

## Guess who's back?

PAGE 2



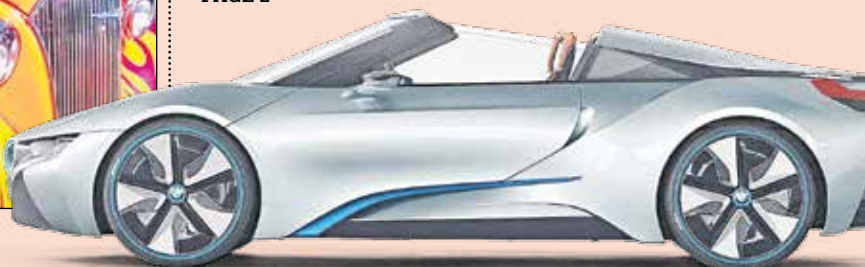
## Car show calendar

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PAGE 3



## Along came a Spyder

Inside BMW's new i8 lux sportscar.  
PAGE 2



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U.S. automakers react to Trump pulling out of the Paris Accord.

PAGE 2

## TEST DRIVE

# Motor Matters

## 2017 Porsche 718 Boxster S

DAN LYONS | text and photos  
Special to the Times Union

**B**oxster is all new for 2017. The fourth generation models look both wider and flatter than their former selves (though the tale of the tape shows the width is unchanged). Much of the sheet metal in Porsche's mid-engine sports car is fresh (just hood, deck lid, top and windshield carry over).



Spotter's cues for the new 718 cars include larger air intakes front and side, and a thin, black trim strip with integrated Porsche logo stretching between the taillights. Lighting, wheels and details (mirrors, door handles) have all been reconsidered, and the centrally located tailpipes telegraph the trim level (single, oval Boxster); round, twin (Boxster S or Boxster with optional sport exhaust).

