

## The Audi R8: a captivating legend

- The R8 was Audi's first super sports car and the result of a cooperation with subsidiary Lamborghini
- A total of 45,949 units have left the Neckarsulm and Böllinger Höfe plants since 2007
- The final particular model is a pinnacle: the R8 V10 GT RWD with rear-wheel drive

**Neckarsulm/Ingolstadt, November 15, 2024 – A super sports car legend takes its leave: In its 17 years, the Audi R8 has captured hearts and celebrated just as many successes. After 45,949 units produced, the final R8 rolled off the line at Böllinger Höfe in March 2024. A look back at an unparalleled success story.**

Breathtaking design, a tantalizing engine sound, and driving dynamics like no other road-legal Audi ever offered: When it was unveiled in 2006, the R8 was a revolution – in Germany and around the world. A mid-engine super sports car; never before had Audi offered such a vehicle. With the R8, Audi moved into more exclusive segments previously dominated by brands such as Ferrari, Porsche, and Lamborghini.

The Audi R8 was developed and built by the former quattro GmbH (today: Audi Sport GmbH). It immediately became the sporty icon in the company's product portfolio and continues to contribute to the exclusive image of the Audi brand to this day. The R8 name refers to a successful race car that brought Audi more wins at Le Mans than any other manufacturer in history: In 1999, Audi launched its legendary Le Mans program with a sports prototype that started in the LMP900 class. The first name of this racing prototype was R8. It won at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, and 2005, making it the Le Mans sports car with the most victories in modern history. The prototype claimed more victories at the 12 Hours of Sebring, a race in the USA, which it won every year from 2000 to 2005. With these victories, Audi increased its prestige in international racing and laid the foundation for the road-legal R8 super sports car.

### **The Audi Le Mans quattro as a preview of the R8**

The Audi Le Mans quattro provided a first taste of the series product. First unveiled at the 2003 International Motor Show, the concept car was conceived as a "high-performance sports car suitable for everyday driving, a car that makes no compromises on comfort and user-friendliness," according to Bernhard Voll, the project's technical director.

The exterior design of the Le Mans quattro came from designer Frank Lamberty, who still designs exciting vehicles at Audi to this day. He puts the requirements for a high-performance sports car suitable for everyday driving in this way: “In the Le Mans quattro, you can drive record laps on the track just as easily as you can parallel park in front of the hairdresser’s. That made it quite a challenge for us.”

The technical basis of the Le Mans quattro was the Lamborghini Gallardo. The Le Mans quattro marked several technological milestones, such as LED headlights, the carbon fiber Audi Space Frame, the digital cockpit display, and Audi magnetic ride adaptive suspension. An absolute highlight was the double-turbocharged 5.0-liter V10 with gasoline direct injection. It had an output of 610 PS and a maximum torque of 750 Nm, making it a real automotive heavyweight.

### **World premiere of the first Audi R8 in 2006**

The first generation of the Audi R8 celebrated its world premiere at the 2006 Paris Motor Show, where its resemblance to the Le Mans quattro was almost perfect. However, there were some technical differences to the concept car.

The first-generation production car used a 4.2-liter V8 FSI mid-engine mounted behind the passenger compartment. The engine had an output of 420 PS (later: 430 PS), and except for using dry sump lubrication, which is more suitable for the racetrack, it was almost identical to the engine from the then-current Audi RS 4 (B7). Later, a V10 variant with a maximum output of 570 PS was added, which used the 5.2-liter aspirated engine from the Group’s sister model, the Lamborghini Gallardo.

For the suspension, Audi used the then-new Audi magnetic ride, which allows the driver to tighten the shock absorbers at the push of a button. The shock absorbers use a synthetic hydrocarbon oil containing microscopic magnetic particles in the pistons. When the magnetic coils are activated – which was the case in sport mode – the particles in the piston chambers align themselves perpendicular to the oil’s direction of flow, obstructing the flow.

The first-generation R8 initially featured a manual transmission with an open gearbox. The all-wheel quattro drive transferred power to all four wheels, with a maximum of 30 percent going to the front axle. Other transmission options included the R-Tronic, an automatic transmission, and the S-Tronic dual-clutch transmission from 2012. What’s more, in 2008, the R8 became the first car available with full LED headlights. In 2009, Audi added an open variant to the Coupé, the R8 Spyder.

All Audi R8 models were built at the Böllinger Höfe plant – largely by hand. Audi built the plant near the Neckarsulm site specifically for its first super sports car.

### **Special models and concept cars**

The first-generation R8 continued to captivate fans long after its premiere, thanks partly to several special models and concept cars. The most well-known special models are the Audi R8 GT Coupé and the R8 Gt Spyder with an aspirated V10 engine upgraded with 560 PS. The models weighed around 100 kilograms less than the standard R8 V10 models and were designed much more for use on the racetrack. For instance, they featured roll bars and a firefighting system. Both the Coupé and the Spyder variants were limited to 333 units.

