



## Home Turf

**Aksel Lund Svindal is one of the world's foremost ski racers and a real car fanatic. On the road to his home country's mountain peaks in the Audi A4 allroad quattro, the superstar explains how he made it to the very top.**

Jan Wilms (copy) & Jan van Endert (photo)



**Aksel Lund Svindal**

Born in 1982 and raised near Oslo, he first put on a pair of skis at the age of three. He formed a deep connection with the sport. From the age of 15, he attended a skiing boarding school in Oppdal, choosing to pursue the sport on a full-time basis when he was 19.

The shades of gray in the sky over Oslo combine in dramatic layers. The temperature hovers above zero and a stiff northeasterly wind whistles over the Holmenkollen, the "Temple Mount" of Norwegian ski sport. Ideal conditions in which to meet arguably the world's best ski racer: Aksel Lund Svindal, super-G winner at the 2010 Winter Olympics, five-time Alpine World Ski Champion, not to mention a free-ski star, a passionate petrolhead and a social media influencer. With a superb view over Oslo, the fjord and out toward Svindal's home town of Lørenskog, the "Kollen" is the ideal starting point from which to track an impressive career.

We're on the road in the new Audi A4 allroad quattro. It's a true all-rounder equally at home on gentle off-road terrain as it is in the urban jungle. Which makes the car ideally suited to a country where nature is ever-present, where jagged cliffs and deep fjords are as commonplace as houses, streets and squares. "For nature lovers like myself, Norway and especially the Oslo region are magical places. In summer, you can swim in the fjord and ride mountain bikes in the hills. We go hiking there in the fall and skiing in the winter," says Aksel. With its spacious luggage compartment, quattro drive and high-end Audi connect infotainment system, the multitalented Audi A4 allroad quattro offers the perfect mix of performance, space and comfort for busy lifestyles.

Leaving Oslo, Aksel accelerates down the country road leading to the north, toward Norway's natural wilderness: The pine trees become taller, the red farmhouses with their white roofs more frequent—only the clouds remain granite gray. We are headed for Varingskollen, which at first glance seems like a perfectly normal ski hill. It comprises five lifts and five descents—including one for children and a 1.4-kilometer, world-cup class black run.



Our destination is Varingskollen, which at first glance seems like a perfectly normal ski hill.

This is where the young Aksel started to gather unstoppable momentum—in every sense of the word. “In the beginning, I never dreamed of having a great career; I just wanted to be faster than the others,” recalls the 33-year-old. “Analyzing how I might achieve that goal, I realized that the number of hours spent training had a direct impact on the results.” While this scarcely sounds like a stroke of genius today, it was nevertheless a eureka moment for the then 15-year-old.

From that point on, Svindal trained obsessively. He spent what were probably the most formative training sessions of his life here on the five Varingskollen slopes. The rest is history, recorded in the annals of all Alpine ski competitions, from downhill to slalom and giant slalom all the way to super-G: his World Cup debut at the age of 18, his first World Cup victory in the super-G in 2005 and the overall World Cup title in 2007. Svindal’s first major setback occurred in late 2007, when he crashed in the U.S.’s Beaver Creek and was forced to take a year off. He returned in 2008—and claimed victory on the very same downhill slope. In the years that followed, his career reached new heights: At the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Svindal won gold, silver and bronze. He cemented his reputation as an outstanding athlete by winning the super combined World Championship in 2011, the World Cup super-G in the years 2012 to 2014, the Alpine Ski World Cup in 2013. It is his ability to pick himself up again—to see a setback merely as an opportunity to stage a spectacular comeback—that sets him apart.

And when Aksel Lund Svindal grows weary of chasing titles, he takes a detour into the deep snow. He is also a champion in the



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It was at Varingskollen that the young Aksel Lund Svindal first started to gather momentum.

discipline of freeskiing, which revolves around posting hair-raising online action clips and attracting clicks rather than cups: Aksel has 350,000 followers on Instagram and his YouTube clip The Evolution of a Freeskier is currently heading for one million views. However, the suggestion that this lanky Norwegian might actually be a little insane elicits the following response: "I'm no risk-taker—speed is nothing without control. And what counts even more so than perfect skiing technique is mental strength."