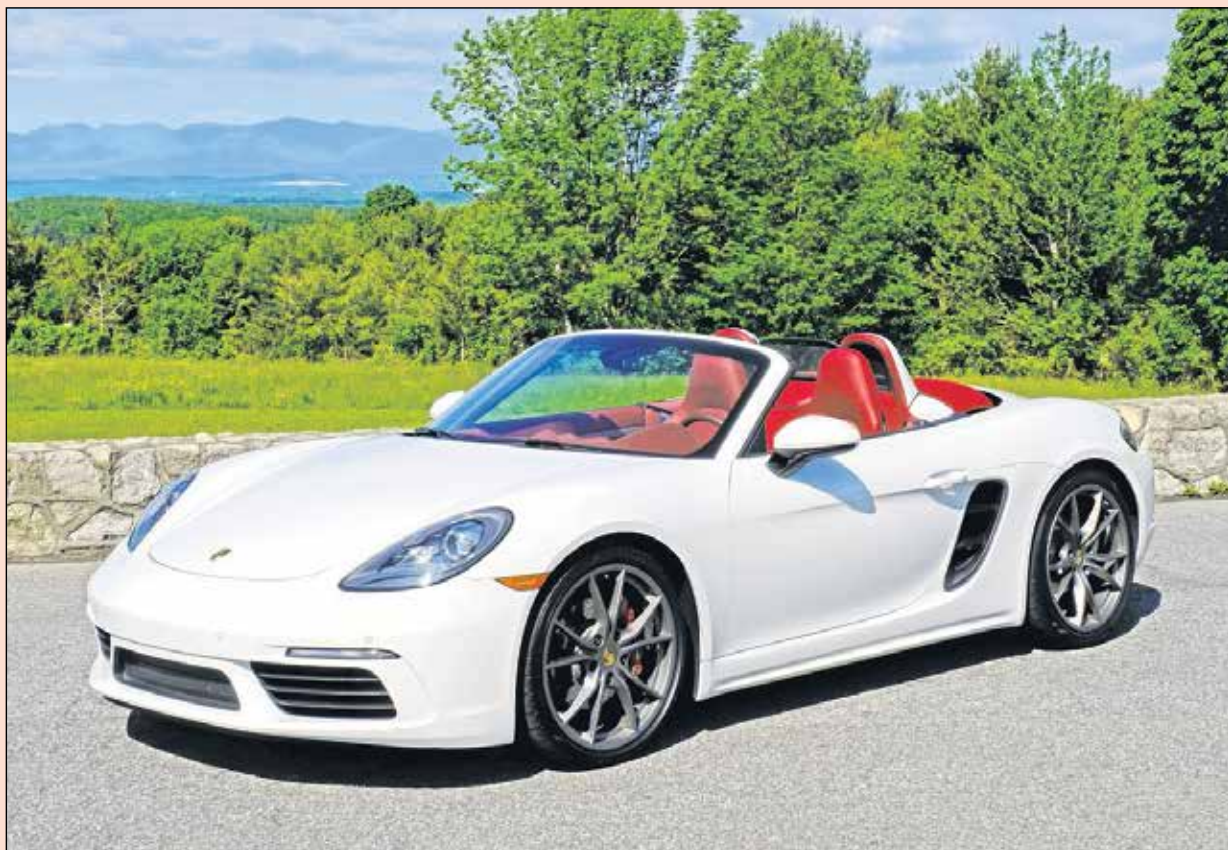
### 2017 Porsche 718 Boxster S

MSRP: \$56,000 (Boxster) \$68,400 (Boxster S)  
As Tested: \$94,310

More significant are the differences in engines. The former, naturally aspirated flat-sixes have been replaced with turbocharged, four-cylinder motors. Porsche says that the engine changes were made in the interest of boosting power and efficiency. Regarding the latter, EPA says you can expect 20/26/22 on a car like my tester (an S model with six-speed stick). I recorded 22), or 21/28/24 with the same model equipped with the PDK.

While fuel economy is up, with performance cars, m.p.h. carries far more weight than m.p.g. For 2017, Boxster's standard model gets a 2.0L turbo four rated at 300 horsepower and 280 lb.-ft. of torque. (That's +35, and +74, respectively, compared with the former, 2.7 flat-six). S models employ a 2.5L turbo four that generates 350 h.p. and 309 lb.-ft. of torque (+35 h.p. and +43 lb.-ft. of torque, vs. the former, 3.4L flat-six). Both motors can be paired with either the standard, six-speed manual or optional (\$3,210) PDK seven-speed, dual-clutch automatic transmission.

The new motors are distinctly different than the ones they follow in how they drive, and how they sound. As you might expect, given the increase in power, the Gen 4.0 turbo cars are faster overall and noticeably quicker off the dime. Porsche claims that the standard car is now as fast from 0-60 (4.5 seconds with PDK and Sport Chrono pkg.) as the S model was in 2016, and has a



THE PORSCHE 718 BOXSTER returns for 2017 with new styling cues, including larger air intakes on front and sides.

similar top, track speed (170 mph vs. 172). The 2017 S is quicker still, with a Porsche claimed 0-60 time of 4.0 flat (PDK and Sport Chrono). Acceleration in my S test car was glass smooth and lag free.

Porsche estimates that about 20 percent of Boxster buyers will opt for a stick shift car, as would I, so I was happy to have a manual model for this test. Both the standard model and the S have the same (tall) transmission gearing as was found in the former S.

It's a wide ratio gearbox, and on the racetrack, you'll only shift once before you hit (and pass) 60 m.p.h. The spacing between cogs is appropriate if the objective is maximum speed. However, for most sports car drivers (even the ones who regularly hit the track or autocross), the majority of their driving is on road.

Here, the process of running through the gearbox is an integral, enjoyable part of the car/driver connection. I think it's safe to say that the subset of drivers who buy a manual would prefer a close-ratio gearbox, because they're seeking maximum involvement in the driving process. More shifting beats less, in that regard.

That said, dual clutch automatics are a nice alternative for those who would rather let the car do the work, with the option of shifting themselves. I've driven a PDK most recently in the 2017 Porsche 911. The gearbox is impressively smooth from gear to gear, and quick to respond to paddle shift requests, in manumatic mode.

Sound, as well as shifting, is a core part of the classic sports car experience. I've had the pleasure of driving a

The new motors are distinctly different than the ones they follow in how they drive, and how they sound.

*Continued on page 2*

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