

PORSCHE CAYMAN S

THE "BOXSTER COUPE"

By Barbara & Bill Schaffer



BARBARA –

We seldom see a woman driving a Porsche, and one wouldn't be on the top of my shopping list. Nevertheless, I loved the new Cayman. It's been a couple of years since I drove a 911 or Boxster and I don't remember either one being as much fun or as user friendly as this new two-seat coupe.

BILL – For most people it's hard to justify buying a two-seat sports car, but on a drive to the airport recently, I may have come up with a good reason—fuel economy. Running with traffic between 70 and 80 mph, I averaged 27.9 mpg on my 90-mile drive to the airport. That's better than many economy cars and it is certainly a heck of a lot more fun. However, good fuel economy is just the icing on the cake. This new Porsche is great!

BARBARA – The Cayman is designed as a coupe version of the midengine Boxster roadster, and most of the body panels are identical. The roofline is similar to that on the 911, but from the side view it drops behind more bulbous rear fenders. A large stylish air intake for the engine is positioned just behind each door.

With its large front openings, the Cayman more closely resembles the 911 Turbo than the 911S, which has smaller openings. The Cayman rear lacks the air intake of the 911S and instead has a clean and slightly recessed surface that stretches from the rear window to the spoiler that deploys at speeds over 75 mph. The spoiler could be a telltale for knowledgeable highway patrol officers.

BILL – As on the highly regarded Boxster, the Cayman engine is mounted right behind the passenger compartment. This configuration produces excellent balance and handling, plus makes a significant 14.1 cubic feet of overall cargo space in the front and rear compartments. That's as much space as the trunk of a BMW 5 Series sedan.

The Cayman is built on the same platform as the Boxster, but with the rigid roof and other structural enhancements, it's nearly as solid as the 911.

BARBARA – Like all Porsches, the Cayman has a long list of options that allow buyers to customize the car to their individual needs, tastes and budget.

The only model currently available, the Cayman S, has a base price starting at \$59,695 including destination charge. Our test vehicle was loaded with nine options that totaled over \$13,000. Options included metallic paint, a preferred package of convenience features, power seat package, PCM (navigation and audio) and Bi-Xenon headlamp package. It also had 19-Inch alloy wheels, Porsche Active Suspension Management, Sport Chrono Package Plus, and a Porsche crest in the headrest. The total price with options was \$73,050. That's over \$20,000 less than the benchmark 911 Carrera S, and I like this just as much. Porsche believes this car will not cannibalize normal 911 buyers.

BILL – The Cayman power comes from a 3.4-liter horizontally opposed six-cylinder engine producing 295-hp. The engine is

Porsche Cayman S

STANDARD EQUIPMENT

18-Inch alloy wheels; Speed activated rear spoiler; Active Brake Differential; Porsche Stability Management; Traction control; Power windows; Anti-theft system and alarm; Partial leather seats; Climate control; Heated outside mirrors; Homelink system; Cruise; Keyless entry.

Base Price: \$58,900
Freight.....\$795

Options:

Metallic paint.....\$825
Preferred package.....\$2,190
Power seat package\$1,550
PCM (navigation & audio)\$2,970
Bi-Xenon headlight package.....\$1,090
19-Inch Carrera S wheels.....\$1,550
Porsche Active Suspension Management\$1,990
Sport Chrono Package Plus\$920.
Porsche crest in headrest.....\$270.
Total Options.....\$13,355
Price as Tested.....\$73,050

DIMENSIONS

EPA SizeTwo-seater
Weight.....2,954 lb.
Wheelbase95.1 in.
Length.....172.1 in.
Width.....70.9 in.
Height51.4 in.
Fuel Capacity19.6 gal.
Cargo Capacity.....14.1 cu. ft.

MECHANICAL

Engine3.4L DOHC Horiz. 6-Cyl.
Horsepower295@6250
Torque251@4400
Transmission.....6-Spd. man.
Drive.....Rear-wheel
Brakes.....Disc ABS
TiresFront P235/35ZR19
RearP295/30ZR19

PERFORMANCE

0 to 60 mph.....5.1 sec.
Top speed171 mph
EPA economy rating20/28 mpg
Our actual fuel econ24.1 mpg

COMPETITORS

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>> PORSCHE CAYMAN S - cont'd

water-cooled and has a Variocam Plus variable intake valve control. Our car had the precise six-speed manual transmission, but a five-speed Tiptronic S transmission, which can be shifted manually by control buttons on the wheel or the shifter, is an option.

The brakes are four-piston with vented and cross-drilled discs, anti lock and Active Brake Differential.

BARBARA - The Cayman is loaded with active and passive safety equipment including a stability control system, traction control, and six air bags (front, side and thorax on both sides of the cabin.

BILL - Porsche claims a 0 to 60 mph time of 5.1 seconds, and we have no reason to argue. I recorded 83 mph in my own acceleration test, where I pull onto the highway and accelerate full-throttle to the first mailbox, or about one-eighth mile. They also claim a top speed of 171 mph.

As I said earlier, the fuel economy was fantastic. We did record 27.9 mpg at highway speeds of 70 to 80 mph. In combined driving, we averaged 24.1 mpg. The EPA rates the Cayman at 20 mpg for city driving and 28 mpg on the highway.

BARBARA - It looks like Porsche has another hit on their hands with this new Cayman.

BILL - The Porsche Cayman S is an easy car to fall in love with. It's a car that allows a good driver to push the limits or for an average driver to be all that he or she can be.

On the downside, the rear visibility is poor, especially when trying to back up. It would be nice to have a rear-view camera displaying in the navigation system when backing up.

On other Porsches, I was frustrated by the complexity of the audio systems. The PCM system, combined with the navigation system in the Cayman, was very easy to use. I was able to get everything I wanted without resorting to the owner's manual.

If you find price of this Cayman S too high, watch for a more affordable 250-hp Cayman model in 2007. ■

