

Cars, bikes, pedestrians and the metro share the streets of Berlin. And it all works, no stress or hassles. The integrated navigation system in the Audi A1 helps us relax even more, by making sure we can always find our way through this lively city—like here at the Schlesisches Tor (Silesian Gate).

Capital appreciation

Berlin is a design mecca; if you want to attract attention here, anything goes—except the ordinary. The **Audi A1**, that creative individualist, is perfectly cut out for the job.

By Christiane Tillmann (copy) and Breun & Grega/Out to Focus (photos)



A duel between teak brown and matte black: The Audi A1 in front of the L40 building by the Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz station.



The Audi A1 works its visual magic on the city's residents at last. One look at its metallic paint finish gleaming in the spring sunshine is enough to melt their cool reserve.

Progressive and sexy: Berlin exerts a magnetic attraction on people from all over the globe—especially creative types. Over 160,000 people work in the culture industry here alone, as musicians, actors or painters, or earn their living at one of the over 2,500 agencies, 151 museums or 400 galleries in the city. Most of these organizations are located in the Mitte district—and with good reason. Nowhere else is the city's heartbeat as loud and strong, no other area boasts so many hip bars, boutiques and Berliners who are of-the-moment and always up on the latest trends.

Berliners who work and live in Mitte shroud themselves in an aloof, cool aura. In other words, they're not the types to stop and point at a plane as it passes over their heads. Or wave enthusiastically at a new car model as it drives by. Never ones to pass up a good challenge, we took the opportunity to test the Audi A1 on the discerning public frequenting the streets of Germany's capital. Starting on the Avus, a former racetrack and Europe's oldest autobahn, we headed for the city on the Spree river and quickly discovered that small doesn't have to mean frail. In this case, quite the opposite: Our Audi A1, fitted out with a powerful 1.6-liter TDI engine that features direct injection and turbocharging and delivers 105 horsepower, displays its dynamic genes when accelerating; hugging the asphalt, it thrills with its direct steering response.

The premium small car wends its way quickly and nimbly through the increasingly dense traffic as we pass Checkpoint Charlie and kick off our "impress the Berliners" mission. But before the locals even get the chance to cast a glance at us, the tourists are already at it. For a moment, they forget all the pictures they were planning to snap for the family album of the spot where, until 1989, the West Berlin sector ended and Communist-controlled >>

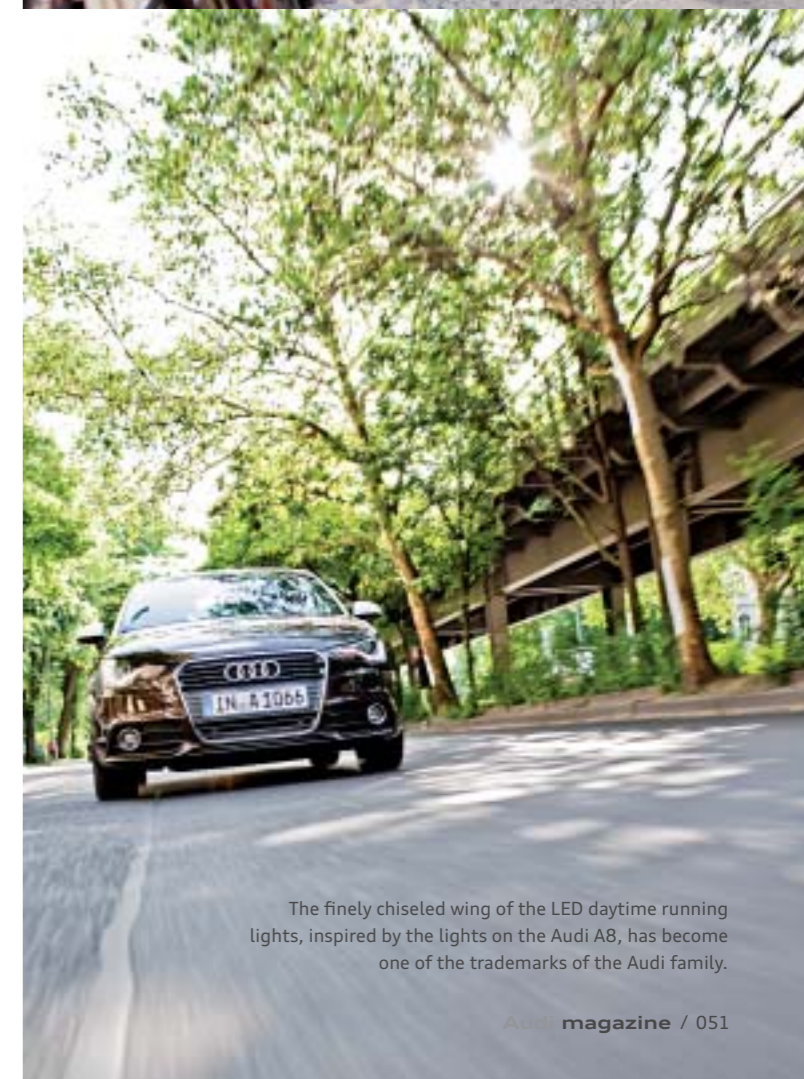
"Life ain't no pony farm," announces the sign on the Café St. Oberholz in Mitte. Sure it is: The café offers free WLAN and great coffee at decent prices.