One concept car that never made it to series production was the R8 with a turbocharged V12 diesel engine; the R8 V12 TDI concept. Background: In the 2010s, Audi was successful at Le Mans with the R10 TDI and wanted to establish diesel technology for sports cars, which had not existed until then. With 500 PS and a maximum torque of 1,000 Nm, the concept went from zero to 100 km/h in about four seconds – with an average consumption of less than ten liters.

The final evolution of the first-generation R8 was the Audi R8 LMX, a special edition released in 2014 that was limited to 99 units and – like the R8 GT a few years earlier – was inspired by racing. With 570 PS, the R8 LMX raced from zero to 100 km/h in 3.4 seconds, making it the fastest Audi production car at the time.

Another unique feature was the laser high beams, which the R8 LMX was the first production car to use. A laser module in each headlight generated a light beam with twice the illumination range of full LED headlights.

In eight years, Audi produced just over 26,000 units of the first R8 at the Neckarsulm plant.

### **The Audi R8 as a movie star**

Thanks to its movie-star looks and Hollywood flair, the Audi R8 was featured in numerous blockbusters. The R8 made its most famous cameo as the companion of Marvel hero Tony Stark, alter ego Iron Man. In all three movies, Stark, played by Robert Downey Jr., drove a first-generation Audi R8; in the third installment, it was an electric R8 e-tron.

The second-generation R8 also starred in Marvel movies, such as “Captain America: Civil War” in 2016 and “Spider-Man: Homecoming” in 2017.

In the 2004 sci-fi thriller “I, Robot,” the main character, Del Spooner, played by Will Smith, drove a super sports car whose basic shape was reminiscent of the Audi R8. The futuristic sports car was an Audi RSQ Concept, designed for the movie by Audi’s design team and then Head of Design Walter De Silva.

### **Second-generation R8 unveiled in 2015**

At the Geneva International Motor Show in 2015, Audi presented the successor to the R8, which had already made its mark in the super sports car world. Like the first generation, the new R8’s primary features were based on a Lamborghini, the 2014 Huracán.

In terms of its appearance, the R8 was an evolution of the previous model. The distinguishing features remained the front with the new full LED headlights and the characteristic side blades. The new design was much more angular and harmonious than the first generation.

What characterized the second generation above all was the V10 engine from Lamborghini. In both versions, the R8 used the aspirated engine with two output levels, 540 or 610 PS, and a seven-speed dual-clutch transmission. The 610 PS R8 went from 0 to 100 km/h in 3.2 seconds, with a 330 km/h top speed. Before the 2019 model update, the new R8 also transferred power to all four wheels via quattro all-wheel drive.

### **For the first time also with rear-wheel drive**

However, one thing about the second generation was new to road-legal Audis: With the R8 V10 RWS, Audi offered a rear-wheel-only variant that was slightly lighter than the all-wheel version for the first time in the company's history.

Following the 2019 facelift, a 570 PS version of the V10 engine became available, while the all-wheel-drive Audi R8 V10 Performance was upgraded to 620 PS. Customers could choose between different all-wheel and rear-wheel drive variants.

The Audi R8 V10 GT RWD was a true track specialist. It was a rear-wheel drive special model limited to 333 units with a host of aerodynamic features, including a front splitter, flics, and a large rear wing. With an output of 620 PS, the R8 V10 GT RWD remains the most powerful rear-wheel drive Audi of all time.

### **Series of global wins in customer racing**

The sports car delighted fans off the road as well. Based on both generations of the Audi R8, Audi Sport built 454 racecars for the newly established customer racing area in 2009. Of these, 313 were the GT3 variant, which dominated the sports car sector. Customer teams from Audi Sport customer racing claimed victory at no fewer than seven 24-hour races at the Nürburgring and 11 additional overall victories at international 24-hour races.

With the differentiation for the GT3, GT2, and GT4 categories, Audi was a formidable force in championships worldwide, with teams in America, Australia, Asia, Europe, and Africa celebrating 368 championship titles in 16 years. The GT racecars have helped Audi sharpen its sporty profile, giving the public a chance to experience the brand on the racetrack and continue to be fast and famous ambassadors of the Audi brand in private use.

On March 22, 2024, the final Audi R8 was built at Böllinger Höfe. The R8 in Vegas Yellow is destined for the hallowed halls of the Audi Museum in Ingolstadt.

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In 2023, the Audi Group delivered 1.9 million Audi vehicles, 13,560 Bentley vehicles, 10,112 Lamborghini vehicles, and 58,224 Ducati motorcycles to customers. In the 2023 fiscal year, Audi Group achieved a total revenue of €69.9 billion and an operating profit of €6.3 billion. Worldwide, an annual average of more than 87,000 people worked for the Audi Group in 2023, more than 53,000 of them at AUDI AG in Germany. With its attractive brands and numerous new models, the group is systematically pursuing its path toward becoming a provider of sustainable, fully networked premium mobility.

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