

2013 Porsche Boxster S First Drive

Media Player



2013 Porsche Boxster S Picture

Wider, longer and quicker, the 2013 Porsche Boxster S is new in many ways. | March 07, 2012 | Porsche Cars North America, Inc.

Road Test

2013 Porsche Boxster S First Drive

Now With Longer Legs, Better Performance and More Efficiency

By [Andreas Stahl](#), Contributor | Published Mar 8, 2012

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We couldn't help but be impressed with the third-generation Porsche Boxster when we got to [ride in it](#) late last year as part of a final validation drive for the new midengine roadster on a run from San Francisco to Los Angeles, suggesting it had taken on a newfound maturity without any compromise in its ability to provide big levels of driving entertainment in the right conditions.

And this impression holds true now that we've finally been behind the wheel of a production version. This week the 2013 Porsche Boxster made its [public debut](#) at the [Geneva auto show](#) in Switzerland, Porsche having thoroughly reengineered its new entry-level model to a degree that hasn't been seen since the original was added to its lineup back in 1996.

As with the [911](#) — a car with which it continues to share much of its front end structure, Porsche went back to the drawing board when it came time to conceive the new Boxster, known under the code name 981. The only elements that have been brought over from the old model, the 987, are the engine and gearbox, and even then they have been subtly reworked for added levels of smoothness, performance and fuel efficiency.

It Works

The result is a driving experience every bit as captivating as any previous Boxster model but with little or no compromise to its everyday abilities. It's a brilliant blend of track-capable handling along with the sort of inherent comfort that allows you to thoroughly enjoy the new roadster over extended highway journeys. It is a car that allows you to have your cake and eat it, too.

The moment you twist the steering wheel away from the straight ahead you're aware Porsche has succeeded in matching the brilliant feel of the previous model's hydraulic-assist setup with its new electromechanical steering system: Like everything about the new car, it is meaty in its weighting but fantastically direct in its actions.

The revised underpinnings, which feature thoroughly new elastokinematic properties, have cured perhaps the only real weakness of earlier Boxster models: a tendency toward high-frequency movements at the front end on less than smooth surfaces. It is now wonderfully controlled, and with it comes an added dose of stability, particularly at high speed.

The ride is predictably firm, but it is never harsh and settles quickly like. The upshot of this inherent firmness is superb body control all-out cornering. Massive grip also provides high cornering speeds. The cornering balance is wonderfully neutral and, with Sport mode dialed up, the PSM (Porsche Stability Management) is configured to allow a small degree of slip angle before it kicks in. Turn it off and the intimacy of communication fed back to the driver allows you to revel in power-on oversteer.



The Big Changes

The view out front is typified by the rounded haunch of the front left-hand fender — a cue that has its roots with the original Porsche, the iconic 356. But with a lower seating position and higher rear bulkhead, vision to the rear is now rather restricted — and even worse with the roof up owing to the small glass rear window, which despite having being widened, remains too small.

Roof up, the new 2013 Porsche Boxster is now a more pleasant place to be. New sound-deadening material has cut noise levels from a previous 75 decibels to 71 decibels — a figure that results in a halving of ambient noise, according to Porsche, and further pushes home the new model's improved long-distance qualities.

Porsche says the sprint to 62 mph requires only 4.8 seconds.

Dropping the top, an improved version of the old Boxster's magnesium-framed and multilayer fabric-covered structure, no longer requires manual twist-and-turn. Just hit a switch on the center console and two electric motors take care of the rest, folding the roof back in just 9 seconds and stowing it atop the engine at the rear of the cabin at speeds up to 31 mph. Unlike with previous Boxster models, there's

no separate body cover for the roof once it is down. It simply rests there with the top section exposed.

The 2013 Porsche Boxster is bigger, too. Length is up by about 1.8 inches to 172.2 inches, but width and height remain the same as before at 70.9 inches and 50.4 inches. The 2.36-inch bump in the wheelbase to 97.4 inches has enabled Porsche to repackage the interior, providing it with greater length and the scope for added seat adjustment. Luggage capacity, though, remains rather limited, with 5.3 cubic feet in a deep cubbyhole up front ahead of the fuel tank and 4.6 cubic feet in a shallow hold behind the engine at the rear. The best place for your golf clubs, then, continues to be the passenger seat.

