



FIRST DATE

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The completely redesigned Boxster is lighter and faster, but still carries the genes of the legendary mid-engine sports car—join us in a nocturnal encounter in the south of France with the completely new roadster.



A notable debut in the exquisite interior of the Boxster is the rising center console. It accentuates the cockpit character of the interior.

The first night is always exhilarating. Anticipation and nervousness combine to create a stirring cocktail that sets the senses on fire. You don't quite know each other, and yet there's a sense of familiarity. And then you see the other for the first time in all of his or her beauty. It takes your breath away.

An encounter with the Boxster is a feast for the senses from the very first moment. From the front, the curves of the new Boxster evoke a feminine aspect—above all at night, when the yellow neon light from street lamps reflects on the paint, highlighting the roadster's voluptuous contours. Without knowing it, you run your fingers over its sweeping rear wings. And yet it is impossible to overlook the Porsche's masculine character—wild and forceful, ready for anything. The seams and edges span the body like muscles and sinews beneath the skin. The front and side air intakes accentuate the powerful appearance even more. The Boxster exudes the air of a thoroughbred chomping at the bit. His master's trusty steed.

When started the six-cylinder Boxster engine rumbles to life, and from the first touch of the gas pedal it lets out an impatient roar that goes straight to the pit of your stomach. It's best not to let the elegant appearance of the sports car fool you; the new Boxster has plenty of muscle. After all, the Boxster S packs an impressive 232 kW (315 hp) punch just waiting to be uncorked. That's 37 kW (50 hp) more than the

standard engine and 4 kW (5 hp) more than its predecessor. But not to worry: we'll get along just fine. The second attempt, a gentle touch of the pedal: the Porsche purrs quietly and sets off with exquisite manners.



Now we leave the city at a heady clip, driving into the solitary night. The road takes us into the mountains high above the sea. Soon the silhouettes of the buildings in the port city of La Ciotat sink into a sea of lights. As we recede farther and farther from the city, the lights melt into a giant glowing pile of embers whose heat radiates from the valley as nothing but a faint glimmer of light. On narrow switchbacks the Route des Crêtes winds its way through a sparse, rocky landscape in southern France. The road is unlit. Not a single lamp illuminates the moonless, starry night up here. Only the patch of road before us, caught in the light cone of the headlights, is visible. Trees and bushes appear as shadows along the side of the road before disappearing as quickly as they appeared. There's no other car to be seen far and wide. It feels like we're the last survivors of a civilization that has recently met its demise.

The road that winds along the crest of the mountain is steep, but the aluminum-steel-hybrid body makes the ascent a breeze for the new Boxster. The new roadster has shed about 35 kilograms (77 pounds), and it shows. The featherweight speedster zooms up the massive climb to just

*Nocturnal ascent in a rocky landscape:
the aluminum-steel-hybrid
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THE SEAMS AND EDGES SPAN THE BODY OF THE **BOXSTER** LIKE MUSCLES AND SINEWS BENEATH THE SKIN.

ENGINEERING MASTERY MEETS ARCHITECTURE: THE **NEW BOXSTER** IN FRONT OF THE LE CORBUSIER BUILDING IN MARSEILLE.



about 400 meters (1,300 feet) above sea level with playful ease, mastering the countless turns without losing its balance for an instant. The Boxster powers through even the tightest switchbacks as if on rails, displaying peerless agility and punch. The traditional mid-engine design ensures optimal weight distribution of 46:54 percent (front:rear) and dynamic driving behavior. The longer wheelbase also improves road handling.

Calmly but resolutely the Boxster goes through its paces. After a few miles the tension begins to let up, the grip on the steering wheel loosens—after all, the electromechanical power steering is even more responsive than before. Driver and car become a single unit, inseparable, almost like two old friends. Just a distant glimmer in the rear view mirror still reminds you of the road just traveled. Your eyes are on the road ahead. The journey is the destination. Then the route passes its highest point. It's all downhill from here—sometimes gentle, sometimes steep. When called upon, the new, bigger braking system forcefully takes charge. On gentler slopes, however, the automatic Porsche double clutch transmission (PDK) disengages and the car “sails” smoothly on its way.

