

# quattro®

## quarterly

Fall 2010

**Audi's A7 Unveiled**  
**LeMans and Vorsprung durch Technik**  
**Monterey Weekend Drive**  
**The Most Extreme Bentley**



# quattro quarterly

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Photo: Audi AG

Audi A7

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Photo: Mihaljlo Veselinovik

Ingolstadt Museum



Photo: Mihaljlo Veselinovik

Audi Forum Ingolstadt



Photo: Andreas Dharmawan

Andreas Dharmawan explores Monterey Bay.



Photo: Audi AG

A7 unveiled

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# A day in the life of an Audi Services Team

by Andreas Dharmawan

## 5:30 AM

George Demar is already packing his lunch box in the kitchen while the rest of the family is still soundly asleep. Minutes later he is already driving over the Santa Cruz Mountain pass on highway 17 towards the Bay Area. Since he has memorized every turn and pothole on his way to Rector Motors in Burlingame, California, it usually doesn't take much energy to do his commute.

He arrives fresh at 7:15 am at his customer service desk. Equipped with a fresh brewed coffee, he reviews his appointment list for the day on his computer screen. The service center opens at 7:30 am every morning. The sparkling sterile service hall is empty and quiet, but in a few minutes, this place will be brimming with activities.

## 7:30 AM

When the large metal garage door opens, several Audis and Porsches are already waiting. One by one, the customer rolls his car into a small-airplane-hangar-like garage. They form two lanes, the left one for Audis and the right one for Porsches. George greets the first customer, reviews the condition of the cars, takes the odometer reading and puts the service tag on the windshield.

He has been taking care of this client's cars for over ten years. Today, the client's black S4 is due for the 90K miles service. After explaining the service tasks, he attentively asks the client if there is any other specific matter to inspect before he provides the client with a loaner car.

By now there are already over a dozen cars. A line of standing customers forms outside the Service Advisor room. The other three Service Advisors are just as busy as George attending the early bird customers. Before he attends the next customer, he walks across the hall to talk to Dennis Dolen, the Director of Services and Parts, who is leading over two dozen team members.

Dennis is the traffic controller of this operation. He gets all the work orders from the four Service Advisors and reviews each work order. With over 20 years of experience managing the Audi service department, he decides which car goes to which bay in a particular order based on the tasks that need to get done. No computer program can do the job as well as Dennis, because, over the years, he has developed an intuition for Audi service tasks.

## 7:45 AM

Jose Solis, who is responsible for major services and 100-points inspection, takes the S4 to his service bay. He plugs his diagnostic equipment into the socket in the car and starts reviewing the data and jotting down the tune-up adjustments he needs to do later. Then, he continues with the visual inspection to find anomalies.

Next to his service bay, Luan Trouong, the shop foreman and the head tech, is attending a silver R8. A gray tower of diagnostic instrument stands on one side while a red metal tool cabinet is on the other side. He plugs wires to interface socket in the R8 engine bay and flips through several computer screens verifying engine configuration parameters.

This Audi-issued diagnostic instrument is connected to the Audi Service Server via the Internet. Once the identity of the car is established, the server sends the appropriate software updates list for the car as well as parts replacement list if there is any. Luan reviews the software updates and approves them. Now, he waits for the software upgrade to complete.

# A day in the life of an Audi Services Team

## 8:45 AM

At around 8:45 am, the Service Advisor room is empty but not for long. Because the second wave of customers is arriving just after 9 am. In a typical day, they can service about 60 cars. Service bays are getting filled with cars, and mechanics are swarming around the cars. Parts are being transported from the parts room to each service bay.

Jose has completed the inspection of the S4, and in his hand is a list of recommended tasks to be performed. He goes over the list with George. In addition to the usual factory-recommended 90K miles service tasks, this car needs oil cover gaskets and front brake pads. Looking at his computer screen, George confirms that the car has a lifetime brake pads replacement contract. The only thing he needs to check is whether the labor and the oil cover gaskets will be covered by the extended warranty the car has. After Devin Phatak, the warranty administrator confirms the coverage, George informs Jose to start the work.

