

AUTOMOTIVE

Porsche makes ownership more accessible with short-term rentals

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A Porsche 718 Boxster. Image credit: Porsche

By SARAH RAMIREZ

German automaker Porsche's U.S. importer is expanding its subscription program pilot to give drivers more on-demand, short-term access to sports cars.

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Two new pilot programs give Porsche enthusiasts the opportunity to rent a vehicle for a period as short as a few hours provided they live near one of the markets where the pilots are available. As car buyers' interests and habits evolve, luxury automakers are going in new directions to get more consumers in the driver's seat.

"Porsche is expanding beyond their subscription model to make it more accessible to a younger audience who is used to subscription services that don't require long-term commitment," said Julie Blackley, communications manager at [iSeeCars](#), Woburn, MA. "It's a good way to attract young brand enthusiasts who may not be able to afford a high-end luxury vehicle but will have the means to own one in the future."

Ms. Blackley is not affiliated with Porsche, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Porsche](#) was reached for comment.

On-demand driving

Porsche Cars North America is launching a short-term rental pilot and a peer-to-peer car sharing pilot.

Now available in the Atlanta metro area, Porsche Drive is a followup of sorts to the brand's month-to-month subscription plan, Porsche Passport, but without the same level of commitment. Created in partnership with Clutch Technologies, the program gives drivers access to new Porsche models for up to a week.



Porsche Passport lets members flip between sports cars, sedans and SUVs. Image credit: Porsche

Porsche Drive features current model cars from all six lines, which can be rented for hourly, daily and weekly blocks. Prices start at \$269 for four hours of driving a Macan, 718 Cayman or Boxster and up to \$2,999 to a weekly rental of a 911, without taxes or fees.

Vehicles are delivered within two hours of confirming reservations and include Porsche's white-glove concierge service.



Porsche Host connects owners and enthusiasts. Image credit: Porsche

Porsche Host, which will be available in San Francisco and Los Angeles starting in October, functions differently. The program was developed by Porsche Digital, Inc. and Turo, a carsharing company.

The vehicles in Porsche Host are owned by private individuals who rent their cars through Turo and may be older or vintage models. To add to the experience, the car owners have been trained to offer five-star Porsche service.

Porsche Host rental periods start at one day and can be a month or longer.

Reservations for Porsche Host are completed through the Turo Web site or mobile application, while Porsche Drive has a standalone Web site for bookings.

Changing ownership

As traditional car ownership becomes less of the norm, automakers are adapting their purchasing models to reflect consumer behavior.

Atlanta-area consumers can enroll in Porsche Passport and rent up to 22 different models through a mobile app, allowing them to cater their car choice to their needs.

The service is available on a month-to-month basis and offers two membership tiers. Included in the monthly fee are car registration fees, vehicle tax, insurance, maintenance and detailing, as well as unlimited mileage.

Consumers can apply for the program via an app for Apple and Android devices, with a one-time activation fee of \$500. Porsche Passport runs a background and credit check on a member before granting them approval for the service ([see story](#)).

As affluents grow more accustomed to online shopping, luxury automakers must prepare to meet customers' new digital-led expectations. While offline, onsite car purchases will not be disappearing anytime soon, consumer

preferences are changing fast enough that auto retail already needs to adapt.

With prospective car buyers spending more time online, automakers have a valuable opportunity to learn more information, such as the make, models and features that each potential buyer prefers. This data can help automakers strengthen relationships with consumers, for instance, by better tailoring vehicle recommendations ([see story](#)).

"Carsharing is the next frontier for the shared economy that Airbnb and Uber have paved the way for, and we will see luxury brands on that service as a result," Ms. Blackley said. "More luxury brands are adopting the subscription model to appeal to buyers who want more flexibility than a traditional lease"

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