

The Chapman Report



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Kevin Enderby and Stefano Natoli engage in a little bench racing at the Club Auto Sport Dietsch Werks GGLC club meeting in February.



Alexander Komlik trains a next generation driver on one of the Trinity Racing Concepts simulators at Club Auto Sport. (Alex is also helping out with his finger on the "go" pedal since the driver cannot reach it!)

March/April Meetings

Friday, March 18, 2011 – 7:30 PM

Host: Pete and Noni Richen

Friday, April 15, 2011 – 7:30 PM

Host: Rahul and Nithya Nair

GGLC Recruits and Parties at Club Auto Sport for February Meeting

editor

GGLC prez, Jen Dietsch (with some help from Rob and Sebastian), organized a special club event for the February meeting held at the Club Auto Sport facility in San Jose. Club Auto Sport is the new home of Dietsch Werks, and it provides an outstanding venue for car folks to gather and share experiences.

cold and wet weather that did little to dampen the spirits of the attendees.

Many of the tenants at Club Auto Sport opened their doors for the attendees to hang out and swap stories. The immaculate show and race cars on display in the main meeting area and at Borelli Motor Sports presented the perfect backdrop for the event.

One of the highlights of the evening was the chance for attendees to try out the state-of-the-art racing simulators being developed by Jack Ulstad and Martin McKeefery at Trinity Racing Concepts. They

generously opened their doors for the evening, and many guests took advantage of the free seat time.

The evening focused on introducing potential new members to the GGLC, and the turn out was impressive, especially considering the uncharacteristically



Another special feature of the evening was a chance to get a first look at the spiffy new paint and decals on the GGLC equipment truck.



The new look is bound to attract some positive attention during the upcoming AutoX season, and it will serve as a great club billboard at this year's LOG event in Las Vegas.



Lotus Puts on a Big Show in LA

editor

Last year's LA Car Show took place November 19-28, 2010, but space limitations in earlier issues of the Chapman Report forced me to delay coverage of the spectacular unveiling of 5 new Lotus cars at the show. It was an amazing event, and, with help from Dave Simkin and Carl Jackson from LCU, Kiyoshi Hamai, Rahul Nair and I were able to get passes to the Press Preview days held before the opening of the show to the general public. That means your exclusive GGLC reporting team had some very special up-close time with the cars and the people involved.

Lotus corporate and LCU put their best face forward showing off the exciting concept cars us-

ing elaborate graphics and displays along with an array of Hol-

extensive world-wide coverage of the new car lineup.



lywood stars to add to the glamour of the event. The show in LA was essentially a repeat of the first showing of the cars at the prestigious Paris show in early October 2010, which resulted in

The atmosphere in LA was no less festive, and it was combined with a rare chance for us to see and talk to the people behind the

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cars. In particular, Rahul was able to get some exclusive one-on-one video interviews with key Lotus personnel, and the content of those interviews provided some special insights as well as lots of attention when they were posted on his GGLC Chapman Report Online blog.



Sharon Stone at the wheel of the new Esprit with Lotus CEO, Dany Bahar in the passenger's seat.

Check out the accompanying photos to get a flavor of the excitement Lotus has been generating with these concept cars that will hopefully be turned into customer cars delivered to a re-vitalized dealer network in the not too distant future.



Ace GGLC blogger Rahul Nair videos his interview with an enthusiastic Lotus CEO, Dany Bahar.



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Calendar

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Location</u>
March 5	Car Club Challenge (Karts)	Fremont
March 18	Social/Club Meeting	San Francisco
March 31	Track Day	Thunderhill
April 15	Social/Club Meeting	Daly City
Apr 23	AutoX	Marina
May 15	Marin/Sonoma Concours	Marin
May 17	Track Day	Thunderhill

See www.gglotus.org for additional information about upcoming events.

