

Brief specification*

Engine	In-line 'four'
Capacity	1558cc
Bore/stroke	82.5mm x 72.75mm
Valves	Twin ohc
Compression	9.5:1
Power	126bhp(DIN) at 6500rpm
Torque	113lb.ft(DIN) at 5500rpm
Transmission	Five-speed manual
Top gear	20.4mph per 1000rpm
Brakes	Discs/drums with servo
Front sus.	Ind. by wishbones and coils
Rear sus.	Ind. by radius arms, links and coils
Steering	Rack and pinion
Tyres	155-13
Length	13ft 1in
Width	5ft 5in
Weight	14cwt

Performance

Max speed	123mph
0-60mph	6.6sec
30-50 in top	12.5sec
50-70 in top	11.4sec
Fuel con.	25/30mpg

*Europa Twin Cam Special

Production history

The S1, with chassis and body all in one and fixed windows, was built in 1966 and 1967. It was theoretically an export only model, though a few probably stayed over here. Although it was a pretty basic vehicle, mid-engined sports cars were not readily available at that time and there was certainly a demand for one that carried the Lotus name, even though the engine was a Renault 16; it was completely reliable but not exciting. The S1 was also listed as a Lotus 46.

The S2 was far more practical and less austere. It had a chassis that could be separated from the body for repairs and electrically-operated door windows, which permitted hand signalling, rube or otherwise. It was first produced in 1967, still for export, but at last it became available on the home market in 1969, listed as a Lotus 54. In 1970, the S2 was suitably modified for Federal requirements and exports to the USA began, this version being called a Lotus 65.

In 1971 came the Twin-Cam, using the Lotus engine from the Elan but retaining the Renault four-speed gearbox (Lotus 74). At the end of 1972, the Europa Special was introduced, with the Big-Valve engine and usually with the Renault five-speed gearbox. There does not appear to be a separate type number for this model.

The Europa was phased out in 1975, after a total production of 9230 cars. This figure includes those vehicles which were completed in France and also, of course, the kit cars. The Lotus 47 is rather outside the scope of this article, but it won its first race, in the hands of John Miles, at the Boxing Day Brands Hatch meeting of 1966. For the next couple of years it was raced seriously and was then in great demand for club racing. For homologation purposes, the components for 50 cars had to be manufactured and certainly one can trace more than 30 on the circuits.

Europa prices were as follows:- 1969: S2 £1667 (£1275 kit); 1971: S2 £1918 (£1459 kit); 1972: Twin-Cam £1995 (£1595 kit); 1973: Special £2471 (£2044 kit). Extra: light-alloy wheels and Firestone tyres £101.

Buyers spot check

The Europa and Elan are immune from rust problems, having glass-fibre bodies and simple backbone chassis that are treated against corrosion. It is necessary for the buyer to decide whether he wants an immaculate car, ready for immediate use, or a well-used example that he can recondition himself. Obviously, the important thing is not to pay for a rebuilt car when it is actually a tired one that is about to need work.

It is essential to check that everything is true and that none of the wheels are out of track. The famous roadholding and handling of Lotus cars are dependent on the suspension and steering

parts being accurately in line. A bent chassis is extremely difficult to straighten to these standards and it may well be cheaper and quicker to cut your losses and renew the frame.

Lotus are still making new chassis for their earlier models. They are built on the original jigs which only the manufacturers have, so complete accuracy is ensured; replacement chassis from other sources should be regarded with suspicion. Lotus also keep a good stock of replacement glass-fibre body panels, but they no longer handle the Twin-Cam engine.

All the engine parts are available, if you try hard enough. The cast-iron crankshaft is now out of production but steel ones are to be had — at a price. Cylinder heads are not plentiful, but there is still a reasonable supply of good secondhand ones. Lotus agents always seem to be helpful and enthusiastic and will go to considerable trouble to assist the amateur mechanic. For the man who would rather not get his hands dirty there is always the cheque book restoration. In this connection, Bell and Colvill regularly carry out total rebuilds on Elans and Europas.

Finally, here is a word of warning. There are some people who always know better and cannot leave a good car alone. A Lotus that has been modified or 'improved' is worth virtually nothing and should not be touched with a barge pole!

Rivals then and now

The Europa was made for the man who must have a mid-engined sports car. Therefore, it cannot be regarded as a competitor of the Elan, though if it were, the Elan would win easily as a road-going, high-performance car for everyday use. Apart from its engine, the Europa was probably too much influenced by racing practice to be really popular as a road car.

