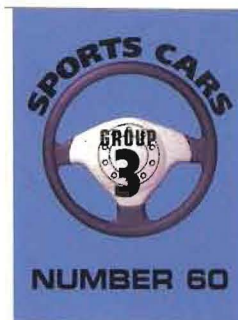




UK 1962-1973

Lotus ELAN



The lithe and agile Lotus Elan is still regarded by many as one of the best-handling cars ever made—a masterpiece and tribute to Colin Chapman's innovative and intuitive engineering skill.

Produced by
Lotus Cars, Hethel,
Norfolk, England



VITAL STATISTICS

Top speed:	118 mph
0-60 mph:	7.0 sec.
Engine type:	In-line four
Displacement:	1,558 cc
Max power:	126 bhp at 6,500 rpm
Max torque:	113 lb-ft at 5,500 rpm
Weight:	1,515 lbs.
Gas mileage:	26 mpg
Price (1970):	\$5,610



"...fantastic driver's car."

"The Lotus Elan is a lightweight compared to most other small sports cars. It remains a fantastic driver's car. First of all it is fast: 126 bhp in a car that weighs just over 1,500 lbs. means aggressive power in the lower gears all the way past 100 mph. But it is the handling that makes the Elan so memorable. It doesn't understeer or oversteer, but simply tracks faithfully around any curve generating high levels of lateral acceleration even on skinny tires."

Despite its light weight, the Elan still has a high-quality wooden dashboard.



Lotus ELAN



The Lotus Elan Sprint was one of the fastest sports cars built in the 1970s. Its speed, agility and compact dimensions mean it is now one of the most sought after of all classic Lotus models.

Twin-cam engine

Based on the Ford Cortina, the Elan's engine was originally supposed to have a smaller 1,340-cc capacity. It was designed by Harry Mundy, the technical editor of *Autocar* magazine.



Four- and five-speed transmissions

Most Elans came with the Ford four-speed, but in search of better high-speed cruising, a few later Sprints used the Lotus five-speed transmission (commonly found in the +2S 130), which used Austin internals.

Backbone chassis

Chapman's original intention was to make the Elan a fiberglass monocoque like the Elite. In fact, Elan prototypes used a separate chassis so that they could be built quickly for testing. They worked so well, however, that the production cars were built with separate chassis.



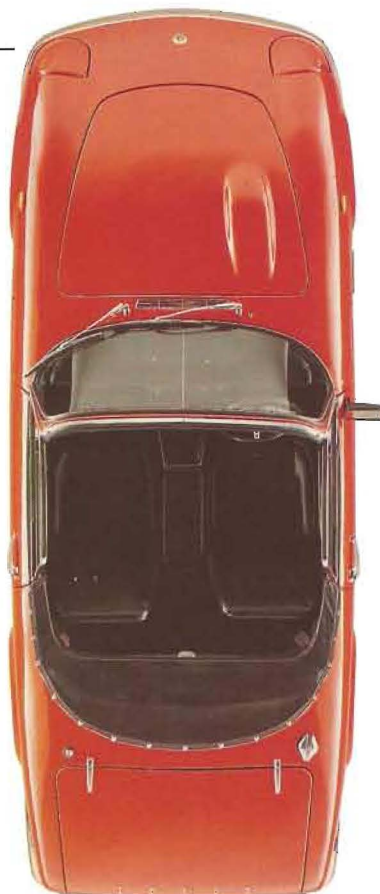


Fiberglass body

Lotus was a pioneer of fiberglass bodyshells. Fiberglass is ideal for low-volume production and has the advantages of strength, light weight and rust resistance.