GGLC's Anti-Football Fun Run Attracts a big Crowd

editor

The first fun run of the new year was organized by Kiyoshi Hamai, and fortunately enough it was scheduled for a glorious, bright and clear CA day on January 22. No matter that there were no major football games actually scheduled for that day as the owners of the 20+ cars that joined the fun run did not need an excuse to exercise their vehicles on some of the best of Bay Area back roads.

The group gathered at Buck's restaurant in Woodside where early arrivals could enjoy one of the classic restaurant's hearty breakfast specials before setting

out on the roughly 90 mile trek that Kiyoshi had laid out.

The route first ran through the hills while heading south to-



Photo credit: Kiyoshi Hamai

wards Big Basin and Santa Cruz. Eventually, we reached the coast and began the scenic drive north towards Half Moon Bay.

Rest stops included Boulder Creek and an especially scenic visit to Pigeon Point.

The final destination for the fun run was Cameron's Pub in Half Moon Bay where the participants could share some stories and find a traditional British fish-'n-chips lunch if that was their pleasure.

All in all, it was a great day combined with a great outing to start off the new year of club events with style. And, as an extra bonus, no one had to forgo their favorite football game to enjoy the excursion!

An Elan at Last

by Royce Hong

Reprinted from *Motoring Con Brio*
(www.motoringconbrio.com)

I started sketching and drawing cars at the tender age of five, and I have always sketched and drawn a “top 12” list of cars that I—an industrial designer and motoring enthusiast—consider to be the best cars ever made. I am a die-hard fan of ingenious engineering wrapped in simple, sumptuous curves that give an inimitable driving experience. These attributes are the very essence of industrial design: genuine, accessible, yet highly rigorous in concept, form and performance.

Two Lotus cars sit on my top 12 list: the Series 1 Elise and the original (1960s) Elan. Being a loving owner of a Series 1 Elise in Taiwan for almost ten years now, I have lusted over its predecessor the Elan for as long as I can remember. Due to both work circumstances (I split my time between Taipei and the San Francisco Bay Area) and wayward luck, I had never crossed paths with an Elan that ended up going home with me.

Although the Elan had eluded me for a long time, I would always think how absurdly fantastic it would be to drive a roadster Lotus in Northern California. I could just imagine how the Elan would drive down a twisty mountain road as I hear the car working with me. Honestly, what could be a purer driving experience?

As luck would have it, late last year I finally met my Elan. An old college friend from LA shot over a link to a blue '67



Elan S3 for sale on a British car enthusiast forum. One look at the posted photos and I'm bewitched. The seller is a well-known professional car photographer, and the photos really capture what it feels like to own and drive the car.

I showed the pictures to my wife, and to my absolute delight, she urged, “Get it! Get it!” (*above all else, perhaps definitive proof that Royce Hong is an incredibly fortunate man- Ed.*), thereby sealing the deal for me and my Elan. After a friend checked it out for us in LA and came back with a favorable nod, we bought the Elan, sight unseen.

For me, driving is about a total experience formed by how the car works, how it looks, how it sounds, and how it performs. It is about the injection or superimposition of personality, story, and poetry into a precisely engineered performance machine.

Unlike the various Porsches I've owned, British cars—especially older British cars—

are anything but perfectly engineered. Nor are they exactly reliable. They have a ‘well, it more or less works’ build quality about them and ALWAYS give you an unpredictable driving experience. Something unexpected always happens with these cars—be it mishap or delight—and mine is no exception.



The adventures started during delivery, before I even had a chance to drive it. We had the Elan trucked up north to an auto shop in the Bay Area as we wanted to have the car properly looked at. On the day of the scheduled arrival, a severe winter storm broke out. Worried that the car might be caught in the storm, we asked the trucking

company for an update on their truck's whereabouts but were told they were not able to locate the truck or their driver! A huge panic ensued and phone calls raged as hard as the blowing wind. When we finally located the truck, they insisted, quite vehemently, that the car was delivered, even though our auto shop said they never took delivery of an Elan. More phone calls ensued, and a good deal of further hell raising later, we finally found the Elan. As it turned out, the truck driver had dropped the car off at another auto shop next door! The car was finally found, without windows and top (removed by the previous owner for lightness, consistent with Colin Chapman's philosophy) and with boxes of parts in the trunk.

