1980 Quattro-inspired design for sleek Q8 coupe-SUV



**6 Resurrection**  
Reborn 8 Series to face off against Benz S-Class Coupe



**9 Carbon bond**  
Aston's sold-out DBS Superleggera drops weight, gains 63kW for twin-turbo V12

**13 Speed racer**  
Porsche celebrates 70th anniversary of first sports car with retro-inspired 911 Speedster





# 8 track

Audi channels the past with 1980 Quattro-inspired design for sleek Q8 coupe-SUV



By RON HAMMERTON

**A**UDI designers have gone back to the future by channelling styling cues from the original 1980 Audi Quattro when designing the new Q8 large SUV coupe that was revealed earlier this month in China ahead of roll out in Europe in the third quarter

of this year and Australian launch in early 2019.

Sportier-looking than the related Q7, the five-seat all-wheel-drive Q8 has bulging “blisters” above the wheelarches, just like the legendary Quattro coupe that went on to dominate the world rally scene with its

breakthrough quattro all-wheel-drive system.

Audi has confirmed that the new-look “singleframe” grille with its protruding octagonal surround and egg-crate slats will become a fixture on future new members of Audi’s Q SUV family.

Design wise, the Q8 is less of a “coupe”

design than its major rivals, including the BMW X6 and Mercedes-Benz GLE Coupe, with a less extreme slope from the roof peak to the rear hatch.

However, the engineers and designers have gone to considerable trouble to differentiate the Q8 from the Q7, widening the body by





27mm, to 2000mm. The Q8 is also 62mm shorter, at 990mm, and 27mm lower, at 1710mm.

The result is an SUV that looks more planted on the road, while offering healthy interior space in a shorter package.

However, the shorter rear overhang means that a third row of seats – available on the Q7 – is not possible.

Luggage space takes a hit, down from 770 litres in the Q7 with the rear seats up, to 650

litres. With the seats down, Q8 cargo space is 1755L, compared with the Q7's 1955L.

Officially, Audi is yet to confirm the powertrain offerings, except to say that they will include a mild-hybrid addition that employs a 48-volt lithium-ion battery and alternator-starter that can feed extra power to the drivetrain to increase efficiency.

Interestingly, this hybrid system will be applied to all engines that, according to Britain's *Autocar*, will start with a pair of

3.0-litre V6s – a 210kW 50 TDI diesel and a 250kW 55 TFSI petrol – both with eight-speed automatic transmission.

A mechanical centre differential delivers the drive to all four wheels via Audi's trademark quattro system, with 60 per cent usually going to the rear wheels.

Ride height is 254mm with the conventional suspension system, but ticking the box for the optional air suspension means this ride height can be adjusted by up

to 90mm depending on the driving situation – say, high-speed highway or low-speed off-roading.

Audi has not given wheel sizes for the standard alloys – UK reports suggest 21 inch – but has disclosed that 22-inch rims will be available.

Headlights are LED, although the customer can fork out extra for the more sophisticated matrix variety that automatically control glare for oncoming traffic.



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The tail-lights are joined by an LED strip across the rear hatch.

For car owners that get hot over lights, the Q8 driver can fire up different lighting functions by using a phone app while outside the car.

The luxurious interior borrows heavily from other new-generation Audi models, including the latest A8. The all-digital instruments on a high-res 12.3-inch display can be modified to taste and function, including the sat-nav map.

Instead of a console control button, two touchscreens – a 10.1-inch unit on the dash and an 8.6-inch display lower down – are used to control various functions in similar fashion to the system in the new A8.

The lower screen operates basic functions such as the climate control, while the upper

unit controls items such as the Bang & Olufsen sound system and connectivity that includes in-car Wi-Fi. Voice control is standard.

Driver assistance systems include adaptive cruise control and, from 2019, “remote garage pilot” – a system that parks or backs out the vehicle from the garage autonomously when controlled by the MyAudi app on the driver’s phone. It is unclear if this latter function will be offered in Australia where regulations on autonomous functions are yet to be settled.

These driver assistance systems reportedly will be offered in extra-cost packs, such as Tour Assist and Emergency Assist.

