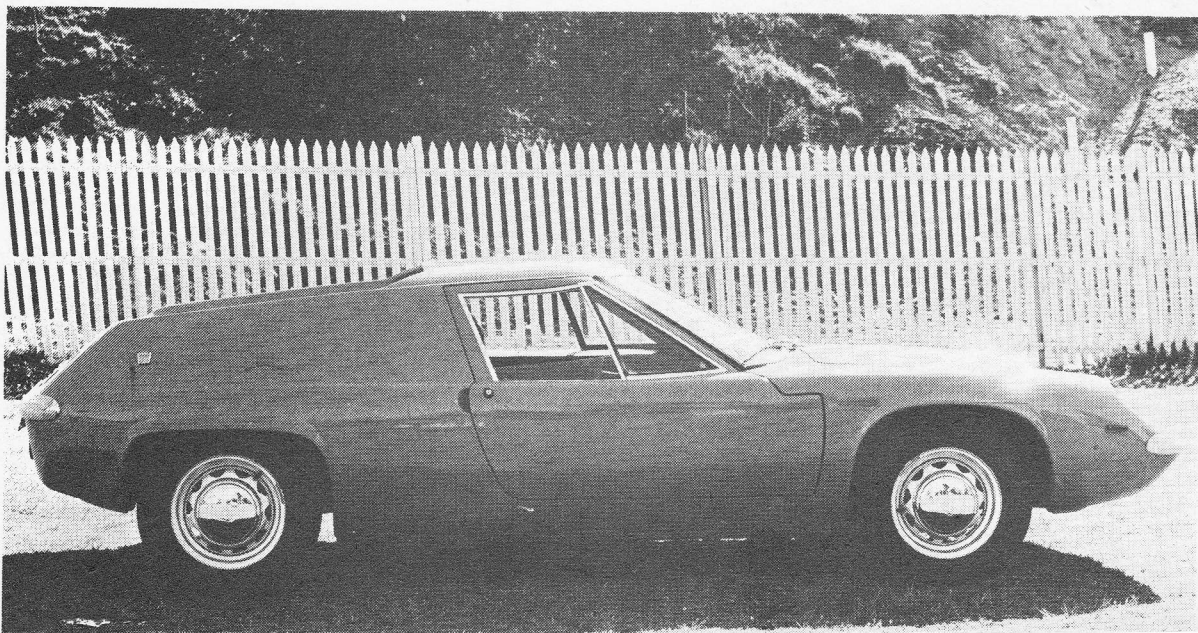




LOTUS EUROPA

...in gear for swingers

It's a pretty silly business, but Chappers has built the best bloomin' GT to ever come out of Britain. The British can't have any for themselves — at least not yet. But Australia is one of the lucky ones to get the fantastic Lotus Europa.



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Top left: The rear window appears small, but actually offers an adequate amount of rear vision. The interior mirror is located mere inches ahead of the window, assists rear vision tremendously. Engine hood rises from rear.

Top: A terrific amount of wind tunnel work went into the final overall shape. John Joyce, now in Sydney (and producer of Bowin designs) was instrumental in the conception of the Lotus Europa. Result is a very low drag co-efficient.

THE English motor-noters thought it could happen only to them. They had to thumb their way to places like Austria to road test their Lotus Europa because the car was built for the export market only and there weren't any in Britain. After three or four months of waiting, telephoning, threatening and cajoling, we finally got that long-awaited call from Geoghegan's Sporty Cars, Parramatta Road, Sydney.

We'd been right in the ear of Ian (Pete) Geoghegan every week for three months asking when he'd have a Europa. We figured he was getting rather tired of the ritual when one week he said, in that old theatrical cliché, "Don't call us, we'll call you".

Finally Pete rang, seemingly on a social call. He spent about 20 minutes passing the time of day, exchanging news and gossip until finally we mentioned we really had to go as we had this deadline to meet 'n all that. It wasn't until that moment that Pete casually remarked, "Oh, yes, that's what I was calling about. We've got a Europa here you can go for a whistle in — providing you're here in an hour because we've got to send it away again." Nine minutes later . . .

The Lotus Europa has been in production for almost two years in Britain and has been available here for just over 12 months. Its success can be measured by the fact that slightly over one year from its inception, Lotus had sold 500 on the Continent, and had a tremendous backlog of orders.

The Europa was born with the idea of giving foreign Lotus fans a two-seater GT offering high performance at a relatively low initial cost — at the same time providing competition road hold-

ing and handling combined with the utmost docility under everyday traffic conditions.

