

The Europa's lines are familiar to British racegoers who have watched the Lotus 47 in action.

THE Lotus Europa, the Renault-engined coupé which shares its body shape with the twin-cam Group 4 47, has been manufactured for export only since its introduction in December 1966, and is in consequence a very rare sight on British roads. However, after over 2000 Europas have been sold in 35 countries throughout the world, Lotus announce this week the introduction of the Europa S2 in right-hand-drive form for the home market. Price is £1667 including tax; it is not available in kit form.

The S2 is a more refined version of the original car and features improved sound-proofing and passenger comforts, including electric windows and adjustable seats with integral head rests. The walnut dash incorporates airflow ventilation.

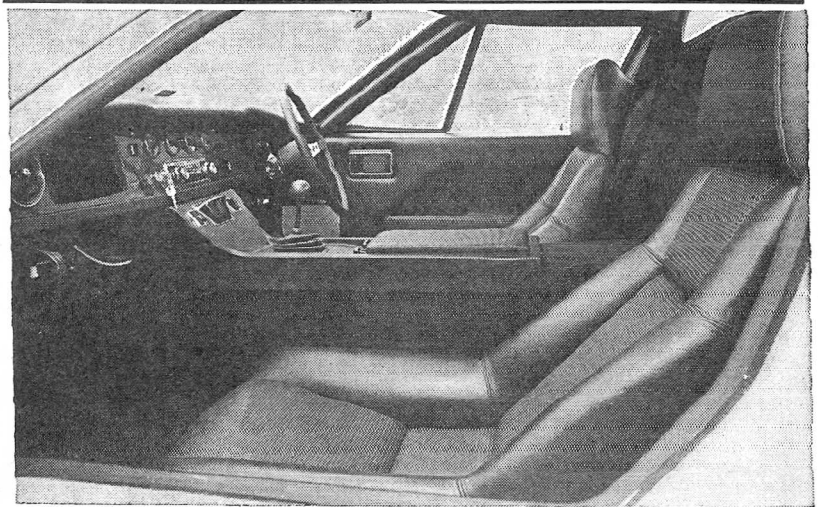
The rest of the car remains as before, with a steel backbone not unlike that of the Elan in reverse, with the alloy Renault R16 1470 cc engine in the rear fork ahead of the back wheels, which it drives via the same transaxle transmission unit that motivates the front wheels of the Renault, but with the crown-wheel turned upside down. The power output is boosted from 63 to 82 bhp by Lotus modifications which include a twin-choke Solex carburetter, high compression pistons, bigger valves and a higher-lift camshaft with greater overlap. In this form the engine produces 76 lbs ft. of torque, and maximum speed on the standard 3.56 rear axle ratio is claimed to be 120 mph.

A contributory factor in this performance from a 1500 cc mass production-engined car is the very low-drag one-piece fibreglass body (the drag coefficient is 0.29, compared with the Elan's 0.36). The car's overall height is just 3 ft 7 ins, and the shape is the work of John Frayling, who did a lot of the work on the Elite body design.

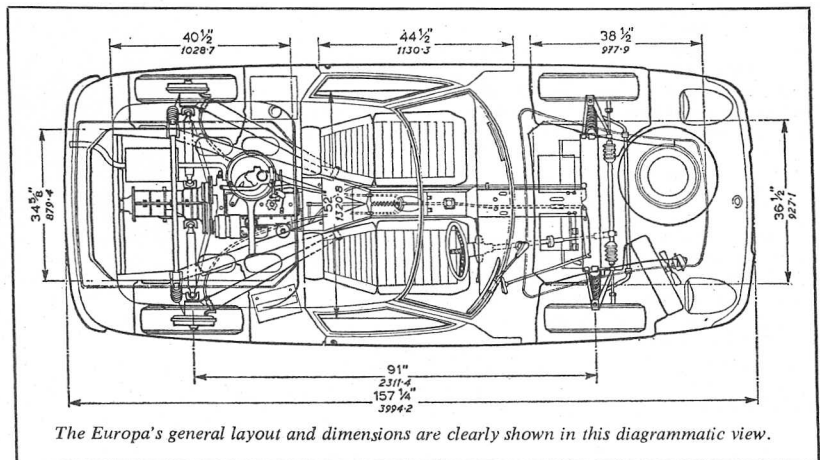
Front suspension is by an orthodox coil/wishbone arrangement, while at the back there are coils, long trailing arms and bottom links mounted below the gearbox; the drive-shafts are solid. There are small luggage compartments front and rear, and the radiator is mounted in the right-hand front wing, with the spare wheel on the other side. Braking is by 9½-ins discs at the front and 8-ins drums at the rear; a servo is an optional extra.

When we tried a Series 1 Europa for a few laps of the Lotus test track at Hethel last year we were very impressed with the little car's controllability and handling. Perhaps Lotus will succumb to the temptation of fitting the 1600 cc R16TS engine sooner or later?

Lotus Europa for Britain



The S2 interior includes adjustable reclining seats, walnut dash and electric windows.



The Europa's general layout and dimensions are clearly shown in this diagrammatic view.