

The Chapman Report



Published by the Golden Gate Lotus Club www.gglotus.org February 2008

How Much for that Lotus in the Window?

editor

Are the prices of the used Lotus Elise dropping like Stockton real estate values? Well, no. Some owners appear to be in pure anxiety over some scenario like this, fearing they would have to sell their cars for pennies on the dollar.

Well, some of us have through this before and want to say just relax.

I shopped for my first Lotus, a used Elan, in 1965. I would stop by a Lotus dealership that was owned by a guy named Bob Challman about every day, as I lived in Redondo Beach and worked at LAX (LA Airport). I had been introduced to Lotus by the ads that were created and paid for by Bob, and placed in Car and Driver or Road and Track. His ads were the only marketing for Lotus in the U.S., and he was the car's leading cheerleader. He had to be, as Colin Chapman had little concern for marketing at any level. I could have gotten an Elan with low miles then for \$3500 from him, but my dad wouldn't co-sign the loan. He also wouldn't let me get the Porsche RSK Spider in Vasek Polak's used car lot for \$2600. He hadn't heard of either of those car companies, so let me buy a '58 Desoto.

The early 70's would come and you could pick up a Lotus for CHEAP. How cheap? I was in Las Vegas by then, and heard from a friend that someone had tried to trade in an Elan on a new Fiat Spyder. The dealership had refused



Elan and Elise at the Laguna Track Day.

to give him anything on the Elan; didn't want it. I told a friend in the SCCA about it and he bought it for less than \$500.

So, that should have been about the end of the Lotus Elan and Lotus cars in general.

So what's that Elan selling for today? About \$15K, and that's not even in perfect, restored condition for that price. PS: I tried to buy a Seven from Bob Challman back in '65. He said: "forget it, kid." Smart man.

February Meeting

Friday, Feb 15th, 7:30 pm

Host: Tom and Cherie Carney

Burlingame, Ca 94010

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2008 Lotus Meet *David Anderson*

GGLC Founder John Ridley moved to southern Oregon a while ago and he's been the driving force behind the 2008 convention and autocross.

So put October 2 thru 5 2008 on your calendar and plan to drive (or trailer) your Lotus to Canyonville, Oregon! Event headquarters will be the Seven Feathers Casino and Resort. Plenty of easy parking and a great resort (your scribe is told). The autocross will be designed by Barry Spencer (past national autox champion)! There will be a Lotus car show and a town parade!

For more info, watch the GGLC website and this newsletter. Or call John Ridley at 541-825-3370.



More Europas at the Laguna Track Day. Do Europas breed? They sure don't die. Nice car.

Calendar

- Feb 15th meeting. The Carneys, Burlingame.
- March 21st meeting. Jim McClure's
- March 21st, Track Day, Thunder Hill
- March 29-30th, Goodguys, Pleasanton
- April 18th Meeting, The Richens, San Francisco
- April 20th, Autocross Clinic, Marina Airport
- April 27th, Dream Machines, Half Moon Bay
- May 4th, Hillsborough Concours
- May 16 meeting. The Andersons, Hillsborough.

For more and up to date information on these GGLC and other events check the GGLC website at www.gglotus.org



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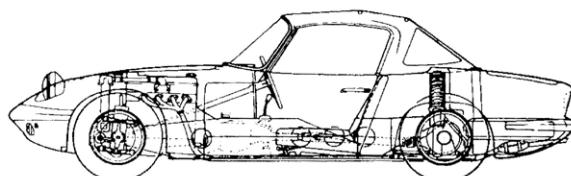
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Tesla Toast? *editor*

From the San Jose Mercury News: "The messy divorce between Tesla Motors' co-founder and the Silicon Valley electric-car company continues.

Tesla has ousted several senior executives and about a dozen other employees in recent weeks. Darry Siry, the company's vice president of sales, marketing and service, said the moves were related to "performance management." Ze'ev Drori,

The news of the firings - they aren't layoffs, Siry said, as the San Carlos company lists 39 job openings on its Web site - was announced on a new Web site by Martin Eberhard, who founded the company along with Marc Tarpenning.

On his www.teslafounders.com late Thursday, Eberhard named 16 people who have left the company in recent days, and he added more names Friday morning. He called it "a blood-bath," and said Tesla's new management team has made cuts among its top executives, many engineers, its service organization and its firmware team.

Eberhard was replaced by an interim CEO in mid-2007, and left the company entirely just after Drori's arrival.

Originally scheduled for delivery early in 2007, the first production Tesla roadster has yet to be built. Delays, most related to the car's transmission, mean the first customers won't get their \$100,000 cars for at least a few more months, and even then the

car will be getting what Tesla calls an "interim" transmission."