Fully Redesigned

Among its many developments are a new lightweight floor pan and body, some 46 percent of which is now fashioned out of aluminum, including the front and rear end structures, doors, hood, trunk lid and the mounting for the rollover hoops behind the cabin. The result is a 77-pound reduction in curb weight for the Boxster S over its steel-bodied predecessor on sale in North America since 2004. That's not as much weight as Porsche cut from the 911, but it manages to buck the trend of its roadster rivals. The Audi TT, BMW Z4 and Mercedes-Benz SLK have all gained weight in their latest incarnations.

MacPherson strut suspension remains front and rear; however, the new Boxster is 1.4 inches wider at the front and 0.23 inch wider at the rear than the second-generation car. It is all bolted to a body structure that is claimed to be a whopping 40 percent stiffer than before.

Haunches pumped up to accommodate larger wheel arches and, on the Boxster S, standard 19-inch wheels wrapped with 235/40 front and 265/40 rubber, mean the Boxster's styling is now more individual. Compared to the old model, it is much more distinctive, boasting a more cab-forward appearance with greater structuring within the doors and an intriguing rear end in which the rear spoiler, which deploys at speeds above 75 mph, is integrated in the taillamps.

Inside, everything has changed. Taking its cue from the 911, the 2013 Porsche Boxster receives a contemporary new cockpit modeled on that first seen in the [Panamera](#), which instantly lifts its appeal to the level of its competition. Classic elements such as the ignition located to the left of the steering wheel and the three-dial instrument cluster are retained, but there is now a much higher level of perceived quality and improved ergonomics.



Updated Powertrains

Just as it has since its introduction to the Porsche lineup back in 1996, the new Boxster continues to serve up two different engine options. The base version now runs a new 2.7-liter version of Porsche's water-cooled flat six-cylinder with 10 horsepower and 7 pound-feet more torque than the older 2.9-liter unit. Direct fuel injection helps it produce 261 hp and 206 lb-ft of torque.

The S model driven here retains a 3.4-liter engine that is fitted with a new twin-track intake system that's fed by both of the side vents. Power increases 5 hp to 315 hp but the peak arrives 300 rpm higher in the rev range at 6,700 rpm. Torque remains the same at 266 lb-ft but is now delivered 100 rpm higher at 4,500 rpm.

Both engines come with the choice of either a standard six-speed manual or optional seven-speed double-clutch PDK (Porsche Doppelkupplung) gearbox — the latter using rocker switches on the steering wheel for remote shifting and, as part of the optional Sport Chrono package, dynamic mounts that are claimed to minimize weight shift during gearchanges — something that is claimed to provide the new roadster with a steadier feel when the driver decides to shift mid-corner.

As part of Porsche's efforts to improve the Boxster's fuel efficiency, both the manual and double-clutch gearbox also come as standard with a switchable stop/start function together with brake energy recuperation — features that are now fitted to every new Porsche model from Boxster to Panamera.

On top of this, the double-clutch unit also gets a coasting function that cuts engine revs to 700 rpm when the driver gently steps off the gas. The measures certainly appear successful, netting the Boxster an official European combined average consumption of 7.7L/100km (about 30.5 mpg) and the Boxster S 8.0L/100km (29.4 mpg) — improvements of 15.4 percent and 14.9 percent over their predecessors. Not that typical Boxster customers are going



to be too concerned about fuel saving, mind you. However, the lower consumption helps provide a greater range from the 16.9-gallon tank.

On the Gas

The engine is a gem, of course, but then we expect nothing less from a flat six-cylinder unit from Porsche. More eager throughout its broad rev range, thanks to an upgraded electronics package that provides added throttle response and, on double-clutch gearbox-equipped versions like our test car, noticeably improved shift quality. The official figures hint at a peaky delivery, but the 2013 Porsche Boxster S possesses proper shove from little more than 1,500 rpm — or just 800 rpm above idle, making it easy to thread through tight city traffic.

It is through the midrange, though, where it really comes alive. From 3,000 rpm up to 6,000 rpm, it is fantastically strong and, with the optional sports exhaust system like that fitted to our test car, brilliantly loud on a loaded throttle. On deserted roads you find yourself deliberately holding on to gears longer than is absolutely necessary just to sample its aural delights. Winding it all the way to its 7,700-rpm redline is pure four-wheel entertainment — best achieved roof down on rock-lined canyon roads for full effect.

