

UNSTOPPABLE

QUATTRO DOMINATION

The Audi Quattro burst upon an unsuspecting world rally car scene in 1980, and things have never been the same ever since



It's 1982, and the mighty 4WD Audi Quattro rally car is simply unstoppable. Modern-day rally cars owe so much to the erstwhile Quattro...



Edition 7 of a special series by
APOLLO TYRES LTD.



In 1981, while others were struggling with conventional rear-wheel-drive, the 4WD Audi Quattro was showing how it's done right!

The Audi Quattro, one of the most significant rally cars of all time, was launched back in 1980, and was the first rally car to take advantage of four-wheel-drive technology for rally competition. Till then the only success by a 4WD car in WRC was by a Jeep Wagoneer in a one-off US Rally! Critics initially thought it would be too heavy, too complex to be really competitive, but they were soon silenced by the Quattro's successes. The Quattro won on its very first outing – the Austrian round of the 1981 European Rally Championship in – and the four-wheel-drive 'experiment' was an instant success. The Quattro went on to win another couple of rounds of the World Rally Championship in 1981, and Audi gained additional exposure when Michèle Mouton won the 1981 San Remo Rally, the first woman to win a WRC event.

Yes, the original Quattro rally car was rather heavy, its front-mounted engine and monocoque chassis gave the car clumsy handling characteristics, and reliability was less than top-notch. However, the Audi Quattro still won the 1982 constructors championship. The rear-



Hannu Mikkola, in 1987, was a force to contend with. This pic shows him driving his Quattro during the Safari Rally

wheel-drive Lancia 037 offered fierce competition to the Quattro in 1983, despite which Audi driver Hannu Mikkola won the driver's championship, even though Lancia took the constructor's title.

1984 was Audi's most successful year, with Stig Blomqvist doing very well in the short-wheelbase, hugely powerful (450+ horsepower from a 2.2-litre, five-cylinder turbocharged engine...) Sport Quattro, with its Kevlar bodywork and six-speed transmission. With Blomqvist, Audi took both the drivers and the constructors championships in 1984.

The Peugeot 205 T16 did offer stiff competition to the Audi Quattro in 1984, and by 1985, the rear-engined, lightweight Peugeot had caught up with and passed the Audi Sport Quattro. Audi responded with the even more powerful (600bhp and more!) Sport Quattro S1, but the new car could only manage a single victory – the San Remo rally in 1985. The Audi Quattro Sport's era came to an end in 1986, when Group B cars were banned from the world rallying scene.



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Never wary of progress, never skeptical about success,
Never scared of challenges, never tired of trying,
Every step of the way we travel with our customers
On the "unstoppable" journey to success.

However, by that time, the Quattro had competed for four and a half years, winning four championships, and changing the face of rallying forever. The Quattro ushered in the 4WD age, and every World Rally Championship (for Makes) since 1982 has been won by a four-wheel-drive, turbocharged car.

Today's rally cars, with their tricked-out limited-slip differentials and sophisticated torque-management and active-4WD systems all have their genesis in the Audi Quattro. Even today's four-wheel-drive road-going rally-reps – most notably the Mitsubishi Evo series and the Subaru Imprezas – owe their existence to the mighty Quattro!

Apart from the world rallying championships, the Quattro was also hugely successful in America, at the Pikes Peak annual hillclimb. Audi drivers – Michèle Mouton, Bobby Unser, and Walter Röhrl – set insanely fast times at the Pikes Peak event throughout the mid-1980s. The Audi Quattro, a legend in its own lifetime, continues to be hugely respected by fans of motorsport and high-performance car enthusiasts all over the world. Unstoppable it remains in its 4WD technology.



In fast bends and on loose surfaces, the all-wheel-drive Audi Quattro had a traction and an handling advantage which the competition could not match...



The mighty Sport Quattro S1 on its way to victory in the 1985 San Remo Rally, with Walter Röhrl at the helm! Some of the world's best drivers drove for the Audi Sport works team with great success.



The Audi Sport Quattro was also very successful at the Pikes Peak hillclimb in the US. This is Walter Röhrl at the 1987 Pikes Peak event