OK, some may get their cars but with bad trannys and maybe a few other problems. But, their service network will be able to sort those issues in due time. Wait, there is no service network yet. They could also be doing quite well, on their own or as a part of a larger car company by that time.

I would have loved for the Tesla to have succeeded, but I honestly can't see this scenario coming true.

P.S.: Since this article, there have been more positive press on Tesla, including the latest Autoweek. It is reported that there is another transmission, one speed. The Chairman of the Board and major investor, Elon Musk, has received his car. He stated that he had \$50 million in the company. There have yet to be any long term tests of the car, and, no financials are reported by Tesla. As a privately held company, they are not required to tell us anything, and they don't.

Lotus Bytes

Dave Anderson

Regional Autocrossing
Member Jesus Villareal has been campaigning his 73 Europa to good effect, winning X Prepared at SCCA San Francisco Region's event November 18 2007 at Castle Airfield, Atwater CA. The picture in the November issue of "North American Pylon" shows his beautiful paint job and large rear wing and large front splitter (what we used to call an air-dam).

GGLC Track Day, Laguna *by David Anderson*

It was cold but dry all day at Laguna Seca. It was hard to get tires up to good temperatures in the 40-50 degree F chill. Your reporter had stayed in Carmel Valley overnight and had to scrape 1/8 inch of frost/ice off the tow car windows at 7AM... Very unusual for Carmel.

We had a full slate of 75 entrants (the track limits to 25 on track at once, a firm limitation). One or two entrants packed up before lunch allowing lucky late applicants to register and get on track in the afternoon.

The entrants were split into 3 25 car groups. Each group ran a 20 minute session so a full set was once an hour: each group could predict when to be ready to go on track. We kept to schedule very well all day.

One Elise had engine trouble (reportedly a camshaft had been replaced and the replacement failed). Otherwise there were no incidents.

We had 6 Europas (!) and 2 Elans and at least 10 Elise/Exige on hand. We must not forget Dave Platt's very quick Esprit of course: he skipped the last couple of sessions as he cracked a brake disk and did not dare press on, he had to drive home!

Evil Twins Racing (Dan and Sharon Wardman and Joel Farber) brought 2 Europas and a Zink Formula Ford: I sat (well, really laid down) in the Zink in the paddock and don't quite understand how one could actually drive such a cramped vehicle!

Next one is at Thunderhill.

Lotus News

Press Release

New Lotuses On Horizon
Eagle Lands Next Year, Followed by Esprit Replacement

EVO - September 3, 2007

From the outside Lotus looks to be in a precarious position. Owner Proton is subject to a takeover bid, and while the Malaysian company's homeland state-of-the-art manufacturing plant has huge appeal for potential buyers, a small, specialist sports car maker with a dodgy financial past, based in rural Norfolk, could seem like unwanted baggage.

"Production is now tailored to demand – we're selling 65 cars a week and we're making 65 cars a week"

Lotus CEO Mike Kimberley (Photo above with Lotus founder Colin Chapman's image looking over his shoulder) confesses that he isn't party to the machinations of the Proton takeover but he is adamant that whatever the outcome, Lotus has a future. In fact, he believes the company is now as strong as it has ever been – it has returned to profitability and plans to launch an all-new 2+2 at the London Motor Show in 2008 and the Esprit replacement a year later.

'Production is now tailored to demand – we're selling 65 cars a week and we're making 65 cars a week. We've eliminated the build-up of stock, particularly in the US where the situation was out of hand and unsustainable. There's a need to refocus Lotus on being a niche

company, small enough that a 'can do' culture can flourish, as it did in Colin's (Chapman) day.'

New 2+2

Kimberley is clearly passionate about Lotus's forthcoming models, starting with Project Eagle, a 2+2 designed to sit between the Elise/Exige/Europa and the new Esprit, and due to debut at next year's London motor show, on sale early in 2009. Teasingly he grants me a quick glance at pictures of the Eagle, which appears to be a mid-engined coupe with (very) occasional rear seating. Think Bertone-bodied Dino 308GT4 with a modern Lotus twist and you won't be too wide of the mark. Price is likely to be sub-£50K (\$100,000).

Unlike the Europa, the Eagle isn't based on an Elise platform but it will use a bonded alumin-

um tub and glassfibre composite body. Kimberley won't confirm where the engine's coming from, but doesn't argue with the logic of our guess at a Toyota unit, most likely a 3.2-litre V6 with about 300bhp.