As we waited for the rainy winter to pass, we had the top and windows put back on, the racing roundels removed, the bumpers painted, and the running gear given a good once-over. Spring finally arrived and out came the Elan for a drive. I met up with a friend driving a Miata—perhaps the Elan's spiritual successor—at Alice's Restaurant on Skyline Blvd.

Next to the compact Miata, the Elan looked like a 70% reduction of a car, tiny and svelte—more like a toy than a real car. Yet my 43-year-old Elan had no trouble keeping up

with the track-prepped Miata on Skyline's numerous curves. We stumbled upon some seriously narrow and twisty back roads, where the Elan really shined! It was such an incredible feeling carving through the turns so effortlessly. The car swung and swayed in smooth, lithe rhythms—light and springy, yet nimble and powerful. As if on cue, the swing music of the bandleader Benny Goodman



started playing in my head, conjured from thin air. For a continuous 20-mile stretch, I really did feel like I was dancing with the car, swinging to the big band sounds of Benny in glorious California spring weather without a care in the world. I was having a gasoline-fueled metaphysical bonding experience with the Elan—a sort of tarmac nirvana, and a moment I will never forget.

Similar driving highs would help me get stranded on Skyline sometime later, albeit through no fault of the car. Once, I needed to recharge after a month-long

business trip in Asia, so I headed straight for the hills with the Elan the minute I got back. Trailering a beautiful (and considerably more powerful) Aston Martin V8 Vantage all the way up the twisties, the Elan danced beautifully and was engaged in full-swing mode. I was having loads of fun keeping up with the big Aston when suddenly I felt a hesitation from the car. I immediately realized that I was so immersed in the driving experience that I had completely forgotten to check the fuel gauge! The car was literally running on empty. By then, the Aston was already way out of sight. I coasted down the mountain for about five miles until the car slurped up its last drop of fuel. Having this much fun had left us without gas in the middle of nowhere.

I had no navigation tools with me, and no idea where we were.

A car eventually came along and, with the Elan by my side, I managed to convince the Prius driver that I was no serial killer, thereby successfully hitching a ride to the nearest gas station five miles away. I hitched another ride back to the car with the station attendant who had just clocked off. Once gassed up, I turned the Elan around and headed back for the hills.

One of the reasons for getting the Elan was that I wanted to

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start autocrossing. The local and very active Golden Gate Lotus Club runs a great series that is usually held at the Marina Municipal Airport near Monterey.

Two nights before my first event, I went to dinner at a German restaurant with some friends in Sunnyvale. Later, as I walked out to the Elan in the

that for awhile, trying to figure out why the car wouldn't start. I remembered the bratwurst from the night before and the mysterious sound I heard in the parking lot, so I jacked up the car to have a look underneath. I was shocked to see that half of my starter was missing!

I immediately hopped into my daily driver—not a British car—and headed back to the restau-

my pleasant surprise, my ad-hoc, slapdash fix to my starter did not dampen the car's performance at all.

I've never owned a car that developed so many problems over the course of ownership and left me stranded so many times. Yet I am starting to feel that they are an integral part of the vintage motoring experience

(that is, assuming you decide to really uncork it). I was quite surprised at how calm I was during each event, which I began to think of as the space time and mechanical temperament of the Elan. In fact, I've started to anticipate and accept these mishaps as adventures, and the moments of transcendental connections with the Elan as some sort of man-and-machine-as-one cyborg fantasy.



parking lot, a heavily modified late-model Mustang was warming up next to my Elan. It was loud, visceral, and it sounded good. I started the diminutive Elan, then heard a loud clunk, followed by some clanging sounds—as if something had fallen off the Mustang amidst all the V8 noise. The two guys in the Mustang got out to check out their car. I didn't think much of it and drove off. Come the next day, I started packing up for the autocross and wanted to warm up the car. This time, the Elan wouldn't start. I had just fixed the solenoid and a faulty starter switch, so I fiddled around with

rant. From a distance, I could see dark hunks of metal on the ground. It was the other half of my starter, in pieces—still there 24 hours later! I gathered up the parts and scrambled home for an ad-hoc fix, just in time for the autocross the next day.