"We point the Audi in the direction of Svindal's very first mountain: Geilo (pronounced Yei-lo), situated halfway between Oslo and Bergen. It was here, at the age of three, that his parents first put him in ski boots and nudged him onto a slope. "If it hadn't been for my parents, both of whom were ski instructors, I would never have truly connected with this sport," says Svindal, describing the influence of his father, and his mother who passed away in 1990. "I have them to thank for this career."



#### Audi A4 allroad quattro

Color	Argus Brown
Engine	in-line four-cylinder
Displacement	1.968 cc
Power	140 kW (190 PS)
Max. torque	400 Nm
Transmission	7-speed S tronic
Acceleration 0-100 kph	7,8 sec.
Top speed	220 kph



Perhaps it is this lesson in life coupled with his deep respect for nature that make it impossible to imagine Aksel Lund Svindal getting carried away with himself—enduring the moments of his greatest success, which he explains in quite rational terms: "I anticipate well, see things sooner even over great distances and can process that information in a flash," says the Olympic and World Cup champion. "When I'm on the move, I'm always intuitively calculating what will happen in the next few seconds."

"Aksel Lund Svindal also appears extremely relaxed behind the wheel of the Audi A4allroad quattro. Maybe this has to do with the sure sense that this car is always in contact with the outside

world. Audi connect and the dedicated onboard SIM card turn the Audi A4 into a Wi-Fi hotspot that is permanently online—an essential feature for someone like Svindal who has to update his social media channels.

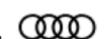


The Audi A4 allroad quattro continues toward Svindal's very first mountain, in Geilo.

In the Audi A4 allroad quattro, the Audi virtual cockpit displays the final destination for the day—we are headed back to Oslo. Time to philosophize about cars with petrolhead Aksel Lund Svindal. The athlete reveals his appreciation of aesthetics, declaring the beauty of outstanding design to be a work of art: "Certain cars are among the most desirable objects ever made," says Aksel. "They're the type of cars I could just admire sitting in my garage—I wouldn't need to drive them." Technology, he adds, should remain low-key without being intrusive. It should allow the car to retain a certain sense of purity. "I'm fascinated by lightweight materials and aerodynamics—that's where less really is more. Having said that, we also need technologies such as the sustainable drive system in the Audi e-tron models as well as piloted driving, all of which offer mobility while protecting the planet and resolving capacity problems on our roads.

"If we use these innovative cars—featuring lightweight construction, connectivity, alternative drive systems and piloted driving functions—for everyday trips in the future, Svindal hopes it may also be possible to spare the classic models. He dreams of buying an historic Audi Sport quattro. How would he drive it? "You don't have to push everything to the limit. Often the mere thought of all the things you could do is what's exciting."

Aksel Lund Svindal is currently fighting his way back into the world elite following a severe knee injury. Based on the theory of seriality, he will once again return from this time out stronger than ever. He is driven by a profound belief born on the Varingskollen and in Geilo during his early years when his sole focus was on the sport: Even from a small mountain, it is possible to become the greatest skier in the world.



\*All legal notices and information relating to availability as well as technical specifications can be found at [Audi.com/connect](http://Audi.com/connect).

Audi A4 allroad quattro 2.0 TDI S tronic fuel consumption urban/extr-urban/combined (in l/100 km): 5.7–5.5/4.8–4.6/5.1–4.9. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions combined (in g/km): 134–128. Audi A4 allroad quattro fuel consumption urban/extr-urban/combined (in l/100 km): 8.2–5.4/5.9–4.6/6.7–4.9. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions combined (in g/km): 154–128. Where stated in ranges, fuel consumption, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and efficiency classes depend on tires/wheels used.

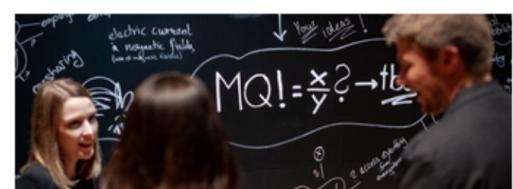
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**Sixth sense for snow and ice:** Blanketed with snow and ice, Lapland lies at the heart of endless forests interrupted by lakes. In this landscape, winter is the prevailing season. Living and working here requires coming to terms with the extreme conditions.