



John Bolster drives the experimental development car on the factory track.

One of the two "boots" on the Europa. Besides this luggage space behind the engine, there is another compartment at the front.



67 I was able to try three examples of the Europa Twin-Cam, ranging from a perfectly standard car off the production line which was still a little tight, to a well-thrashed development car that was nice and loose but had a few experimental settings. Under these circumstances, I decided not to bother too much with exact performance figures as I shall in any case be carrying out a full road test in due course. It seemed better to employ the available time in getting driving impressions of the cars, and I was lucky to have the Lotus test circuit at my disposal, where I could corner to the limit without danger to Her Majesty's lieges.

It is at once obvious that there is more power at any speed within the car's range. The gearchange feels precise and accurate and though it was heavy to operate on the low-mileage example, it moved quite freely on the well-used machine. Perhaps the most impressive feature is the excellent sound insulation and nobody could criticise the noise level, though this is generally regarded as the bugbear of mid-engined cars. The heat of the engine is well confined to the rear bonnet, too, and does not tend to creep forward and cook the occupants. The adjustable fresh air inlets provide a good volume for breathing, which is rare since these things seldom pass a sufficient flow. The windows move up and down electrically.

The comfortable seats give a driving position that approaches perfection and, in conjunction with the very effective suspension, they ensure a smooth ride that would make a long day's journey a most untiring experience. I tried both the standard tyres on pressed steel wheels and the optional wider ones, with broader treads at the rear, on light alloy wheels. Though the Europa is well-balanced and handles well on the standard equipment, it definitely corners faster on the differential sizes and the loud screaming when sliding takes place is almost eliminated. With the smaller rear tyres, some tucking in and rear-end breakaway could be provoked by lifting the accelerator in the middle of a corner, but this effect was almost totally absent with the wider boots. Of course, I was driving harder on the circuit than would be advisable on the road, but the extra cornering power is well worth having.

The body shape and the strategically placed spoilers certainly seem to confer excellent stability. On a road circuit, the brakes stand up to continuous hard driving without any sign of distress. The exhaust silencer easily complies with the latest noise regulations and the car can be accelerated up to full revs on the gears without attracting unwelcome attention. The mirror now gives a wide field of view, too, so no unwelcome followers can catch one unawares.

The Lotus Europa has acquired a useful performance increase from its new engine. Much more important, it has ceased to be merely a fun-car and has become a thoroughly practical form of everyday transport, equally suitable for the trip to the office or for long, fast continental journeys.

JOHN BOLSTER

**SPECIFICATION AND PERFORMANCE DATA**  
 Car tested: Lotus Europa Twin-Cam two-seater coupé, price £1995 or £1995 including tax.  
 Engine: Four-cylinders 82.55 mm x 72.75 mm (1958 cc). Twin chain-driven overhead camshafts. Compression ratio 9.5 to 1. 105 bhp at 6000 rpm. Two horizontal twin-choke De Lorté carburetors.  
 Transmission: Single dry-plate clutch. Four-speed all-synchromesh gearbox with central remote control in unit with spiral bevel final drive, overall ratios 3.66, 5.26, 8.05 and 12.85 to 1.  
 Chassis: Steel central backbone chassis with glassfibre body. Independent front suspension by wishbones, coil springs, and telescopic dampers, with anti-roll bar. Rack and pinion steering. Independent rear suspension by fixed-length driveshafts and lower links with trailing radius arms, coil springs, and telescopic dampers. Servo-assisted disc front and drum rear brakes. Bolt-on pressed steel 4½J wheels fitted 155 HR 13 tyres. Option: Brand Lotus 5½J alloy wheels with differential tyre equipment, 175/70 front and 185/70 HR 13 rear tyres.  
 Equipment: Twelve-volt lighting and starting. Speedometer. Rev counter. Ammeter. Water temperature, oil pressure and fuel gauges. Heating, demisting and ventilation system. Two-speed wipers and washers. Flashing direction indicators. Electrically controlled windows. Extra! radio.  
 Dimensions: Wheelbase 7 ft 8 in. Track (front) 4 ft 5.5 in. (rear) 4 ft 5 in. Overall length 13 ft 1.5 in. Width 5 ft 4.5 in. Weight 1513 lb.  
 Performance: (approximate figures) Maximum speed 117 mph. Speeds in gears: third 84 mph, second 55 mph, first 32 mph. Acceleration: 0-50 mph 5.3 s, 0-60 mph 7.4 s, 0-100 mph 23.3 s.