Crossing the Oberbaum Bridge toward Kreuzberg.



Consummate cornering on Rosenthaler Square.



The finely chiseled wing of the LED daytime running lights, inspired by the lights on the Audi A8, has become one of the trademarks of the Audi family.

Nifty but thrifty, too—and not just when negotiating the traffic and shoppers on Rosenthaler Street: Thanks to the start-stop and recuperation systems that come as standard, the fuel gauge on the Audi A1 looks like it's glued in place.



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East Berlin began. Instead, they turn their curious gaze on us. One point for us! But we've got our sights set even higher: We're out to make at least one cool Berliner do a double take as he tries to get an eyeful of our designer jewel.

But first, en route to the Hackesche Höfe courtyard complex, we turn up the volume and let our optional Audi sound system show what it can do. Its 10 loudspeakers including subwoofer and center speaker are the perfect way to air the current favorites on our playlist. As soon as we've parked the Audi A1 on Rosa Luxemburg Street, it works its visual magic on the city's residents at last. One look at its Teak Brown paint finish gleaming in the spring sunshine is enough to melt their cool reserve. A Berliner—possibly on his way to the studio to mix his second album, design a multimedia ad or just grab a chai latte—registers our compact Audi appreciatively. A subtle, positive glance, an acknowledging smile or even an undisguised brief nod—the Audi A1 charm offensive is having an impact. The photographer swiftly fixes his hair in the reflection of the side window. A woman passing by responds with the world-famous Berlin bluntness, "Forget it, kid, you aren't going to get any better looking than that." If you can make it here, you'll be a crowd-pleaser anywhere. //

If the cockpit of the Audi A1 makes you wonder whether you're at the airport, you're right on the mark: The dashboard including its air outlets was modeled on an airplane wing.



The Elsen Bridge links Friedrichshain with Treptow.



Engine

Audi A1 1.2 TFSI (86 hp)¹

Audi A1 1.4 TFSI (122 hp)²

Audi A1 1.4 TFSI (185 hp)³

Audi A1 1.6 TDI (90 hp)⁴

Audi A1 1.6 TDI (105 hp)⁵

Drive/transmission


Front-wheel drive, five-speed manual transmission, six-speed manual transmission, seven-speed S tronic.


Standard equipment

Includes ESP with electronic axle-differential lock, chorus radio, head airbag system, radio-operated remote control.

Optional extras

Include xenon plus, MMI Navigation plus, concert radio, navigation package, Audi sound system, advanced key, media style package, Audi parking system plus, high-beam assist.

 For more information on the Audi A1, go to www.audi.com/a1.

 Get the iPad app for the video of our joyride through Berlin. Information at www.audi.com/apps.

The figures stated were determined in accordance with stipulated measuring methods, fuel consumption urban/extra-urban/combined (in l/100 km): (1) 6.2/4.4/5.1; (2) 6.8-6.5/4.6-4.4/5.3-5.2; (3) 7.5/5.1/5.9; (4) 4.4/3.4/3.8; (5) 4.7/3.5/3.9. CO₂ emissions combined (in g/km): (1) 118; (2) 124-119; (3) 139; (4) 99; (5) 103. All vehicles comply with the Euro 5 emission standard.