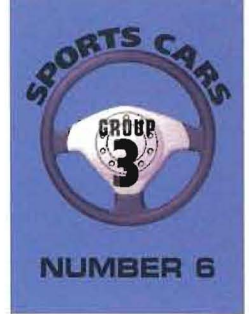




UK 1989-1994

Lotus ELAN

Lotus revived the concept of a lightweight fun-to-drive sports car with a new Elan introduced in 1989. It has terrific handling and the use of Isuzu components helped to keep production costs down.



Produced by
Lotus Cars, Hethel,
Norfolk, England



VITAL STATISTICS

Top speed:	136 mph
0-60 mph:	6.5 sec.
Engine type:	In-line four
Displacement:	1,588 cc
Max power:	165 bhp at 6,600 rpm
Max torque:	148 lb-ft at 4,200 rpm
Weight:	2,254 lbs.
Gas mileage:	19.6 mpg
Price:	\$40,989



"...superb grip and handling."

"Turn the key and the 16-valve engine responds enthusiastically. Hit the accelerator and you'll discover the Elan's excellent mid-range torque, which is exceptional for such a small engine. With turbocharged power, 0-60 mph takes just 6.5 seconds. Its front-wheel drive and incredibly stiff structure makes grip and handling superb with minimal understeer. Unlike some of its rivals, the ride remains firm but comfortable."

The Elan has a fully-stocked dashboard with easy-to-read instruments.



Lotus ELAN



When the new Elan was launched, two models were available. This example is the top-of-the-range SE, or Special Equipment, which uses a turbocharger and oil cooler.

Turbocharged twin-cam engine

The 1.6-liter four-cylinder was built by Isuzu and is turbocharged and intercooled to deliver 165 bhp on the SE model. The non-turbo model produces 130 bhp.



Steel backbone chassis

Lotus pioneered the use of a backbone chassis on its original Elan in 1962. This feature has been retained providing greater stiffness and also ease of maintenance.