Pricing, powertrains, specification levels and other details for the Australian line-up will be revealed closer to launch. **MM**



# Resurrection

Reborn 8 Series to face off against Benz S-Class Coupe



By JUSTIN HILLIARD

**B**MW has unleashed its reborn 8 Series Coupe in production form, with the luxury model to lob in Europe from November with petrol and diesel power, but the Australian line-up and timing are yet to be confirmed.

The 8 Series Coupe will be offered overseas in 840d and M850i guises from launch, while the yet-to-be-revealed M8 flagship has already been locked in for next year. Several other variants could also be in the works alongside the expected Convertible and Gran Coupe body styles.

Speaking to GoAuto, BMW Group Australia product communications manager Adam Davis said that “the local product, specification and line-up are all still to be determined as production start is still a little while away yet”.

However, it appears likely that Australia will be offered the petrol-powered M850i

and M8 pair given the market’s penchant for performance models, but the diesel 840d’s prospects are less clear.

The M850i is motivated by a 4.4-litre twin-turbocharged V8 engine that produces 390kW of power from 5500 to 6000rpm and 750Nm of torque from 1800 to 4600rpm. A more





potent version of this unit is tipped to move the M8.

Conversely, the 840d makes do with a 3.0-litre turbocharged six-cylinder engine that develops 235kW at 4400rpm and 680Nm from 1750 to 2250rpm.

Both variants exclusively send their outputs to the ground via an eight-speed torque-converter automatic transmission and the German car-maker's rear-biased xDrive all-wheel-drive system. The M850i also picks up a rear-axle differential lock.

As a result, the 1890kg M850i can sprint from standstill to 100km/h in 3.7 seconds, while the 1830kg 840d completes the triple-digit run in 4.9s. Both have an electronically limited top speed of 250km/h.

Claimed fuel consumption on the combined cycle test is 10.0-10.5 litres per 100 kilometres for the M850i and 5.9-6.2L/100km for the 840d, while carbon dioxide emissions have been tested at 228-240 grams per kilometres and 154-164g/km respectively.

Compared to the Concept 8 Series shown at the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este in May last year, the production model remains faithful to the design, although some elements have been toned down.

As with other BMW models, the 8 Series will be offered with several styling and equipment packages, including M Sport and M Technic Sport for the 840d. A lightweight carbon-fibre reinforced plastic roof will be optionally available on a non-M model for the first time.

Inside, the leather-trimmed interior is also surprisingly reminiscent of the show car's, with several parts of the next-generation look shared with the recently-detailed fourth-generation X5 large SUV.

Key highlights include the 12.3-inch



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digital instrument cluster and 10.25-inch touchscreen infotainment system, which both run the new BMW Operating System 7.0, plus a 16 per cent larger head-up display.

Measuring in at 4843-4851mm long, 1902mm wide and 1341-1346mm tall with a 2822mm wheelbase, the four-seat 8 Series Coupe offers 420L of cargo capacity with the 50/50 split-fold second row upright.

The 8 Series Coupe's suspension set-up consists of a double-wishbone front and five-link rear axles with adaptive dampers, while the electrically power-assisted steering is enhanced by standard rear-axle steering, dubbed Integral Active Steering. An active roll stabilisation system will be optional on the M850i.

Meanwhile, braking is handled by ventilated discs with four-piston fixed callipers up front

and single-pot floating stoppers at the rear.

Five driving modes – including Adaptive, Eco Pro, Comfort, Sport and Sport+ – allow the driver to alter engine, transmission, steering and suspension settings while on the move.

Advanced driver-assist systems extend to low-speed autonomous emergency braking with pedestrian and cyclist detection, adaptive cruise control with stop and go functionality, steering assist, lane departure warning, blind-spot monitoring, cross-traffic alert, park assist and surround-view cameras.

When the 8 Series Coupe hits showrooms, it will go toe to toe with one key rival, the Mercedes-Benz S-Class Coupe. The new model made its international debut earlier this month at the annual 24-hour race in Le Mans, France. **MM**



# Carbon bond

Aston's sold-out DBS Superleggera drops weight, gains 63kW for twin-turbo V12



By JUSTIN HILLIARD

**A**STON Martin has uncovered its “brute in the suit”, the DBS Superleggera, with the all-new and sold-out grand tourer priced from \$517,000 plus on-road costs ahead of Australian deliveries starting as early as October this year.

