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Used Porsche Boxster and Cayman (987 & 981) Buyer's Guide

Known issues, what to inspect, generation differences, and current sold prices from the pcarvalues.com auction sample. Prices are U.S. dollars only.

Prepared Nov 24, 2026 (America/Chicago). Auction figures are from pcarvalues.com auction sales data as of Nov 20, 2026. This is a market snapshot and a buying checklist, not an appraisal.

The 987 and 981 Boxster and Cayman share engines, a mid-engine layout and most of the same homework. The Boxster is the convertible; the Cayman is the coupe. Neither is a lesser 911 so much as a different, often more usable sports car, and both are where a lot of first-time buyers should start.

987 cars cover Boxster model years 2005–2012 and Cayman model years 2006–2012, with a facelift for 2009 (987.2). 981 Boxsters are 2013–2016; 981 Caymans are 2014–2016 in the U.S. (there was no 2013 model-year Cayman here). The later 718 cars are a separate, four-cylinder line and have their own pages.

The Boxster line as a whole (including the earlier 986) had a $17,600 median from 477 U.S.-dollar sales, with the middle half selling between $13,000 and $31,500. Sales in this window ran from $4,500 to $142,000. Of 236 sales with a known mileage, the median odometer reading was 37,000 miles.

The Cayman line as a whole had a $34,375 median from 112 U.S.-dollar sales, with the middle half selling between $26,400 and $55,400. Sales in this window ran from $11,500 to $150,000. Of 62 sales with a known mileage, the median odometer reading was 41,000 miles.

The Boxster median is pulled down by the first-generation 986, which is cheaper and older. For a 987 or 981, use the generation figures below, not the blended Boxster number.

What these cars have been selling for

GENERATION	MODEL YEARS	MEDIAN	MIDDLE 50%	USD SALES	MEDIAN MILEAGE
Boxster (987)	2005–2012	$26,500	$20,400–$35,900	134	33,000 miles
Boxster (981)	2013–2016	$47,500	$36,000–$70,500	79	24,000 miles
Cayman (987)	2006–2012	$29,500	$23,000–$36,000	77	72,000 miles
Cayman (981)	2014–2016	$63,000	$48,900–$85,600	35	17,000 miles

Medians and the middle 50% use the same snapshot window as the matching value page (last 12 months, or the full sample if that window is thin). Mileage is the median odometer reading among sales in that window with a known mileage. All figures are U.S. dollars only.

Generation differences

Split these cars by generation first, then by coupe or convertible. 987.1 cars share the M96/M97 engine family and the intermediate-shaft bearing with 997.1 Carreras. 987.2 cars (from the 2009 facelift) moved to direct injection and left that bearing behind; PDK became optional. 981 cars are the last six-cylinder Boxster and Cayman before the 718, with a stiffer structure, electrically assisted steering and a more modern cabin. The earlier 986 Boxster (1997–2004) is a different, cheaper car with its own issues and is not the focus of this guide, though it is linked below.

Known issues

987.1: intermediate-shaft bearing and bore scoring

Early 987 Boxsters and Caymans, especially 2005–2008 cars, carry the same intermediate-shaft bearing concern as 997.1 Carreras. Treat records of a retrofit or a recent specialist inspection as a requirement, not a nice-to-have. Bore scoring is reported particularly on 3.4-liter S engines. A borescope belongs in every pre-purchase inspection on a 987.1, and is still wise on a 987.2.

Rear main seal, water pump, coolant pipes and the air-oil separator

These are the same wearable items you see on 996 and 997.1 cars. A rear main seal seep often waits until a clutch job. Plastic coolant pipes and the water pump should already have been serviced on a car of this age; if they have not, budget for them. A failed air-oil separator can cause smoke or oil consumption.

987.2 and 981: a shorter engine list, not a free pass

987.2 and 981 cars avoid the 987.1 intermediate-shaft bearing, which is the main mechanical reason to pay more for a later car. Direct injection can lead to intake-valve carbon over time. PDK needs a documented fluid service. 981s also need a careful look at the electrically assisted steering, sensor faults, and the usual water-pump and coolant work. 981 GT4 and GTS cars are a different price band; use their trim pages.

Convertibles, coupes and the rest of the car

On a Boxster, cycle the top several times, check the plastic rear window or glass window and seals, and look for damp carpets. On both body styles, engine mounts, control arms, wheel bearings and worn tires are common at this age and mileage. Door-latch and window-regulator repairs are annoying rather than fatal, but they show up on neglected cars.

What to inspect before you buy

- Specialist inspection with a borescope, especially on any 987.1 and on 3.4-liter S cars.
- Records of intermediate-shaft work on 987.1 cars, plus water-pump, coolant-pipe and PDK or manual clutch history.
- A top-cycle and water-hose test on Boxsters; a look under the front and rear carpets on both body styles.
- Test drive that includes a rough road (listens for worn arms and mounts) and a hot restart.
- Underside for oil, coolant and exhaust leaks, and for damage to the front lip or the rear diffuser.
- Tire date codes, brake-pad and rotor thickness, and whether the car sits evenly.
- A VIN recall check. Compare each car to the matching generation page, not to the blended Boxster median.

Value pages for this guide

- 987 Boxster values
- 981 Boxster values
- 987 Cayman values
- 981 Cayman values
- Cayman vs Boxster
- 987 vs 981 Boxster
- 987 vs 981 Cayman
- 986 Boxster values
- 718 Cayman values
- 718 Boxster values

Questions buyers ask

Boxster or Cayman?

Mechanically they are close. Choose the Cayman if you want a stiffer coupe and often a slightly higher sold price; choose the Boxster if you want the open car. Compare them on the Cayman vs Boxster page, then use the 987 and 981 generation pages for the years you are shopping.

Is a 986 Boxster a better bargain?

It is cheaper, and it is also older, with its own engine and top issues. If your budget points there, start with the 986 value page and a specialist inspection. This guide is aimed at 987 and 981 buyers, who are usually shopping a later, more expensive car.

Always verify a specific car with a specialist inspection and a VIN recall check. Figures are a sample of public auction results, not every U.S. sale, and condition, mileage, history and options move any one car. Live values: https://pcarvalues.com/guides/used-987-981-boxster-cayman-buyers-guide/