Colin Chapman could do no better than adopt the techniques of the modern out-and-out competition car of placing the engine in mid-chassis position and apply competition practice to the suspension. The performance ability was taken care of by keeping the weight of the car as low as possible and by covering the mechanicals with a body containing the best aerodynamic principles. All points achieved their purpose, the latter despite the fact that the engine is a very mildly-warm version of an otherwise sedate unit.

The biggest departure from normal Chapman practice with the Europa is the engine and transmission. This is supplied by Renault of France. Normally used to propel the front-wheel-drive Renault 16 sedan, the light-alloy pushrod, four-cylinder unit of 1470 cc capacity has undergone the mildest hop-up ever known in Lotus. It emerges from Lotus hands with alterations in valve sizes and lift, camshaft timing and an increase in compression ratio from 8.6 to 10.25 to 1. With the fitting of a twin-choke, progressively-opening carburettor instead of the conventional single-choke setup, maximum power output has been lifted from 55 bhp at 5000 rpm to 78 bhp at 6000 rpm. Maximum torque went from 78 lb/ft at 2800 rpm to a more sporty 76 lb/ft at 4000 rpm.

Let it be said here and now that the Europa, like its Elan brother, is strictly a two-seater (besides, your feet might scuff my carpets) and there's no way around that one. The cockpit has been made to hold the driver and passenger in maximum comfort with ultra-low layback seats

SPECIFICATIONS

Make Lotus Europa Mk 2
 Price \$4350
 Road test mileage 100 miles

PERFORMANCE:

Top speed (fastest run) 121 mph
 Top speed (average) 120 mph
 Rpm at max speed 6830 rpm
Speeds in gears: **Equivalent rpm**
 First 35 mph 7000 rpm
 Second 56 mph 7000 rpm
 Third 86 mph 7000 rpm
 Fourth 120 mph 6830 rpm

Acceleration through the gears:

0-30 mph 3.3 secs 0-70 mph 12.1 secs
 0-40 mph 5.3 secs 0-80 mph 15.7 secs
 0-50 mph 6.9 secs 0-90 mph 20.7 secs
 0-60 mph 9.3 secs 0-100 mph 26.6 secs

Standing quarter mile:

Fastest run 16.7 secs

Fuel consumption:

Overall for test 26.2 mpg
 Normal cruising 30.0 mpg

CALCULATED DATA:

Mph per 1000 rpm in top gear 17.6 mph
 Piston speed at max bhp 3452 ft/min
 Weight distribution:
 Front 43.7 percent
 Rear 56.3 percent

Engine:

Cylinders four in line
 Bore and stroke 76mm x 81mm
 Cubic capacity 1470 cc
 Compression ratio 10.25 to 1
 Valves overhead
 Carburettor/s Single Solex 35 DDSA
 Power 78 bhp @ 6500 rpm
 Torque 76 ft/lb @ 4000 rpm

Transmission:

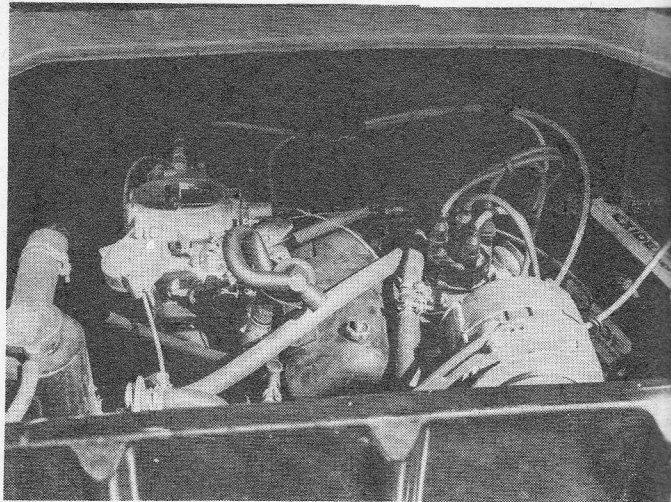
Type Four speed all syncro
 Clutch Single dry plate, 7.9 in. dia.
 Gear lever location central console
 Overall ratios:
 1st 3.61 4th 1.03
 2nd 2.25 Reverse 3.25
 3rd 1.48 Final drive 3.56 to 1

Chassis and running gear:

Construction: Steel backbone chassis bonded glass fibre body.
 Suspension front Independent coils, wishbones
 Suspension rear: Independent, radius arms transverse links.
 Shock absorbers Telescopic all round
 Steering type rack and pinion
 Brakes, type Girling disc front, drum rear
 Dimensions Front 9.75 in. dia, rear 8 in. dia.