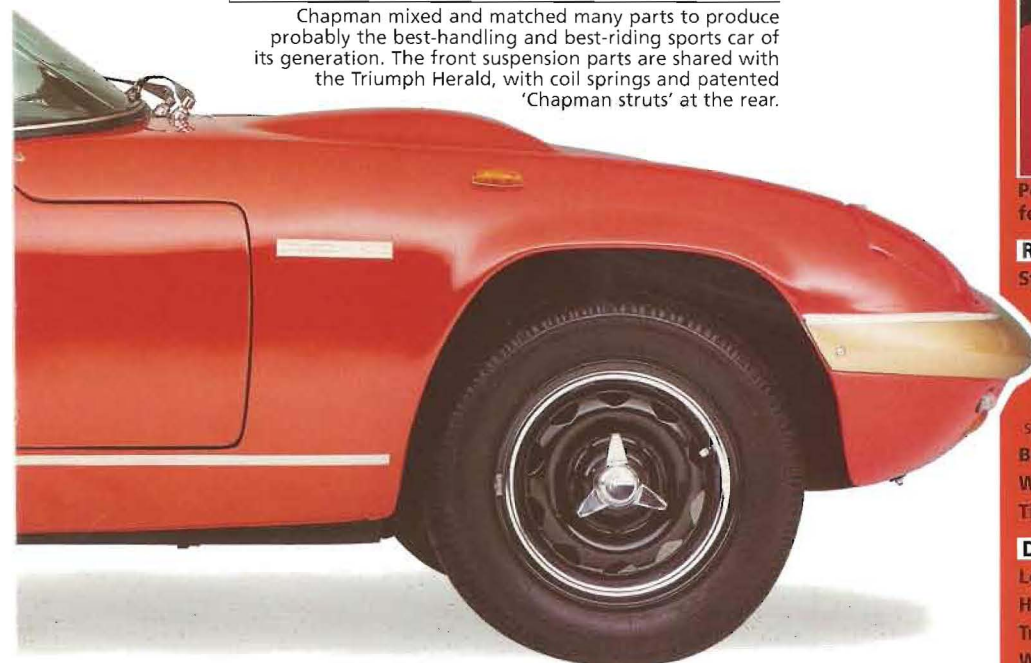
Pop-up headlights

The Elan's pop-up headlights were a first on a production car and were a device intended to meet California headlight height regulations. They are vacuum-operated.



Advanced suspension

Chapman mixed and matched many parts to produce probably the best-handling and best-riding sports car of its generation. The front suspension parts are shared with the Triumph Herald, with coil springs and patented 'Chapman struts' at the rear.



Specifications

1971 Lotus Elan Sprint

ENGINE

Type: In-line four

Construction: Cast-iron block and alloy cylinder head

Valve gear: Two valves per cylinder operated by twin overhead camshafts

Bore and stroke: 3.25 in. x 2.86 in.

Displacement: 1,558 cc

Compression ratio: 10.3:1

Induction system: Two Weber carburetors

Maximum power: 126 bhp at 6,500 rpm

Maximum torque: 113 lb-ft at 5,500 rpm

TRANSMISSION

Four-speed manual

BODY/CHASSIS

Fiberglass body with steel backbone chassis

SPECIAL FEATURES



The hood bulge was incorporated to accommodate larger carburetors.



Pop-up headlights were a rarely seen feature in the 1960s.

RUNNING GEAR

Steering: Rack-and-pinion

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

Rear suspension: Independent by Chapman struts, lower wishbones, coil springs and telescopic shock absorbers

Brakes: Discs (front and rear)

Wheels: Steel, 4.5 x 13.0 in.

Tires: Radials, 165 x 13

DIMENSIONS

Length: 145.0 in. **Width:** 56.0 in.

Height: 45.2 in. **Wheelbase:** 84.0 in.

Track: 45.0 in. (front), 48.4 in. (rear)

Weight: 1,515 lbs.

Milestones

1962 The Elan 1500 is announced at the London Motor Show. All 1500s are recalled and fitted with 1,558-cc engines.



The Elan +2 four seater was launched in 1967.

1964 The Elan S2 is introduced with restyled taillights, larger front brake calipers and a new veneer fascia with a lockable glovebox.

1965 A fixed-head coupe version joins the convertible model.



The Elan replaced the fiberglass monocoque Elite.

