

out of office



Porsche

BOXSTER AND CAYMAN

- Excellence in motion



THE LAUNCH ... AND ...



Carl Wepener,
CE: Corporate Services



Excellence in motion

Show me a motoring journalist who won't respond to an invitation from Porsche for a launch of one of its models and I'll show you a very deranged individual. Not only did I respond to the invitation immediately, but cleared my diary for that day at the same time.

Although the invitation was to the launch of the face-lifted versions of the Boxster and Cayman, it included the opening of the new Porsche Centre South Africa at Umhlanga Rocks in KwaZulu-Natal.

The new home of Porsche Umhlanga, KwaZulu-Natal, is a replica of the Gauteng premises and makes use of the latest technology for servicing clients' vehicles.

The facility

After touring the facility with its General Manager Tracy Elmes and Porsche's MD Toby Venter, the latter said: "The facility was born out of our desire, not only to enhance the ownership experience but to offer both Porsche owners and aspirant Porsche owners a home where every detail echoes the essence of the Porsche brand."

"...to own a Porsche is to be part of a family," he continued, "and we see the new Porsche Centre Umhlanga as the new home for the KZN Porsche Family – a hugely enthusiastic group of owners..."

The state-of-the-art premises built to the latest Porsche International Corporate Identity standards offers a 35-car showroom, a spare parts division which ensures a quick response time and a well-equipped modern workshop with 17 Maha (German make) underground lifts as a special feature. Together with a modern boardroom, Designer Drivers Boutique and coffee shop this 6 158sqm facility is magnificent.

Keeping the brand

Coming to the two vehicles in question, the changes, visual or mechanical, have been made with the aesthetics and advanced development of the brand in mind. In addition, the client and the actual 'sporting' quality of the brand have not being neglected at all.

The front of the vehicle is different in that larger, more aerodynamic, mirrors are fitted on a sleeker fender line with new headlights. The bumper is new with the lights positioned differently, making the vehicles more masculine but with a lot more flow.

The rear also sees new light clusters with a new bumper and round exhaust pipes.

The interior features head airbags in the open car and a number of excellent safety features in all its models. The CDR 30 audio system with its easy to read monochromatic display gives excellent sound, and Porsche's new PCM Communication Management is even more efficient and versatile through its control of communication and navigation functions.

The new lines give a more enclosed look for both models.



The business end, or centre, of the Porsche sees new engines that are completely recyclable, while power has been upped from 2.7 litres to 2.9 litres. The 3.4 litre remains the same size in the S models but now has direct injection.

An amazing new electronically oil demand controlled oil pump ensures delivery to the right parts through any twist and turns or acceleration. Vario Cam Plus ensures smoothness on idle and lift for high revolutions.

A trend-setting gearbox

To my mind the best standard innovation in the Boxster and Cayman is the new PDK (Doppelkupplung Transmission) double clutch that uses the best features of a manual and automatic transmission. This amazing gearbox is set to become the trend in the near future as it is really a marvel in that it is not only very smooth, but can change from seventh gear to second gear depending on your driving style. It also holds the gear through cornering and the changes are 50% quicker due to its double clutch. Of course, a manual gearbox model is available as an option at no extra cost for the old die hards.

At last we could experience these awesome vehicles ourselves and I immediately selected the Boxster S with its 3.4 litre motor with Sport Chrono Plus. This means there is a setting for Comfort, Sport and Sport Plus. The extra settings are for those who like the racing experience. This car is really fast without the look or the feel. From pull away to flooring the pedal it is sheer pleasure handling this gentle rocket and listening to the particular Porsche sound it emits. With the setting on Sport Plus it does harden the suspension but on the National road towards Pietermaritzburg it was hardly noticeable.

Launch control

I have come to the conclusion that the Sport and Sport Plus setting is only for serious drivers that want to race and need that extra bit of advantage and, therefore, Porsche has what is called Launch Control when the vehicle has the Sports Chrono Package or Sports Chrono Plus package. These optional packages are easily recognisable by the analogue/digital stopwatch in the centre of the instrument panel

I could not really drive very fast as the highway was busy, but had ample opportunity to put my foot down on the accelerator in passing slow traffic and going fast into





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Client satisfaction

corners to try this magnificent PDK gearbox. Both the Boxster and the Cayman excelled in this regard although it is not the same experience as with the Porsche 911 or other much more expensive sports cars.

I have heard mention that the Porsche 2.9 litre is not what is expected in acceleration. That said, I must add that while accelerating with a Porsche 3.4 litre in front of me I had no trouble staying with the bigger engined model. The 2.9 litre models reach 100kph in 5.8 seconds while the S models reach it in 5.2 seconds

The S models and the Sport Chrono Plus will be for the more enthusiastic drivers. My personal favourite is the 2.9 litre model as its performance, overall handling and features are more than adequate and are true to a full blooded Porsche. The differences are negligible and will only come into play during true racing where expert drivers are at the controls.

Porsche claims that fuel consumption is 16% better even with the increased power. The test was too short for me to determine this as the driving was hard and more

than one person drove the vehicles. My consumption with the 3.4 liter Cayman S was 16.1 litre per 100km and 11.7 with the 2.9 liter version of the Boxster.

As always, and with all its sports models, Porsche has never not been striking in its appearance and, at this stage, I do believe that the new Cayman is the most striking of them all.

Pricing

The vehicles are priced at R595 000 for the Boxster PDK; R695 000 for the Boxster S PDK; R650 000 for the Cayman PDK; and R795 000 for the Cayman S PDK.

The day came to an end much too soon and I sadly bid good bye to the Boxsters and Caymans. I came back with a great experience and confidence not only in the product, but also by the amount of effort, money and personal dedication the whole Porsche family has put into, not only the Umhlanga Dealership, but also Porsche South Africa to ensure not only its growth, but mostly the satisfaction of its clients' and the marketing of its brand through Porsche's excellence worldwide and its satisfied clients' alike. □