With the skinny M+S tires which were on the car at the time, the Elan slid around quite a bit, yet in a totally controllable manner. My times were obviously not competitive with the modern day Elises and Exiges, but I was absolutely amazed by the telepathic handling of the car and became addicted to her effortless four-wheel drifts. And to

I think Peter Egan said it best in one of his recent *Road & Track* columns about the Elan: "One minute I'd think, I'm free at last, finally done with British cars; I can see a whole new life ahead of me. And the next minute, I'd swing through a big sweeping S-bend, feel that almost miraculous Lotus road holding, and say to myself: This is the best sports car anybody ever made. I must fix this thing and keep it forever."

This & That

News abstracted from the Chapman Report online

Lotus T125 makes its track debut:

Earlier this year, the Lotus F1 inspired customer race car, the Type 125, had its first official run at the Autodromo di Vallelunga in Italy as F1 legend Jean Alesi and Lotus factory driver James Rossiter completed over 200 kilometres during a two-day test.

Commenting on the test, Lotus' Director of Motorsport Operations, Miodrag Kotur said: "We're very happy with the initial performance of the car, there are still some things that we want to improve on but that's natural at this stage and that's exactly why we test. Between them, Jean Alesi and James Rossiter have an incredible wealth of experience and they put this to good use in Vallelunga."

Lotus Type 125 Ambassador

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Jean Alesi said: "Testing is always a big challenge, it's a different kind of pressure to racing but you still can't relax for a second. I enjoyed my first outing in the car, it's great to be involved at such a crucial stage in the cars' development, I really feel like I can help to make this car as fun to drive as possible." Lotus factory driver James Rossiter said: "The Type 125 is unique, it's intense, it's extreme and it's very raw. I can honestly say that I think this is the closest a

'normal' person can get to driving an F1 car. Vallelunga was great, we learned a lot about the car there and I'm really looking forward to the next test at Yas Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi's F1 track, since it will be really interesting to see how the car responds to the conditions of a very different track."

Lotus vs. Lotus—the game's afoot:

The good news is that there will likely be four Lotus-branded F1 cars supported by two different teams on the starting grids at this year's F1 races. The bad news is that you will need a score sheet combined with an instant updating capability to stay abreast of all of the team and owner intrigues. That is, if you are interested.

The two-Lotus saga continued earlier this year with the Lotus Renault team launching their

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new F1 livery in January. This team has sponsorship from Group Lotus, but it is primarily owned by Genii Capital. Along with the introduction of the livery, the Lotus Renault F1 team announced that they would be racing under a British license this year, which means that any wins would be accompanied by a rendition of "God Save the Queen".

Meanwhile, Team Lotus (formerly Lotus Racing), which

is primarily sponsored by Air Asia, has begun rebranding their headquarters with new signage that displays the classic Team Lotus logo and colors. The livery of the Team Lotus F1 cars will retain green and yellow colors used by Lotus Racing last year.



In another aspect of the drama, the Chapman family has formally withdrawn support from the former Lotus Racing team, and the British High Courts are set to rule on the ownership of the "Team Lotus" name later this year.

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Confused yet? The question used to be: "what's in a name?" but now it's: "who (if anyone) owns the real Lotus F1 car?"

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Group Lotus adds to management team:

Group Lotus recently announced two new appointments to their management team: industry leader Karl-Heinz Kalbfell and former Ferrari General Manager, Guillaume Chabin.