Australia's entire allocation of 25 units has already been spoken for, and while the local

allotment for next year is still to be finalised, buyers looking to place an order from today are currently facing a wait of about 10 months.

Speaking to journalists at a top-secret DBS Superleggera media preview event in Melbourne last month, Aston Martin Australia and New Zealand regional manager Kevin Wall made the new model's place in the company's range clear.

“For us, this is a DB11 on steroids,” he said. “There has been some talk around that this is a replacement for Vanquish – this is not the case.”

As such, rumours that the Vanquish nameplate will soon return on a mid-engined sportscar, which looks to take on the Ferrari 488 GTB and McLaren 720S, have gathered further steam.

“In fact, the team at Gaydon are calling (the

DBS Superleggera) ‘the brute in the suit’,” Mr Wall said. “You’ll see what they mean.”

The DBS Superleggera will sit below the track-only Vulcan and the forthcoming hardcore Valkyrie in Aston's line-up, but those two models are not available in Australia.

Motivated by a 5.2-litre twin-turbocharged V12 petrol engine shared with the \$428,000 DB11 AMR, the retuned DBS Superleggera





produces 533kW of power at 6500rpm and 900Nm of torque from 1800rpm to 5000rpm.

This marks an increase of 63kW and no less than 200Nm over the DB11 AMR.

Power is sent exclusively to the rear wheels via a rear-mounted eight-speed ZF torque-converter automatic transmission, while a rear mechanical limited-slip differential with

torque vectoring helps optimise handling.

As a result, the DBS Superleggera can dash from standstill to 100km/h in 3.4 seconds, on the way to a top speed of 340km/h – at which point 180kg of downforce is being generated over its rear wheels. Thus, it is 0.3s quicker and 5km/h faster than the DB11 AMR.

In-gear acceleration is also mighty, with the

sprint from 80-120km/h taking just 2.0s in fourth gear, while reaching 160km/h requires an extra 2.2s.

Comparatively, the 6.5-litre naturally aspirated V12 petrol engine in Ferrari's \$610,000 812 Superfast produces 588kW at 8500rpm and 718Nm at 7000rpm, enabling a 2.9s triple-digit sprint and a 340km/h terminal

velocity.

Weighing in at 1693kg, the DBS Superleggera is 72kg lighter than the recently superseded V12 DB11, thanks to its carbon-fibre body – excluding the aluminium door panels that are shared with the latter – and bonded aluminium sub-structure.

The independent suspension set-up features





double-wishbone front and multi-link rear axles that each incorporate coil springs, anti-roll bars and adaptive dampers, with the latter controllable via three dynamic driving modes – GT, Sport and Sport Plus.

Braking is handled by a carbon-ceramic package, which consists of 410mm discs with six-piston callipers up front and 360mm rotors with four-pot stoppers at the rear, while 21-

inch alloy wheels wrapped in mixed Pirelli P-Zero tyres (265/35 front, 305/30 rear) are placed ahead.

The DBS Superleggera's exhaust system features quad tailpipes and active valves to ensure there is a suitable bark to match its bite. This noise can be altered by the aforementioned driving modes.

Measuring in at 4712mm long, 1968mm

wide and 1280mm tall, the two-door DBS Superleggera is 27mm shorter, 28mm wider and 1mm taller than the V12 DB11, which has the same 2805mm wheelbase.

The aggressive exterior design is highlighted by the honeycomb front grille, front splitter, Curlicue front wheelarch vents, side strakes, Aeroblade II rear bootlid spoiler and Formula One-inspired double-rear diffuser. Full-LED

headlights, tail-lights and daytime running lights are also included.

However, trainspotters will notice that Aston Martin's signature winged badge is missing from the DBS Superleggera's bootlid, which instead features the brand's name spelt out for the first time.

Inside, the similarities between the four-seat DBS Superleggera and DB11 are clearer,



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highlighted by the common centre stack and dashboard designs, which are punctuated by Daimler's 8.0-inch infotainment system and touchpad controller as part of a deal with the German giant to share some components.