When we interviewed Kimberley in 2006, he had just reviewed progress with the Esprit and decided that it wasn't extreme enough. It seems that the car's dynamics are now much sharper, 'more Lotus', as befitting Hethel's flagship £70,000 (\$140,000) supercar.

More Lotus Bytes

editor

The new issue of Autoweek has a good article on all of the variations of the Elise that are currently available, along with further information.



Richard Ryan, above and opposite, getting driving lessons from Derek Bell in the Bently.

Speed 8 Bentley Ride

Richard Ryan



After some inquires, I get an e-mail from Bentley. "We are wondering if, on December 9 at 3:30, you would have the opportunity to take hot laps with Derek Bell in the Speed 8 at Infineon Raceway and then have a chance to interview Derek. Please let me know if this is OK with you." Instantly I fire back my OK.

What does the term "Bentley Speed 8" conjure up in your mind?

Those of us, who are not students of Green history, may think of WO and the boys racing around the 1920/1930s English countryside. Their toy? A huge, slab-sided, green, 4-door monster with large wire wheels and a Villiers supercharger sticking out 2 feet in front of the massive radiator.

At some point, they decide to take on the entire world. They ferry their toys over to the French countryside to take on all comers at the big race. For a few years they beat the pants off the world's automotive giants. Then, just for fun, they pick a train to race against and try to beat it to the end of the line (and they do beat the train).

And they did all this with a

Bentley Speed 8, right? Well, no. Those early victories (1927 to 1930) came in a Speed Six. And yes, like the Speed Six, the Speed 8 is green, but that is about where the similarities end. Two Speed 8s finished first and second at Le Mans 73 years later (in 2003).

Late in 2000 Bentley announced a 3-year plan to return to competition at Le Mans. They knew it would take some time to design, build, develop, and fine tune the mechanics, drivers, and cars before that 73 year drought could be broken and the goal of winning the most prestigious sports car race in the world could be achieved. Work on the first set of Bentley EXP Speed 8s started.

For the 2001 race, Bentley sent a two car team to the famous French racetrack to contest the 24-hour event. One car finished third (and first in class) and one dropped out with electrical problems.

To prepare for the 2003 Le Mans, Bentley took the two Speed 8s to the Sebring 12-hour race and finished third and fourth behind the Audi R8s. Then a two car Bentley team crossed the channel for the 2003 Le Mans 24-hour race. A Speed 8 started from the pole.

24 hours and 3,198 miles later the two Speed 8s crossed the finish line in first and second. As part of the victory celebration Derek Bell drove the winning Speed 8 down the Champs

Eleise in the middle of Paris as the crowds cheered.

Back to December 9, 2007.

Bentley brought the 2001 third place EXP Speed 8 to the USA for some promotional activities. This car weighs about 1,980 pounds. The 3.6-liter, V-8 produced 600+ HP and 550+ foot pounds of torque by using two turbochargers. At speed, the aerodynamics can create about 4,400 pounds of down force.

Time to go for a ride. Ashley Mason (the crew chief) opens the passenger door and pries out the last victim. The victim falls to his hands and knees and kisses the ground muttering, "I made it. I'm still alive." He had never been in any kind of race-car before. I can't imagine how overpowering the ride must have been for him.

I sit on the bodywork. As I feed my feet and legs into the passenger's footwell, then slip my upper body in through the door and slides into the seat. Ashley helps with the belts. I yanks hard on all the belt adjustment tabs, knowing what is about to happen.

The passenger side (left side) of the Speed 8 was not made for a tall person. I really only have 3 points of contact: my feet are wedged into the footwell, my butt is shoehorned into the seat, and my head is jammed into the roof. Ashley shows me a bracket that I can use to hold myself to one side and keep from falling on Derek in left turns. As he lowers the door, Ashley says, "Stand in the footwell when

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Derek hits the brakes.” Derek reaches over in front of my nose to punch the start button. The adventure begins.

Because it is cold (after all it is December), it takes a lap or so to get the tires up to some kind of operating temp so the Speed 8 wiggles around a lot and the side loadings aren’t bad. All car movements are transferred directly from the roof, to my loaner helmet, to my head, to my brain. But at this moment, it’s not too bad. Ever being the driver instructor, I focused on Derek’s lines, and he gets a very good grade. His approach and turn-in for T-7 is a little unusual. During a post-ride conversation with Derek, I decide that I will try that line the next time the mighty FV hits the track. A few laps in, and the tires are now

starting to grip. G-loads in all directions skyrocket. Derek is now fighting the wheel at almost every turn. Even with those hard pulls on the belts, I crash left and right in the seat. And yes, when Derek hits the brakes, you do almost stand in the footwell. The Speed 8’s braking performance is incredible. The acceleration is strong. The noise level is not bad at all. I think the gearbox made more noise than the engine did.