1968 The new S4 convertible is announced.

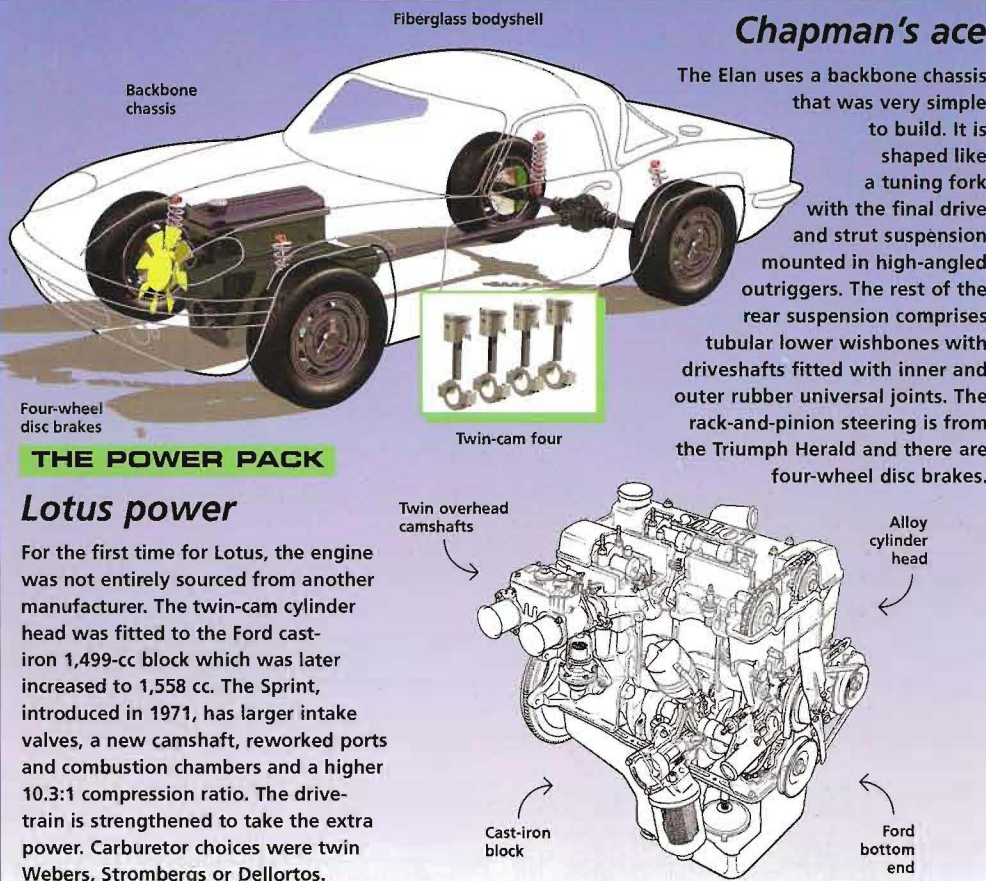
1971 The Sprint is launched with a new 126-bhp version of the twin-cam engine.

1973 Production of the Elan is discontinued.

VALUE GUIDE

ORIGINAL PRICE		
1970	SPRINT	\$5,610
CURRENT VALUE		
\$10,000-\$25,000		
PRODUCTION TOTAL		
12,224		

UNDER THE SKIN



THE POWER PACK

Lotus power

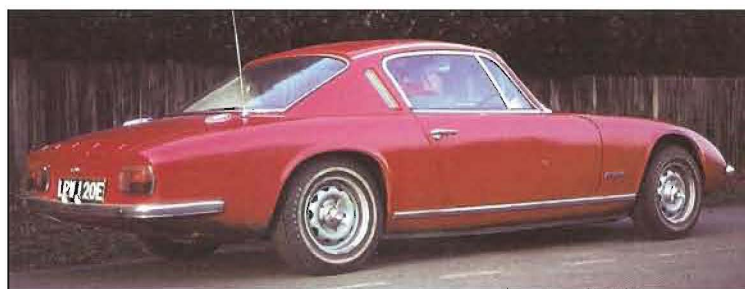
For the first time for Lotus, the engine was not entirely sourced from another manufacturer. The twin-cam cylinder head was fitted to the Ford cast-iron 1,499-cc block which was later increased to 1,558 cc. The Sprint, introduced in 1971, has larger intake valves, a new camshaft, reworked ports and combustion chambers and a higher 10.3:1 compression ratio. The drive-train is strengthened to take the extra power. Carburetor choices were twin Webbers, Strombergs or Dellortos.

Chapman's ace

The Elan uses a backbone chassis that was very simple to build. It is shaped like a tuning fork with the final drive and strut suspension mounted in high-angled outriggers. The rest of the rear suspension comprises tubular lower wishbones with driveshafts fitted with inner and outer rubber universal joints. The rack-and-pinion steering is from the Triumph Herald and there are four-wheel disc brakes.

More seats

To cater to Elan owners with young families, Lotus announced the +2 model in 1967. It has all the engineering features of the small Elan but is clothed in a larger body that offers 2+2 seating. It has all the performance of its smaller brother.



The Elan +2 four-seater is often overlooked by collectors.

NOSE TO NOSE

Ferrari 250 GT SWB • Jaguar E-Type • Lotus Elan Sprint

TOP SPEED	0-60 mph	POWER	WEIGHT	RIVAL CARS
140 mph	6.7 sec.	280 bhp	2,805 lbs.	FERRARI 250 GT SWB
150 mph	7.3 sec.	265 bhp	2,463 lbs.	JAGUAR E-TYPE
118 mph	7.0 sec.	126 bhp	1,515 lbs.	LOTUS ELAN SPRINT

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