Heinz Kalbfell makes a welcome addition to the Group Lotus management team. Based at the Lotus headquarters in Hethel, Kalbfell, formerly of the BMW Group, will provide operational support and advise Group Lotus Chief Executive Officer Dany Bahar on the most efficient delivery of the business plan.

In addition to Kalbfell, Lotus has appointed Guillaume Chabin as Director of Sales. Chabin held senior positions at Ferrari, and he was formerly involved in the re-launch of Bentley.

Commenting on the appointments, Group Lotus CEO Dany Bahar said: "We are very pleased to have both Karl-Heinz and Guillaume on board. One of the keys to the success of any business is having exceptionally

talented people working together effectively, and Karl-Heinz has incredible experience from working in extremely senior positions throughout the automotive industry to bring to the table...His main role initially will be to bring together all our existing efforts across the departments and ensure that we are working effectively as a united force."

Karl-Heinz Kalbfell said: "I've been aware of Lotus over the years and like many in the industry, I have watched with growing interest as Lotus has developed under Dany Bahar and his team. It's not often that you get the opportunity to work with such an iconic automotive brand at such an exciting stage

of its development and I really feel that now is the perfect time for me to contribute towards the future of Lotus. I have many years and some very demanding positions under my belt, which allow me a lot of experience to draw upon. I'm ready for all the challenges that Lotus will bring."

Commenting on his new role, Guillaume Chabin, Director of Sales for Lotus Cars, said: "Joining Lotus was an easy decision for me to make—having previously been involved in the re-birth of an iconic British brand when I was working at Bentley, I know the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. This is a crucial time for Lotus and I'm very happy to be on board."

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2011 Track Days Set

The Golden Gate Lotus Club is pleased to announce 5 Open Track Day dates for 2011, with possibly more to come. Stay tuned!

GGLC Open Track Days are designed to give the Lotus and sports car enthusiast an opportunity to enjoy driving in controlled conditions without random traffic and law enforcement. GGLC Open Track Days are not races, but they allow a driver to run at his or her own pace and to enjoy their car's capabilities.

Mark these dates on your 2011 calendar and enjoy the fun!

- February 24, Thursday -- Laguna Seca
- March 31, Thursday -- Thunderhill
- May 17, Tuesday -- Thunderhill
- July 12, Tuesday -- Thunderhill
- September 6, Tuesday -- Thunderhill

Upcoming Events of Interest

It is shaping up to be a big year for Lotus enthusiasts on the West Coast, and there are several events coming up that will be of special interest:

March 5 — Karting challenge enduro at the LeMans Karting Center in Fremont. The GGLC will field at least 2, and perhaps 3, teams to compete with teams from other Bay Area car clubs. See http://www.lemanskarting.com/events/car_club_challenge.php for details.

May 15 — Marin Sonoma Concours d'Elegance at the Marin Fairgrounds in San Rafael. The organizers have put out a special invitation to Lotus owners, and they hope to have 20+ Lotus cars at the event. Note the Concours entry fee is a charitable contribution. See <http://www.marinsonomaconcours.org/home/index.php> for details.

June 11 — GGLC traditional summer fun run and BBQ at Mel and Darlene's in Danville. Get ready for those stuffed Portobellos!

October 14-16 — LOG 31 will be held in Las Vegas, NV (the westernmost venue for this annual Lotus gathering). The Red Rock Casino and Resort is confirmed for this blow out event featuring an AutoX (GGLC managed), Concours, scenic drives, awards banquet, open Track Day event (optional) and more. See <http://loglasvegas.com/> for preliminary details.

December 10 — GGLC Gala Holiday Party at Club Auto Sport in San Jose. All the excitement of previous parties at a great new venue. Mark your calendars!

Classifieds

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Contributions to the Chapman Report are accepted and encouraged. Please email them to chapmanreport-at-gglotus.org in MS Word, rtf or ASCII text.

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