Dimensions:

Wheelbase 91 in.
 Track front 53 in.
 Track rear 53 in.
 Fuel tank capacity 7 gal
 Tyres, size 155 x 13
 Ground clearance 6½ in.
 Length 157¼ in.
 Width 64½ in.
 Height 42½ in.
 Touring range 210 miles
 Make on test car Firestone F100
 Weight (kerb) 1375 lb



Engine is directly behind the cockpit with a luggage locker behind it. Most of the engine is quite accessible, but with the extra long cables from front to rear everything needs to be spot-on for operation of clutch and accelerator.

and no room anywhere for anything else but two bodies.

The car has certain limitations. One needs to be of the agile variety with sportsman-like freedom of movement to get in and out of the cockpit without doing oneself certain damage. Of course, by owning one, you'd always be assured of the more lithesome variety of girlfriend. Baggage room also is limited, with a compartment under the front bonnet and another at the rear behind the engine. Both rather small, but adequate for two and with enough room to hold enough gear for however far two would normally go in a Europa. But the term "two-seater GT" shouldn't be taken lightly. There is definitely no other car on the market today that can be compared with the Europa in terms of living up to the characteristics designed into it, and to what it was essentially designed for.

Unless you're a former Elan or Elite owner, the seating position is slightly brain-snapping and anyone not used to rushing about in semi-reclining seats is going to take a little time to get used to it. Competition drivers will revel in it. The forward view is splendid, as is the side view. There is a small blind spot on the rear three-quarter section, but the thin rear window offers surprisingly-large vision — particularly through the rear vision mirror as it's placed scant inches forward of the window itself. The steering and pedals are fixed but the seat is movable fore and aft for personal location. The windows are operated electrically from toggles on the facia (the first Europas came with windows which unclipped and were then stored in hollowed-out door panels). The high-g geared rack and pinion steering lets the car dart to and fro on the smallest movement of the wheel, but it is not so sensitive the car will alter direction with a minute, involuntary touch.

The low polar moment of inertia of the mid-engine configuration, and the very sophisticated all-independent suspension, result in handling qualities of a level unknown to drivers of more sedate cars. In situations where a normal road sedan driver — and some sports cars, too, for that matter — would be driving right-on-the-limit, the Europa will still be sticking to the road like glue. There will be few instances where a Europa driver will be able to get himself into



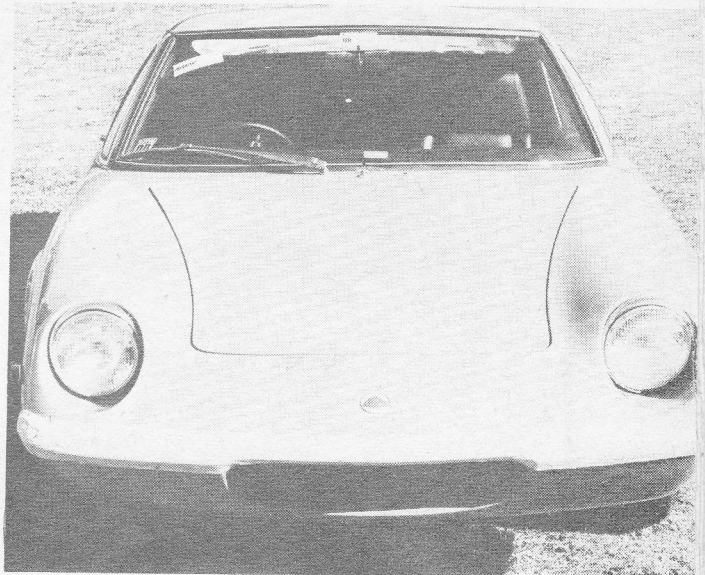
Running on radial tyres and pressed steel wheels, the Europa outhandles the Lotus Elan. It rides smoother, without the slightly-harsh thump of the Elan. Wind noise at speed is virtually unnoticeable with windows up.

trouble, unless he is an absolute clot behind the wheel of anything on four wheels.

The Europa will show a very slight understeer on normal tyre pressures (18 psi front and 28 psi rear) a characteristic which becomes slightly more pronounced when power is brought into play. Driving fast (22 psi front and 32 psi rear) and very close to the absolute limit, it will be either the front or the rear wheels which begin to go first, according to the particular radius of the bend and the amount of extra power the engine can provide at that moment. Body lean is practically negligible and where a good driver may be accustomed to inducing a drifting movement when negotiating a bend in a normal car, the Europa will surprise him by setting up controllable drifts almost on its own. A sensitive driver will, therefore, be able to tune his high speed driving much the same as a musician is able to extract fine variations of tone from an instrument.