Reef the sails! It takes just a press of a button for the soft roof to open, retract, and disappear—rear window and all—behind the seats in a matter of seconds. Despite the mild Mediterranean climate, the evening air is refreshingly cool. The clear mountain air invigorates the senses, and the swirling air drives away all tiresome thoughts. Your head clears; you feel calm and composed and enjoy the nighttime drive in all its glory. Your favorite music is pouring through the sound system, and no one is there to hear you singing, which begins sheepishly but winds up echoing through the mountains. Our descent into the valley is a euphoric ride.



We wish the drive would never end, but at some point the rest of the world inevitably reemerges from the dark oblivion of the night. The first lights of Cassis come into view

of 277 km/h (172 mph), the gendarmerie would surely feel obliged to object. But even if the new Porsche is in no danger of taking off, we have to let the integrated rear wing out just once, at least. Besides, it looks cool.



Exit to Marseille. And the customary toll station when exiting the motorway—*c'est la vie*. On a night like this, nothing can spoil the mood. The city receives its guests with its unique charms. The Boulevard Michelet is lined by high trees; left and right the belle époque mansions alternate with modern apartment buildings. We pass by the renowned Le Corbusier building and the Vélodrome. Then a red light as the engine falls silent. The Boxster has adopted the fuel-saving start-stop system from the 911—an upgrade that allows the new speedster to use up to 15 percent less fuel than its predecessor.

We've almost reached our destination. The time has flown by. Just a bit more! Saturday night in Marseille: the streets and plazas are packed with a mostly young crowd of revelers in search of a good time. Many gather with their cliques before the crowded cafés, gesticulating passionately and conversing in a myriad of languages. Admiringly they point at the unfamiliar car: “Belle voiture!” Across the way the Old Port of Marseille is decked out in festive strands of lights. The boats rock gently on the water; a calmer spot away from the clamor of the crowds. The Boxster is parked in plain sight—a final cup of coffee together delays the farewell a few moments longer. Then we do a few rounds through the narrow alleyways of the old city. The bright signs of the closed shops contrast with the blue of the breaking day. Then the hotel comes into view; soon it will be time to say good-bye. One last fleeting touch, a final glance over the shoulder before the door falls shut.

It was an unforgettable night, and we will meet again. ●

below the craggy cliffs, but this time we blow right past the Mediterranean town with its picturesque promenades. The Boxster beats a path to the freeway heading toward Marseille. As enjoyable as the trot through the mountains was, the roadster needs to air it out a little now. A firm step on the gas pedal sends the Porsche off to the races with an agreeable rumble.

Five seconds flat is all the Boxster S with PDK needs from zero to 100 km/h (62 mph), whereas its six-cylinder little brother with 195 kW (265 hp) and PDK-support performs the same feat in a still outstanding 5.7 seconds. What that means for us—full speed ahead! We cruise down the left lane with bravado. Alas, French motorways are no place for the Boxster S to really flex its muscles. At its top speed

BOXSTER (TYPE 981)
Engine: Six-cylinder boxer
Displacement: 2,706 cc
Power: 265 hp (195 kW)
Maximum torque:
 280 Nm at 4,500–6,500 rpm
0–100 km/h: 5.8 (5.7*) sec.
Top track speed: 264 (262*) km/h (164/163* mph)
CO₂ emissions: 192 (180*) g/km
Fuel consumption
 City: 11.4 (10.6*) l/100 km
 Highway: 6.3 (5.9*) l/100 km
 Combined: 8.2 (7.7*) l/100 km
 * with Porsche double-clutch transmission (PDK)

BOXSTER S (TYPE 981)
Engine: Six-cylinder boxer
Displacement: 3,436 cc
Power: 315 hp (232 kW)
Maximum torque:
 360 Nm at 4,500–5,800 rpm
0–100 km/h: 5.1 (5.0*) sec.
Top track speed: 279 (277*) km/h (173/172* mph)
CO₂ emissions: 206 (188*) g/km
Fuel consumption
 City: 12.2 (11.2*) l/100 km
 Highway: 6.9 (6.2*) l/100 km
 Combined: 8.8 (8.0*) l/100 km
 * with Porsche double-clutch transmission (PDK)