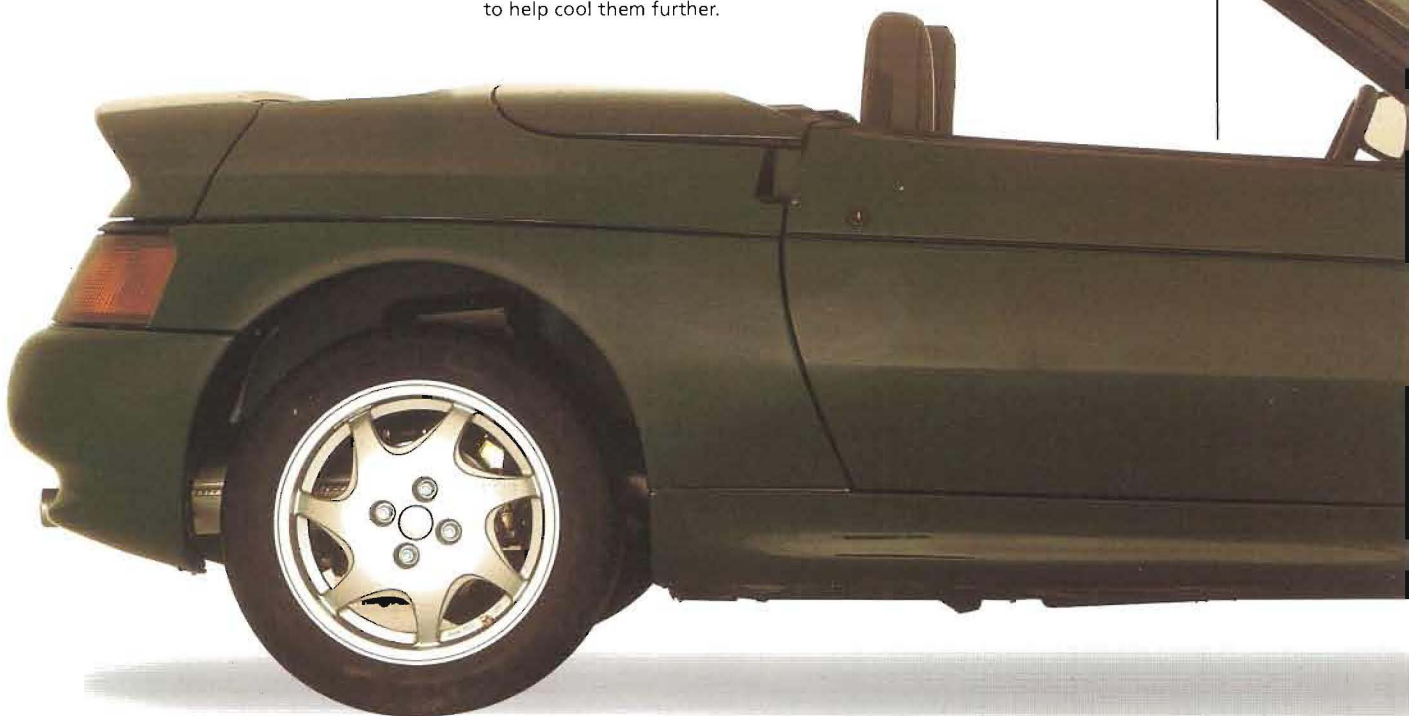


Disc brakes

For maximum stopping power, the Elan has large vented disc brakes at all corners. The vented aluminum wheels direct cool air toward the brakes to help cool them further.

Wide track

The Elan's exceptionally wide track makes it one of the best handling and most stable cars in its class.





VARI body construction

Both the body and floorpan are constructed from Vacuum-Assisted Resin Injection (VARI), which is an advanced form of fiberglass. U.S. versions are fitted with larger energy-absorbing bumpers.



Unique front suspension subframe

The Elan's front wishbone suspension is mounted on a special patented alloy subframe. This helps to eliminate torque steer, a serious problem in powerful front-wheel drive cars of this era.



Specifications

1991 Lotus Elan SE

ENGINE

Type: Turbocharged in-line four

Construction: Cast-iron block and alloy head

Valve gear: Four valves per cylinder operated by twin belt-driven camshafts and hydraulic lifters

Bore and stroke: 3.14 in. x 3.11 in.

Displacement: 1,588 cc

Compression ratio: 10.0:1

Induction system: GM Delco multiport fuel injection

Maximum power: 165 bhp at 6,600 rpm

Maximum torque: 148 lb-ft at 4,200 rpm

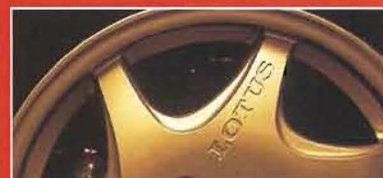
TRANSMISSION

Five-speed manual

BODY/CHASSIS

Steel monocoque with two-door convertible body

SPECIAL FEATURES



The first batch of Elans were equipped with these smart alloys. The S2 cars had different wheels.



The Elan was available in two versions. SE denotes that this is the turbo model.

RUNNING GEAR

Steering: Rack-and-pinion

Front suspension: Double wishbones with coil springs, telescopic shocks and anti-roll bar

Rear suspension: Upper transverse links, lower wishbones, coil springs and telescopic shocks

Brakes: Discs (front and rear)

Wheels: Cast-aluminum, 6.5 x 15 in.

Tires: 20/50ZR15

DIMENSIONS

Length: 149.7 in. **Width:** 68.2 in.

Height: 49.3 in. **Wheelbase:** 88.6 in.

Track: 58.5 in. (front and rear)

Weight: 2,254 lbs.

Milestones

1989 Now under GM ownership, Lotus launches its new Elan. With Isuzu power and front-wheel drive, it looks like a winner.

1990 Although an excellent car, the Elan is not popular with buyers. Emissions and safety requirements delay its entry into the U.S. market.



The original Elan was rear-wheel drive and debuted in 1962.

1991 Fitted with bigger bumpers, the U.S. version finally makes its debut. Sales are low, and the recession means that the Elan is dropped the following year.



Structural stiffness was an important consideration in the Elan's design.