Now things are happening much faster than they did in the early laps. Coming outta T-11 upshifts are wap! wap! wap! wap! and we turn into T-1 faster than Flash has ever been in a car, 160+. The Speed 8 climbs the hill into T-2 like a jet fighter on lift off.

I am sure you know who Derek Bell is and what his

background includes; otherwise, you wouldn’t be reading this magazine. As a quick review, he started racing in 1964 in a Lotus 7 (just like the one in Flash’s garage). He worked his way up through Formula 3 to Formula 2. His first Formula 1 race was in 1968 in a Ferrari at Monza. What a pressure-packed place to start! He was in 16 F-1 races driving for Ferrari, Surtees, McLaren, and Tecno. His sports car credentials are even more impressive. He has won Le Mans five times and three times at Daytona. His latest win was at the 2007 “Race of Legends” held at the Monterey Historics.

I need to say thanks to the group from Team Bentley and Bentley Motor Cars for a great day at the track.

Track Day

Dave Anderson

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The Chapman Report is published monthly by the Golden Gate Lotus Club, PO Box 117303, Burlingame, CA 94011. The GGLC is a non-profit incorporated car club and is not affiliated with Group Lotus, Team Lotus or Lotus Cars USA. The GGLC's annual membership dues are \$25.00.

Opinions expressed in the Chapman Report are those of the authors and do not represent those of the GGLC or its officers.

Submissions to the Chapman Report are accepted and encouraged. Please email them to EDITORGGLC@YAHOO.COM in MS Word, rtf or ASCII text. Submissions may also be mailed to Jim McClure, 11238 Bubb Road, Cupertino, CA 95014.

2006 GGLC Officers are: President: Clark Vineyard, Vice President: Clark Vineyard, Treasurer: Laura Hamai, Event Coordinator: John Zender, Membership Chairman: David Anderson, Secretary: Jon Rosner

Chapma Report Staff: Editor: Jim McClure, Circulation Manager: Tom Carney, Advertising Manager: Mel Boss.

More Classifieds

For Sale: 1973 Europa. Turbo charged, wide tires and wheel flares. Yellow with front to back wide black stripes. Only needs side mirrors and paint touch up. No stress cracks. Upgraded strong brakes. \$35,00.00 Joe at (916) 721-3324 or eve. (530) 886-0788. Joe Marman Day (916) 721-3324 > marmanla@localnet.com (10/07)

For Sale: 2005 ELISE.BRG with star guard and touring package. Soft and Hard cover. Low miles, 34000. Please contact Katherine at 831-595-6476 (11/07)

Offer: I will be heading out to the bay area in April to pick up an Esprit and tow it back to Minnesota. I will have an empty uncovered pickup bed and open trailer for the trip out if anybody has something they want to ship from the upper midwest to any points between Minneapolis and San Francisco. Cost: gas between the pick up point and dropoff. mike.griese@att.net 507 358 2878

Track worthy is an understatement



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Classifieds

(non-commercial ads are free to GGLC members and will run for three issues before requiring renewal)

For Sale: Fully Operational 2.17L 1991 Turbo Esprit SE Motor. Head completely rebuilt in October 2006 with nearly \$4K in new parts.

Price negotiable. Will share shipping cost with buyer.

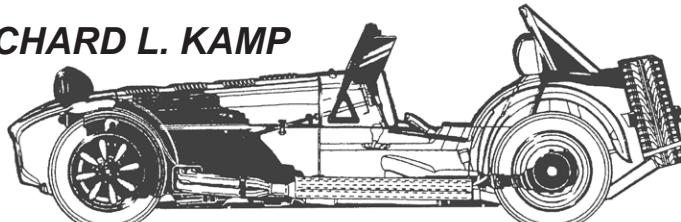
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or call (808) 682-0709 and leave message. Short Video with sound available upon request to confirm operational condition of motor.

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Wanted: 1. Elan S2 side-window glass. Lotus Part Number 26B0090 (two hole finger-lift style) 2. Elan S1/2 door key-lock cylinder(s). Left side Appears to be Part No. 26B6013 LH 3. Steel center-ring from an Elan Plus-2 alloy wheel (are there any busted or bent Plus-2 alloy wheels out there?) Contact Marc Charonnat, Cycling2003@comcast.net, 530-217-9611 (cell) (10/07)

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THE REPORT

