

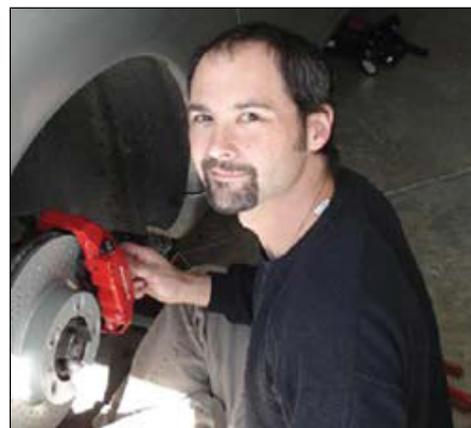
Updating the appearance of a Porsche has been common practice since the marque began. Whether it's putting 911 Fuchs on a 356, adding a rear spoiler to an early 928, or disguising a late 70's 911SC as a rare 993 Turbo S, modernization of aging models has been an important facet of the Porsche experience. Even the very first Porsche, 356-001, built in 1948, currently rolls on 1950's era wheels and wears a later Porsche crest at the center of its steering wheel.

As the 986 Boxster and 996 Carrera are now beginning to show signs of their age, many owners are looking for ways to freshen things up. The factory has helped this along, since many of the year-to-year changes in these models have been cosmetic. One of the easiest factory updates an owner can duplicate are changes to the headlights, tail lights, and side markers. Early Boxsters and Carreras have lights that contain a mixture of clear, red and amber lenses. Newer models, including the 987 and 997 versions, have been able to eliminate the amber section of the lenses, giving what many feel to be a cleaner look to the entire car. The new lights use silver colored bulbs that flash or shine amber, making the amber color in the lens itself unnecessary, but still meeting the DOT requirement for the color of those lamps. The easiest of these lights to replace are the side markers. The markers are held in place with a spring, so tools are not required for their removal. Simply push the lamp housing toward the rear of the car and then pull the front edge out, away from

the fender. Give the bulb a ¼ twist in its socket, and the fixture will be free. The clear fixtures are available from any Porsche dealership; other colors such as "smoke" grey or black along with clear are available from a wide range of aftermarket sources. Either way, be sure to get a set of the silver/amber bulbs to stay within the DOT regulations.

Updating the tail lights is not much more difficult than the side markers. The tail lights are accessible through the trunk or engine cover. The bulbs are all held together in a single carrier which pulls straight out, and the housings are held in place with 4 10mm nuts, one at each corner. For the Boxster, clear/red housings were stock from 2002 on, and for the Carrera, they began in 2000. Either of these newer housings should be available from any dealership. For those who want a more unique look, other variations on the rear lights are out there. For 2004, Porsche produced a 550 SE Boxster which has an almost all red tail light. Also, just like with the side markers, there are many after market companies producing grey "smoked" lenses or completely blacked out lenses. If you like the look of LED tail lights, which the 2009 997's will have, there are after market companies producing those for older models.

Losing the amber in the headlights is a bit more involved, but not by much. For all 986 Boxsters and 996Carreras 1999-01, there were three different headlight assemblies. The first edition fixture has a distinctive amber lens covering the turn signal. Above that, covering the headlights themselves and the fog lights, the fixture is clear. It was only available as a halogen type. The other two later assemblies have clear plastic throughout the lamp, but use an amber filter inside



of the housing to color the turn signals. These are available either as standard halogen or as Porsche's high-intensity version called Litronics. If you've got the first editions, either of the two later fixtures is a direct replacement. Unfortunately, neither is cheap. The halogens are around \$900, and the Litronics \$1800. Most feel that the Litronics are well worth the cost because the difference they make in night time visibility is like night and day. For those who REALLY want to get rid of all the amber pieces, removing the amber filters inside of the second edition lights may be unnerving, but it's really not that hard a job. If you remove the headlight from the car, and then remove the turn signal bulb from its socket, you'll see the amber lens there inside the housing. The lens was put into place before the assembly was sealed up, and rests there in the fixture. It is not glued or otherwise fixed into the light. Removal involves carefully breaking it into pieces small enough to pass through the light socket. Think of it like the reverse of building a ship in a bottle, using a very expensive bottle. Remember, by removing the amber filter, you'll need to replace the clear bulbs with some that flash amber.

Happy driving and wrenching!



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