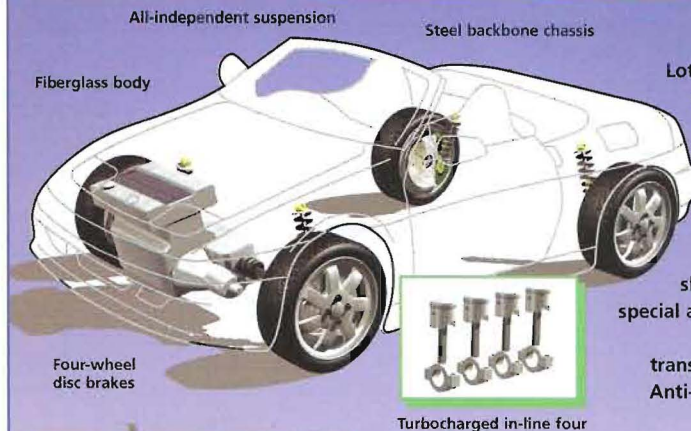
1994 Under Bugatti ownership an improved Elan, the S2, is launched; only 800 are built.

VALUE GUIDE

ORIGINAL PRICE	
1991	\$40,989
CURRENT VALUE	
1998	\$16,000-\$32,000

Like most Lotus cars, the Elan was a revolutionary sports car.

UNDER THE SKIN



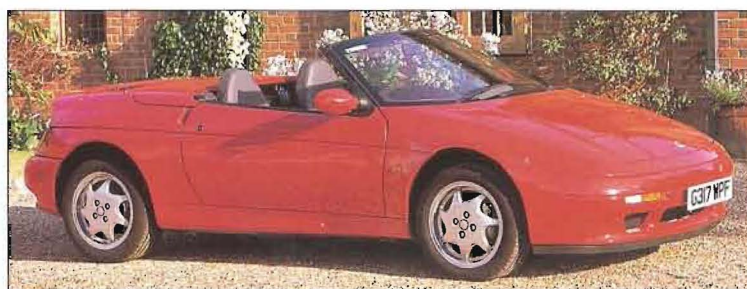
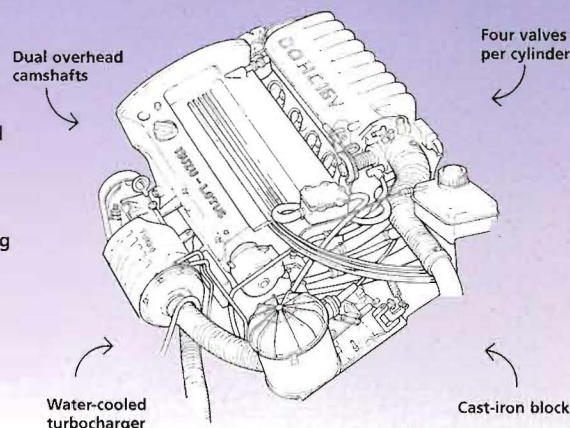
Lotus trademark

Lotus used a version of its backbone chassis, with a separate subframe for the front suspension and engine mounts. This design provides excellent rigidity and strength. The front suspension has conventional double wishbones with coil springs and shocks, but these are attached to a special alloy raft which helps to eliminate understeer. At the rear are upper transverse links and lower wishbones. Anti-roll bars are employed both front and rear to improve handling.

THE POWER PACK

Turbo power

A 1,588-cc Isuzu-built in-line four engine powers the Elan and, like most front-wheel drive cars, it is transversely mounted. It features a cast-iron block with an alloy cylinder head, has four valves per cylinder, dual overhead camshafts, and self-adjusting valve lifters. A GM-built Rochester fuel-injection system is monitored via a central Delco-built engine management system. Fitted with a water-cooled turbocharger, which runs 0.65 bar (9 psi) of boost, the small engine produces 165 bhp and an impressive 148 lb-ft of torque.



Production of the Elan was cut short by the recession.

Undervalued

Introduced in 1989, the new Elan was poorly timed, arriving at the start of a major recession. Problems with safety and emissions requirements delayed its entry into the U.S. market. Due to low sales, rarity will make it a collector's item.

NOSE TO NOSE				Toyota MR2 • Mazda Miata • Lotus Elan SE
TOP SPEED	0-60 mph	POWER	WEIGHT	RIVAL CARS
128 mph	8.1 sec.	173 bhp	2,833 lbs.	TOYOTA MR2
121 mph	9.1 sec.	116 bhp	2,073 lbs.	MAZDA MIATA
136 mph	6.5 sec.	165 bhp	2,254 lbs.	LOTUS ELAN SE

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