In fact, there was nothing then which in any way resembled it and that is still the case. The Fiat X 1/9, for example, is far more attractive and practical for the average user, but it does not have the cornering power or the performance of the Europa, especially if the latter has the Big-Valve engine. Perhaps it has been superseded by the Talbot Matra Murena, which combines superb handling with modern creature comforts.

Clubs, specialists and books

Club Lotus is a very active organisation and it would pay a new Lotus owner to join it as quickly as possible. The secretary is Mrs Margaret Richards, who can be reached on 0953 883314. For details of the other Lotus enthusiasts' organisations (that is, the Lotus Drivers Club and *Shipstream* magazine), see page 47.

Lotus dealers seem to be real enthusiasts for the

marque. Many minor components are also to be found on the popular models of the big manufacturers, which means that you are seldom far from a source of spares. A brief run-down of Lotus specialists also appears on page 47.

For Europa bibliomaniacs, John Bolster's excellent book in Motor Racing Publications' Collector's Guide' series, *The Lotus Elan and Europa* covers the Europa story most thoroughly and Brooklands Books have just released another of their road test reprint books, titled *Lotus Europa 1966-1975*.

Prices

Taking advice from Bobby Bell who has years of Lotus experience behind him, it appears that a mint Europa Special rebuilt regardless of cost could be worth £4500 plus.

On the other hand, an average Twin Cam, running but probably tired and ripe for restoration, would still be worth not much below £1000. A fairly sound Renault-engined S2 would fetch about £800 and would be a good proposition for an impecunious young man, being reliable and economical to run. JVB is of the opinion, however, that an S1 would be worth 50p and dear at the price!

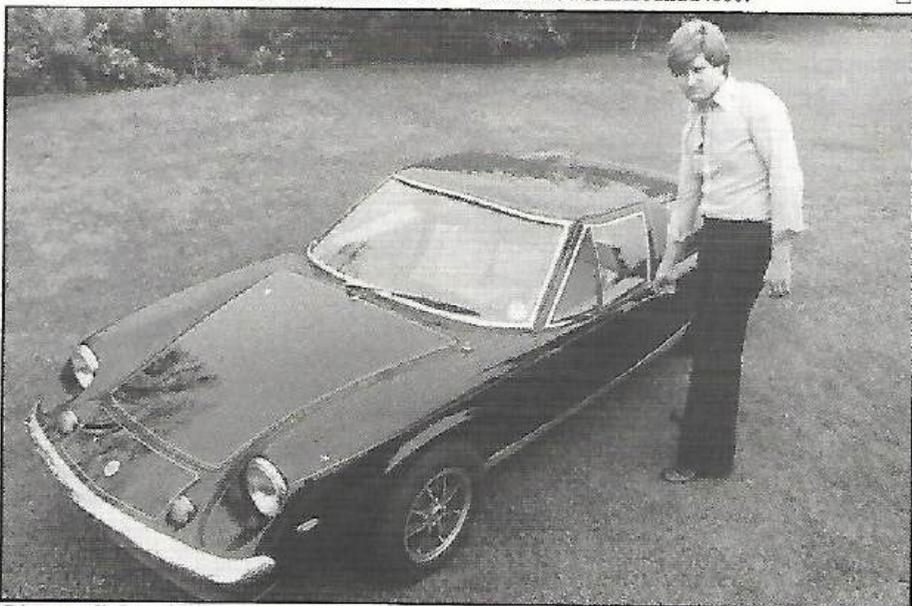
Owner view

Over the past few years Europas have gradually assumed 'collectability' status; yet Richard Hinton's 28,000-mile Europa is probably more collectable than most seeing as it is immaculate throughout and a five-speed, black-and-gold Europa Special at that. At present, this 1974 car is run maybe once or twice a week as Richard uses a Fiesta for his everyday driving but it's good to hear that, so far, 432 RH has yet to succumb to the unreliability problems that have often plagued Lotus in the past.

"They're not nearly as bad as people make out in that respect," said Richard, "the jokes about the cars falling to pieces around you and someone following behind with a box to catch the bits that fall off as you go along just aren't true in my experience. Nothing like that has happened to my car while I've owned it. Thank God!"

Richard has previously owned various Elans and +2s but he finds his Europa the most pleasurable to drive. The handling, he says, is delightful and the steering is so precise. "It's not that practical a car," he continues, "but it's surprising what you can fit inside."

A Tiga Sports 2000 and an ex-Gerry Birrell Lotus 69 Formula 2 car complete the Hinton line-up but it would take an Esprit S2 to tempt Richard to part with 432 RH, a car which he reckons is worth around £4000. □



Big man, little car? Proud owner Richard Hinton towers over his immaculate Europa Special