Jose walks to the Parts Department to submit the list of parts he needs for the S4 to Lawrence Alexander. Lawrence coordinates the five person team to manage the parts inventory throughout the day and to provide service to walk-in customers looking for small do-it-yourself replacement parts or accessories.

## 11:00 AM

At around 11 am, Dennis is making his round. He talks to each mechanic to get progress status. He also makes sure the mechanics get the extra help if needed. He takes extra time talking to the mechanic who is working on a silver RS6 about the boost pressure anomaly. They go online to search the Audi service database to see if there is a documented incident similar to this one.

Jose has completed the 90K service and installed the new oil cover gaskets on the S4. He parks the car in the parking lot. It is now in queue for the brake pads replacement and the steering alignment. Marty Allison, the brake and alignment specialist, is still attending an RS4. This particular RS4 has been on the track quite often and Marty knows this. Using a state of the art laser guided alignment platform, he makes sure that the owner is getting the best thrilling car dynamic on the track.

## 1:00 PM

After the lunch break, George is already reviewing the diagnostic reports and task completion checklists for eight cars. The reports have been put together by the mechanics who worked on the corresponding cars. Prior to updating each customer, he cross-references today service status with the historical service data on the car to spot any anomaly. A family doctor will not only treat you for the illness you have today but also interview you if there is any change in your health and habit since the last visit. That's exactly what George is doing now.

Before making the calls to any customers, he attends the waiting customers. He goes through the work details and ensures that all questions are answered. Before any customer gets his car, a team of detailers cleans every car that goes through this service center.

## 3:00 PM

At this hour, each service bay is still occupied. A lot of activities can be seen everywhere. But yet, they are far from chaotic. There seems to be a synchronized rhythm and flow in how the team works together.

All Audi Service Departments around the world are equipped with the same exact equipment and tools. But like a game of golf, it is not the club that matters, but the person holding the club. There is something extraordinary to be said about this team. Most of its members have been working together for 30 years! Their dedication can be seen in how they support each other in daily tasks.

Additionally, a few of them are willing to commute up to 80 miles each way to be with this team. Watching them working together, one can see not only their passion for providing exceptional services but also their family values. This is something intangible that cannot be quantified in any employee performance review or job satisfaction survey. But the effect of the family values goes beyond many satisfied customers.

## 4:00 PM

After replacing the S4 brake pads and adjusting the alignment, Marty hands off the paperwork on the car to George. George reviews the checklist to make sure all tasks have been completed. He then grabs the keys to the S4 and the other cars that are ready for road test. Each Service Advisor road tests the clients' cars to ensure that the works

have been completed satisfactorily before the cars are placed in queue for detailing.

## 4:45 PM

Everyone starts to tidy up his workspace for shop closing. Most of the service bays are empty. A few cars have to stay overnight. Later tonight when the place is closed, a professional industrial cleaning team will come to make this place sparkling again to greet tomorrow morning's early birds.

Dennis, Jose and Luan are huddling together at Dennis's command center. They are reviewing the results of the 100 points check they performed on 12 cars today. They need to report any out of the ordinary failures beyond the usual wear and tear to Audi Service Center database. Audi tracks all non-wear-and-tear incidents to identify potential design and manufacturing issues on their parts.

## 6:00 PM

After the S4 owner picks up the car, George is ready to go home. He has been doing what he loves for 30 years. He has seen it all. Once, an owner brought his car in, complaining about the fact that the glove compartment could not be opened. A few minutes later, the owner's pet python was discovered in the glove compartment. Another time in a distant past, a customer brought a VW van filled with a goat, three chickens, a dog, a cat, some fishes in an aquarium and two birds. Thankfully, the owner had only asked for an oil change.

He doesn't see the two-hour drive home as a chore because he enjoys working with the team and attending his loyal customers. George was named top Service Advisor in the U.S. by Audi for five years. Other award winning team members are Luan and Devin. They were named the top service technician and the top warranty administrator by Audi, respectively.

To keep his award winning team at the top of its game, Dennis ensures the continuing education and training for his team members. New product information and new service techniques are disseminated by Audi to all Audi Service Centers. Every year, each mechanic must go through a certification process. And under his leadership, his team excels through strong family values and great teamwork.

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