A side effect of the low drag and low weight is the very good fuel economy. Restricting the car to a maximum speed of 90 mph (aha, but we can't do that, now, can we?) one could easily

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Front bonnet unlatches from under the fascia, and has room for luggage — supplementing the smallish area set aside for luggage behind the engine. Front bumper was taken from the Ford Anglia. Turning lights are on the side.



Cockpit is just right, with adjustable seats for anyone who is anywhere near average size. The tall man will fit, but the stouter ones find it somewhat confined. Lay-back seats are superb and door trim is beautifully done.

LOTUS EUROPA

(Continued from page 55)

achieve between 35 and 40 mpg. At a constant 65 it seems you could theoretically sell your petrol back to the oil companies.

The gearchange is quick and sure. There is an almost imperceptible movement of the hand between gears, except when you shift across the gate. The internal ratios of the four-speed, all-synchromesh gearbox remain unchanged from those used in the Renault 16. However, because of the position of the foreign transmission in the Europa, a new final drive set had to be made up in order to reverse the direction of rotation, and the opportunity was taken by Lotus to provide a higher final drive ratio of 3.56 to 1. On 155 x 13 radial ply tyres the Europa is geared for a top gear speed of 17.6 mph per 1000 rpm.

With the windows up, wind noise is virtually eliminated, yet the engine is not unduly noisy. Normal conversation can be had inside the car at highway speeds with windows up or down. The Lotus Europa, priced at \$4150, will be highly attractive among the younger generation drivers — but we wouldn't be at all surprised to see some of the elders sporting a bit of this gear as well. It's certainly one of the prettiest sports GT cars of its price and performance capabilities ever to hit the Australian market.

As always when we have an enjoyable sports car on test, such as the Europa, the time goes all too quickly and it was with a little reluctance we took the car back to Geoghegans. The Europa is a real fun machine and while it's a good performer it's also a forgiving and very safe unit. You wouldn't think twice about lending it to your girlfriend to duck down the street on a Saturday morning. In fact you will probably have a hard time keeping her out of it. We liked it . . . but then if we bought every sports car we tested . . . #

MGB—AUTOMATICALLY YOURS

(Continued from page 46)

manual shift was. It operates very much like the 1800 and the Mini in that it has a lift-release for getting from Park and Reverse back through Neutral and the three gears. The slide-lift is quite basic, but very effective. It's base is stopped in the normal position by a small raised "knob" on the right of the selector console, thus ensuring the lever cannot be taken further backward (or vice versa) until the outer shaft is raised by lowering your grip from the lever knob to the slide section of the stem.

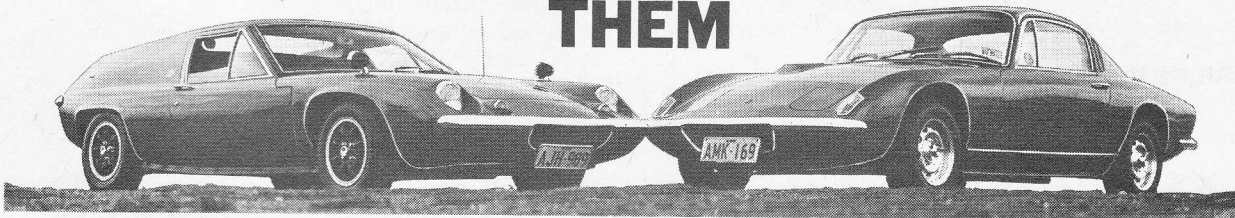
Now, as we've already said, the automatic's operation might not suit some, but plenty of people are going to love the new ease with which they can now drive a sports car.

First, for any serious work — such as the odd amateur gymkhana or such — you'll find the automatic shift something of a slouch. There is too much elapsed time in changing both up and down through the gears, even shifting manually. High speed passing brings its own problems for the automatic has definitely robbed some of the old MGB punch. If you require a quick change back from third to second, you'll have to learn to anticipate your needs a little more than before to allow the shifting time. In short, this automatic (or the one we drove indicated — and we'll say adjustment is possible) will not go down with the fellows who feel they are quick of eye, cat-like in reflexes and enjoy cutting things a little fine at times.

But the appeal is there. Definitely so. For anything but spirited driving which calls for instant transmission changes (like that of the Torqueflite) the MGB automatic is a dream. It's the first time (our first time) we've had that expensive feeling of climbing into the seat, switching on, snicking the lever into drive and forgetting it until you have to park somewhere.

WHAT'S BETTER THAN A LOTUS?

TWO OF THEM



THE LOTUS EUROPA
(\$4440 INC. TAX)

THE LOTUS ELAN+2
(\$6290 INC. TAX)

See these superb machines at:

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