

A BOXING *match...*

In this month's review, **Ade Holder** takes the hotly-anticipated new Porsche Boxster for a spin around Surrey – starting from, where else, but the zig-zags of Box Hill...

For those of you who frequent the *Surrey Life* online motors page at surrey.greatbritishlife.co.uk, you will know a little bit about what I was expecting from this car – and I am very happy to say it is well worth the hype.

A tour across Surrey seemed the perfect way to test the Boxster – and starting from the slopes of Box Hill, the focal point of all the Olympic cycling action, then to Richmond, via Reigate, Horley and a top-down cruise through Esher, it was driving pleasure at every turn.

From the first moment you see the new Boxster in the flesh, you realise Porsche are taking this incarnation of their mid-engine roadster very seriously indeed. In simple terms, the wheels are closer to each end so the car looks more purposeful than the older version, the overhanging nose is gone, the side air intakes are bigger and the whole car just looks fantastic. As well as the looks, though, this vehicle is more powerful, lighter and more economical than its predecessors, and that's before you even get behind the wheel.

The car that Porsche Guildford very kindly loaned to me did have a number of optional extras as part of the package, from various handling and internal options to the fantastic 7 speed PDK gearbox, as well as larger wheels and a very impressive audio upgrade. However, with or without this, I am confident this car would still impress even the most hardened drivers.



Above: The Porsche Boxster; a lesson in mid-engine magic
Right: The Boxster's interior... cool, calm and collected



The interior is perfectly German; smooth, neat, well laid-out and a very nice place to be. Porsche have somehow managed to make you feel like you are in a racing car without any of the bumps and sharp edges.

A smooth ride

To drive, this car is just a joy. It offers various modes to suit your taste from sports-plus with sharper gear changes, harder suspension and less traction control to the standard setting that serves very well for just popping to the shops. I

“A tour across Surrey seemed the perfect way to test the Boxster – and from the slopes of Box Hill via a top-down cruise through Esher, it was driving pleasure at every turn...”

even managed to drive my eight-and-a-half month pregnant partner the 30 or so miles in perfect comfort!

In sports-plus, the performance is stunning and it feels substantially faster than the figures would suggest. However, in any mode, it's a thrilling experience. The engine noise is just addictive, you feel so connected with the road and it's a car you won't want to get out of... ever!

After countless miles of smiling round Surrey, I found it impossible to find anything I don't like about this car. Even the convertible roof folds down simply and quickly with no fuss at all. When the roof is up, you would never know you were not in a hard-top car. At a push, the worst thing I could come up with was that the hidden cup holder in the dashboard would not fit a bottle of drink from M&S... that is really it!

So, whether you are a Porsche owner or a first-time sports car buyer, you will get heaps of fun from this car – and all for a starting price of under £40,000!

• **Porsche Centre Guildford**, Woodbridge Meadows, Guildford GU1 1BD. Tel: 01483 408800 / porsche.co.uk/guildford

NEED TO KNOW:

How much: Boxster from £37,589 and Boxster S from £45,384

Power: Boxster 265bhp, Boxster S 315 bhp

0-60mph: Boxster 0-60mph in 5.7 seconds, Boxster S 0-60mph in 5.0 seconds

Economy: Boxster 37.7 mpg with PDK gearbox, Boxster S 35.3mpg with PDK gearbox

How: Book your test drive at Porsche Guildford