While Caithness leather and Alcantara upholstery is standard, Balmoral full-leather trim is optional, with each covering the Sports Plus seats and steering wheel with fixed paddle shifters.

Other standard equipment includes satellite navigation, digital radio, Bluetooth and USB connectivity, heated front seats, keyless entry, surround-view cameras, park assist and tyre-pressure monitoring.

Estimated claimed fuel consumption on the combined-cycle test is 12.3 litres per 100km,

while carbon dioxide emissions have been tested at 285 grams per kilometre.

When questioned if a drop-top Volante or performance-honed AMR version of the DBS Superleggera were on the cards, Mr Wall explained he was not aware of any plans.

As previously reported, this marks the third use of the DBS moniker, which first appeared on the 1967 model before returning on the 2008 GT made famous by the 2006 James Bond film *Casino Royale*.

The Superleggera designation – Italian for ‘super light’ – pays homage to Italian automotive coachbuilder Carrozzeria Touring Superleggera, which worked with Aston Martin on the 1958 DB4, 1963 DB5 and 1965 DB6 Mark I GTs. **MM**



# Speed racer

Porsche celebrates 70th anniversary of first sports car with retro-inspired 911 Speedster



By JUSTIN HILLIARD

**P**ORSCHE has marked the 70th anniversary of its first sports car, the 356 ‘No. 1’ Roadster, with the reveal of the 911 Speedster Concept – a retro drop-top that is firming for production next year.

Outed at the sports car-maker’s celebration

earlier this month at its Zuffenhausen headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany, the Speedster already looks set for a limited run as a swansong for the 991-series 911, which is due for replacement by 2019.

Recently spied testing in Europe, a Speedster engineering mule suggests that a debut is

likely set just before the 992-series 911 breaks cover later this year.

Furthermore, the new variant is rumoured to be restricted to 1948 units – a homage to the year the aforementioned first Porsche was registered.

“The concept study offers a glimpse of a

potential series-production version, although this model may not be presented until 2019,” Porsche said in a statement. “A decision on whether to move ahead will be made in the coming months.”

When contacted by GoAuto, Porsche Cars Australia (PCA) declined to comment on the



production 911 Speedster's local prospects.

Developed at the Porsche Motorsport Centre, the two-seat Speedster Concept combines the body of a Carrera 4 Cabriolet with the chassis and running gear of a GT3.

However, true to its namesake, the Speedster Concept adopts a more steeply-raked windshield and shorter side windows to give the sports car a stockier profile, while a carbon-fibre, double-bubble rear cover connects to the roll-over protection structure behind the front seats.

Two aerodynamically honed black slats reside between the humps, while a transparent Plexiglas wind deflector is positioned above with an engraved '70 years of Porsche' logo.

A lightweight tonneau cover replaces the traditional soft-top and can be attached using eight Tenax fasteners when required. Milled, gold-plated 'Speedster' lettering adorns the B-pillars and rear end.

Carbon-fibre is also used for construction of the wings and bonnet, while a 1950s-style fuel tank cap is positioned in the middle of the latter. Contrasting, high-gloss 21-inch Fuchs alloy wheels with centre locks are



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also prominent.

Finished in GT Silver and White two-tone paintwork, the Speedster Concept's exterior makeover is rounded off by its classic Talbot-shaped side mirrors and transparent-cum-opaque headlight covers.

Inside, the infotainment and air-conditioning systems have been removed to reduce weight, while the carbon-fibre bucket seats are trimmed in Cognac 356 light-brown Aniline leather.

Motivated by a flat six-cylinder motor – likely the naturally aspirated 4.0-litre unit from the GT3 – the Speedster Concept produces more than 373kW of power, while its engine

speeds can reach up to 9000rpm.

A six-speed manual gearbox exclusively sends power to the rear wheels, while an exhaust system with titanium tailpipes ensures there is plenty of noise when the top is off.

Limited to 356 examples, the last production Speedster served as a send-off for the 997-series 911 in September 2010. It was priced from \$519,800 before on-road costs.

Sales of the 911 have improved significantly this year, with 276 examples sold to the end of May, representing a 25.5 per cent increase over the 220 deliveries made during the same period in 2017. **MM**