



# *On the Road with the Boxster S in Monaco*

*Seated behind the wheel of the Boxster S, Porsche Junior Alex Riberas Bou is following the route of Monaco's Formula One circuit. Not at racing speed, but still thoroughly reveling in the Porsche's precision handling.*

**By** Charlotte Tiersen **Photos by** Victor Jon Goico



The boxer sound turns this famous tunnel into a resonance chamber

**A**venue de Monte-Carlo. The doors of Gucci, Valentino, Laliq, Hermès, and Prada are still shut tight. A street sweeper in front of the Casino is making its rounds at a snail's pace, while the people on the yachts and sailboats in the harbor still sleep, their boats gently rising and falling to the rhythm of the waves. Before eight in the morning, Monaco is still in slumber; there's no sign yet of the luxury cars that will be lined up along the narrow streets by noon, no sign of the hundreds of motor scooters that will be whizzing by from every corner, nor of the inquisitive tourists who swarm into the city every day.

Now is the perfect time to find one of the world's most renowned racing lines—and to retrace its route. Which explains why one person in the principality voluntarily got up early this morning: Alex Riberas



Bou. The rumbling call of the luminous yellow Porsche Boxster S ignites him into action, and the Porsche Motorsports Junior heads out through the terra-cotta high-rise street canyons to follow the tracks of Formula One. The earlier the better: that's because the 3.34-kilometer Circuit de Monaco is closed to regular traffic only during the Formula One Grand Prix. And—keeping in mind the realm of possibility and traffic rules—the Boxster S wants to let its racing genes shine.

During the warm-up stage, Alex Riberas cannot yet say what impresses him more: the Boxster, the backdrop, or the racetrack. Far from dissipating this impression, a few laps only serve to heighten it. "It's an amazing sensation to drive a Porsche through

Bottleneck:  
The sharp turn  
in front of the  
Fairmont Hotel is  
the slowest bend



Proud Spaniard:  
Alex Riberas Bou (19)  
is delighted with his  
first Porsche contract

On the road to  
Casino Square:  
Yachts on the right,  
exclusive boutiques  
on the left



the streets of such a special place.” Turns and situations that one would normally see in racing broadcasts or computer games are combined with that mid-engine feeling. Reality looks quite different: the lack of barriers and stacks of tires; the sidewalks that mark the route. And what would the jeweler at the Casino driveway say if his window display accidentally became the run-off area? The 19-year-old’s racing spirit inevitably suffers a bit from the restrictions: “I can feel the ambience and the curious glances, but above all the rumbling that promises what the Boxster S would offer if it were set free.”

He is, of course, contemplating how to take a race car to the limit in the place that will become his home this year. The Barcelona teen came out on top in a competition against other young race-car drivers from all around the world in a two-part selection process that focused on factors including fitness, mental strength, and technical abilities, as well as teamwork with engineers and simulated qualifying laps. He is now one of four drivers whom Porsche is providing with special support as part of its program for promoting new talent. “I am very proud to have been selected by Porsche. Especially when I see how many

successful Porsche factory drivers got their start as Juniors,” says Alex Riberas.



Just now, he’s all grins as he sits in the open-top Boxster S and savors his good fortune in—of all places—a spot where money is of no concern. Where a Coke at the popular Jimmy’s club costs 80 euros, and where the price of a room at the Hôtel de Paris can range between 452 and 11,000 euros a night, depending on the season. Alex takes a few easy laps. Yes, the Boxster S is perfect for a leisurely

ramble as well. Past the small Sainte-Dévote Chapel, at the starting bend of the city racetrack that is used as such for just one weekend each May. Then the ascent to Beau Rivage, past the Casino toward the scarcely visible Mirabeau corner, through the narrow hairpin turn down to the entrance of the tunnel below the Fairmont Hotel, back into the light and along the harbor promenade, around the La Rascasse restaurant and then back onto the Boulevard.

The driver and Boxster feel quite at home in the mild Côte d’Azur climate. Back at the Casino, Alex Riberas lets off the gas.

*Along with the ambience,  
there is the rumbling engine,  
hinting at what  
the Boxster S can offer  
if set free.*

As the Boxster S hums along, it seems clear that it, too, is enjoying itself. The first tourists are bustling about the Café de Paris and are happy to see the bright yellow diversion so early in the morning. Even if it means dancing coffee cups for those sitting just across the street.

