

### Three's company

The radical looks and powertrain of the new Mazda3

PAGE 2



Mazda Kai concept

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PAGE 2



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PAGE 3



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PAGE 3

### TEST DRIVE

# Options Open

## 2018 Porsche 718 Boxster GTS

DAN LYONS | text and photos  
Special to the Times Union

The fourth generation Boxster celebrates its sophomore season with a new model. Porsche's mid-engine convertible (and the hardtop Cayman, its series sibling) are now offered in base, S and new GTS versions.

Porsche picked some of the features that are high on most buyer's want lists — Active Suspension Management, Sport Chrono Package, Torque Vectoring, Sport Exhaust, 20-inch rims, etc. — and bundled them into the GTS, for less money that they cost if added individually.

The caper is the bow that wraps that bundle. GTS cars get an extra 15 horsepower over S models, and 8 additional lb.-ft. of torque — maybe. Stay with me, I'm going to back up before I go forward.



### 2018 Porsche 718 Boxster GTS

MSRP: \$81,900 · As Tested: \$99,430

The motors found in the last generation of Boxsters were naturally aspirated flat sixes. As of last year, in the interest of improving power and efficiency, they were replaced by turbocharged, flat fours (2.0L in base models, 2.5L in S). In the new GTS, the 2.5L is rated at 365 h.p. @ 6,500 rpm, and 309 lb.-ft. of torque. But, if you opt for the PDK seven-speed automatic transmission (\$3,730), you also add 8 more lb.-ft. of torque. (That's because the small percentage of stick shift buyers didn't justify beefing up the manual gearbox to handle the added torque).

Those 365 horses are 65 more than the base car, 15 more than the S. In a segment where differences are measured by ticks of the stopwatch, it's enough to notice.

Equipped with the PDK and Sport Chrono Package, zero to 60 times are 4.5 (base), 4.0 (S), and 3.9 (GTS). Stick shift cars are about 1/2 second behind. The new generation of turbo four motors in the 718 cars are



THE 2018 PORSCHE 718 BOXSTER GTS is the German performance maker's mid-engine convertible, offered in base, S and new GTS level, which gets an extra 15 horsepower over the S, powered by a turbocharged flat four.

quicker than the sixes they replaced.

They sound different, too. The honks and howls of the flat six at work were a part of the car's charm since the first Boxster arrived in the 1997 model year. I miss that soundtrack, but Porsche has gone to great lengths to give the flat fours a voice of their own.

And while the bar for tone in four-cylinder sports cars is admittedly low, these cars do indeed sound good. The turbo four's sonic output is amplified and piped into the cabin, via firewall-mounted speaker.

The Sport Chrono package includes a selector with Normal, Sport and Sport Plus driving modes. The latter two progressively unmuzzle the exhaust. Sport drops the tone an octave; Sport Plus adds burbles and pops

whenever you back out of the throttle. Normal is essentially an off switch, allowing you to cruise through quiet neighborhoods before or after hours, without announcing yourself or annoying the easily annoyed.

Porsche picked some of the features that are high on most buyer's want lists and bundled them into the GTS.

Porsche predicts that about 80 percent of Boxster buyers will opt for the automatic transmission. While I would be in the minority on this, the PDK is really responsive. When you want the car to choose the gear, it's happy to do so, and faster than us mere mortals. And, the dual clutch design makes it quick to respond to paddle shift requests in manumatic mode, when you want to channel your Inner Formula One Self.

In addition to loosing the pipes, the Sport and Sport

Continued on page 2

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