Porsche says the sprint to 62 mph requires only 4.8 seconds with the optional double-clutch gearbox and Sports Chrono package, some two-tenths of a second less than the old Boxster, while top speed



d with the word Porsche tell you all you need to know about the brakes before you've even brushed the middle pedal. It doesn't disappoint, delivering a progressive action, lots of feel and crushing retardation once you've really put some weight behind it. For those seeking greater stopping power, the Boxster continues to be available with optional carbon-ceramic units.

Porsche continues to offer optional adaptive damping with its PASM (Porsche Active Suspension Management) system, which now comes with PTV (Porsche Torque Vectoring) and a locking differential. So configured, the Boxster's project leader, Horst Woehler, says it achieves 1.2g of peak lateral acceleration (as opposed to the average number we list in road tests) on the company's Weissach-based skid pad.

The bottom line is simple: The new 2013 Porsche Boxster is still a Boxster — nimble, communicative and sharp. But it now adds measures of comfort and efficiency in a combination few others can match.

Edmunds attended a manufacturer-sponsored event, to which selected members of the press were invited, to facilitate this report.

33 Comments

clipse4g says:

06:15 AM, 03/08/2012

Please let me be the first to say....my 2006 Eclipse had those hips and that spoiler that this Porsche was carrying..FIRST. Still a lovely looking automobile IMO though.... Hahaha

disa says:

05:52 AM, 03/08/2012

Sigh. I wish I could afford a \$70K toy. Sigh.

eldaino2 says:

05:42 AM, 03/08/2012

always been more of a cayman guy...but this is pretty delicious looking

Vehicle Tested:

2013 Porsche Boxster S

Base Price:

\$61,850

Engine:

3.4-liter flat-6

Gearbox:

Seven-speed double-clutch automated manual

Power:

315 hp @ 6,700 rpm

EPA Rating:

N/A

On Sale:

July 2012

First Impression:

A thorough revamping of Porsche's iconic convertible. Sharper, yet larger and more practical.

Vehicle

Year Make Model	2013 Porsche Boxster S 2dr Convertible (3.4L 6cyl 7AM)
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Vehicle Type	RWD 2dr 2-passenger convertible
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Estimated MSRP	\$61,850
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Drivetrain

Configuration	Longitudinal, midengine, rear-wheel drive
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Engine type	Naturally aspirated, direct-injected, flat-6, gasoline
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Displacement (cc/cu-in)	3,436/210
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Block/head material	Aluminum/aluminum
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Valvetrain	DOHC, 4 valves/cylinder
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Compression ratio (x:1)	12.5
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Horsepower (hp @ rpm)	315 @ 6,700
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Torque (lb-ft @ rpm)	266 @ 4,500
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Fuel type	Premium unleaded (required)
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Transmission type	Seven-speed auto-double- clutch manual with console shifter and steering-mounted buttons with Sport/Competition modes
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Transmission ratios (x:1)	I=3.91, II=2.29, III=1.65, IV=1.30, V=1.08, VI=0.88, VII=0.62
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Final-drive ratio (x:1)	3.89
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Differential(s)	Optional torque vectoring, locking differential
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Chassis

Suspension, front	MacPherson struts, coil springs, stabilizer bar and adaptive dampers
Suspension, rear	MacPherson struts, coil springs, stabilizer bar and adaptive dampers
Steering type	Electric-assist, power rack-and-pinion steering
Steering ratio (x:1)	16.5:1
Tire type	Summer
Tire size, front	235/40 ZR 19
Tire size, rear	265/40 ZR 19
Wheel size, front	19-by-8 inches
Wheel size, rear	19-by-9.5 inches
Wheel material	Aluminum alloy
Brakes, front	13-inch vented steel rotors, four-piston fixed calipers
Brakes, rear	11.8-inch vented steel rotors, four-piston fixed calipers

Track Test Results

0-60 mph, mfr. claim (sec.)	4.8 (62 mph)
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Fuel Consumption

Fuel economy, mfr. est. (mpg)	29.4 mpg
Fuel tank capacity (U.S. gal.)	16.9

Dimensions & Capacities

Curb weight, mfr. claim (lbs.)	3,141
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Length (in.)	172.2
Width (in.)	70.9
Height (in.)	50.4
Wheelbase (in.)	97.4

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