It isn’t long before our navigator yields to the temptation of the Sport Plus button on the center console. The Boxster flexes its muscles from one second to the next. The chassis damper characteristics become distinctly more rigid; even Porsche Stability Management (PSM) intervenes at a later



Even with the famous Casino as a backdrop, the Boxster S is an eye-catcher and photo model

point. Engine and transmission reaction times are noticeably faster. The Motronic system changes the engine maps, so that the top speed is now available. The Boxster exclaims, *Here I am*. "It's like having two cars in one," says Alex. "Tigers are my favorite animals, and the Boxster S reminds me of a Bengal tiger that's ravenous with hunger." Alex's passenger notes the pulsating of the flat-six engine and suggests a comparison with the heart of a lion. The concept of Monaco as a big cats' reserve? Somehow it's fitting.



In any case, it's safe to say that the principality is a place of passion. And the passion of Porsche has always been a focal point in the Riberas home. "It took fifteen years for my father to save for his first Porsche; his dream of owning a 911 came true in 2002," says the junior Riberas. Until then, father and son

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raced cars from Zuffenhausen on a slightly different scale: in slot-car races. Between the two of them, their collection adds up to over one thousand model cars. Alex has always been interested in historic Porsche race cars; for Alex's birthday, his father gave him three miniature versions of the Porsche 956 trio that emerged victorious at the 1982 Le Mans—complete with a Rothmans paint job.

In Monte Carlo, Alex Riberas can also experience the difference between night and day, right where he is happiest to set the tiger free—in the tunnel. On this stretch of the Formula One circuit, cars can speed up to 290 km/h, but in an open-top Boxster, the acoustics alone offer endless fascination. "Awesome! This feels like Formula One!" he joyfully shouts into the wall of sound. That's praise a Boxster S can be proud of. What critic could be more exacting than a race-car driver?

Back into the dazzling sunlight, it's time to shift gears at the marina. Whenever Alex shifts down a gear, the Boxster rumbles with joy. It goes without saying that Alex uses the paddle switches on the steering wheel to direct the transmission. And he seemingly can't get enough. "I have to double-clutch in a race car, but here it's automatic," the young man exults. He loves the sturdy, sleek sensation of the roadster: "We often have to work for hours to get a race car tuned just right. Here, all I have to do is get behind the wheel and enjoy the neutral handling."



The endurance test: the hairpin turn in front of the Fairmont Hotel, the sharpest bend. Here, the Formula One rarely exceeds 40 km/h; and it is something the Boxster can do better along the outer edge. "I had anticipated that the car would understeer when turning inward. But the Boxster never loses its grip on the road. In fact, you can begin to accelerate at the exit while still in the cornering position. That really gives you the feeling that here's a car you can rely on."

And what is a race-car driver's ultimate dream? A win in Monaco, of course, even though there are no extra points for doing so. But it does mean an enormous boost of self-confidence. For now, our Boxster tour is as close as Alex Riberas can get to proving himself on the Monte Carlo street circuit. But should he perform well this season in the Carrera Cup, he could advance to the next stage in the Porsche Junior program: the Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup, which—as a Formula One support race series—takes place in Monte Carlo as well. And as the test-drive shows, Alex Riberas is off to a flying start. ●

#### BOXSTER S (TYPE 981)

**Engine:** Six-cylinder mid-engine boxer  
**Displacement:** 3,436 cc  
**Power:** 232 kW (315 hp)  
**Maximum torque:** 360 Nm at 4,500–5,800 rpm  
**0–100 km/h:** 5.1 (5.0\*) sec.  
**Top track speed:** 279 (277\*) km/h (173/172\* mph)  
**CO<sub>2</sub> emissions:** 206 (188\*) g/km  
**Fuel consumption**  
 City: 12.2 (11.2\*) l/100 km  
 Highway: 6.9 (6.2\*) l/100 km  
 Combined: 8.8 (8.0\*) l/100 km  
 \* with Porsche double-clutch transmission (PDK)

The most fortunate race spectators bring their own stands for viewing: Yachts offer the most coveted seats

