

CLASSIC DRIVER

Is this colour-shifting RUF the coolest Porsche Boxster of them all?

Lead

For the love of lilac: bringing the early 2000s trend of colour-shifting paint back to a new generation, Millennium Heroes' 2001 Porsche Boxster RUF 3400 S is rarer than even some of the brand's most sought-after creations...



As we step closer and closer to the ultimate high-tech Porsche of our modern-day dreams, the classics that laid the foundations for models like the 718 Boxster, 992 911, and beyond become all the more appealing. Sure, we can ogle over perfectly-specified classics for hours on end, but Porsche's modern classics are now just as desirable as their golden-era counterparts, with one-offs and customised examples becoming the hottest of hot commodities. This celebration of Lilac you see before you, in the form of Millennium Heroes' RUF 3400 S from 2001, is a prime example of a true head-turner, and certified future classic.

Despite years of being pushed aside as the 911's more squidgy, less attractive sibling, the 986-generation Boxster filled a gap in Porsche's market that has allowed the brand to enjoy success in affordable sports cars for nearly 30 years. First released in 1996 as the first road-going Porsche to be originally designed as a roadster since the 550 Spyder, the 986 shared many parts with the then top-of-the-line 996 911, giving new Porsche customers a taste of what the brand had to offer. The result was an often-overlooked sports car that is only now starting to enjoy its fame, mostly due to the influx of drivers desperate to feel that illusive Porsche buzz, but lack the budget for the mighty 911.



As the 986 continued to be rolled out around the world from Porsche's former 928 facility in Stuttgart, it didn't take long for German-born performance wizards RUF to turn their attention to Porsche's baby 911. Plans began to turn the Boxster into an even more well-rounded cabriolet, boasting 911-rivalling firepower to fully exploit its playful chassis, and shortly after the 3400S debuted at the 1999 Essen Motor Show. We rather flippantly glossed over the horsepower comment there, when in reality the upgraded engine was exactly what gave this rather subtle drop-top a real sting in its tailpipes. The 996-derived 3.4-litre engine completely alters the whole character of the 986 Boxster, pushing over 305 horsepower to the rear wheels, and an unmistakable symphony from the factory Sports Exhaust. As the Boxster continues to mature into a sophisticated and intuitive driver's car, the 986-generation puts the driver firmly at one with the car, aided by the satisfying 6-speed manual gearbox.



Sure, the engine is impressive, but it's hard to ignore the way this 3400 S in particular looks. With only 12 examples ever created, each car is a special creation in its own right, making this example even more unique with its jaw-dropping multi-tone shades of Light Purple Opal, Irish Blue and Amparo Blue Metallic, born out of the owner's love for all things lilac. Working closely alongside the RUF family, this incredibly special paint further cements the exclusivity and rarity of the car, one that has remained with the original owner since it was bought new in 2001. Elsewhere on the exterior, the 3400 S boasts a plethora of 996 GT3 parts, including a front and rear bumper, sports side skirts and redesigned door mirrors to give the car a much more pronounced and aggressive look, one that is reined-in slightly thanks to its pastel shades. To complete the new look, RUF fitted their signature 5-spoke magnesium wheels, helping to once again to transform the Boxster's road presence.

Step inside and anyone familiar with 986 Boxster will feel right at home, while the full RUF interior makeover elevates the levels of style and vibrancy even further. Settle into the GT3 bucket seats, finished in rich blue leather and contrasting Alcantara inserts, and you'll notice the matching sports steering wheel and drilled aluminium pedals, confirming this is certainly no ordinary Porsche Boxster. Perhaps our favourite part of all becomes apparent when the weather takes a turn for the worst, where this unique cabrio boasts a Lilac removable roof, ensuring it will stand out even when the heavens open!



During its single ownership, the car was given a comprehensive overhaul in 2020, ensuring the paintwork is in fabulous condition, while the interior benefitted from just as much time and effort in the detailing booth, ensuring it is as clean as it can be. As so many of us seek to find the rarest iterations of bygone Porsche models, it is those that initially slipped under the radar that return to flourish in later years. This RUF is a fine example of that, boasting rarity the likes of a PTS-shaded 991 GT2 RS can only dream of, all the while priced to leave you with change from 50,000 pounds. Above all, this unique creation got us thinking, who wants to be one of the crowd, when you can get a truly unique ride with RUF and their bespoke Porsche powers? We certainly want to be a part of the latter!

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