

Chapter 1 : Illustrated Lotus Buyers Guide

*Illustrated Lotus Buyer's Guide (Illustrated Buyer's Guide) [Graham Arnold] on calendrierdelascience.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. clean pages and text.*

Lotus Esprit Turbo Buyers Guide The Lotus Esprit appears to have been with us for a long time, fighting Italian mid-engined exotica for supercar supremacy from its base in darkest Norfolk. Catch sight of an Esprit on the roads today and the arresting silhouette still has enough drama and poise to warrant a double-take. Impossibly low, fabulously sleek, beautifully proportioned and clean, it looks like a low-flying missile locked on to its target. The Lotus reputation has been built on fiercely precise, incisive handling with feelful steering combined with a compliant, supple ride, and the Esprit certainly did its bit to enhance that reputation. In this respect the Esprit is brilliant, confidence-inspiring and intoxicating, urging you to drive it hard. But it does have flaws. The pedals are offset and cramped; the trim rattles and creaks; the style is definitely old-school. Whether you can live with that depends on where your priorities lie. Rarely does so little money buy quite so much automotive theatre. But buying the car is one thing; running it can be quite another. Lotuses have in the past developed another, less desirable reputation, one for poor reliability and big, big bills. Treat it right and the Esprit can be reliable enough to be used as daily transport. In fact it works better that way. Like a lot of other high performance machinery, the Esprit responds better to regular use than occasional outings - and ultimately it will prove more economical per mile too. As we will see, some of the servicing will require deep exploration of your wallet. The simple fact is that although you may be able to buy an Esprit Turbo for hot hatch money, this is no mass-produced tin-top and parts are expensive. Fitting substandard parts and delaying services will, in the long-term, prove false economy, with expenditure spiralling higher to cover even bigger problems further down the line. Evolution Not only did the car change in , but the name did too. Up until that time, it was always known as the Turbo Esprit, but the two words were reversed to mark the Peter Stevens redesign. Underneath, it was essentially the same car. Boost was increased to add 5bhp to the of the Giugiaro version, giving the Esprit Turbo a top speed of mph. More importantly, the pensionable Citroen SM gearbox was junked in favour of a Renault 25 unit, which, although criticised today, seemed a big leap forward at the time. Its emissions-friendly fuel injection system combined with a chargecooler a water-to-air intercooler helped the 2. Aside from the badges, the SE could be identified by a fairly subtle rear wing, an oil-cooling duct ahead of the front wheels, straight-line side-skirts and larger, fatter wheels. Checkpoints Having decided to take the plunge into Esprit ownership, you need to decide which model to go for. With so many different versions, numbers of each specification are low, so finding the ideal car may take some time. Try to drive as many as you can and use every available resource to swat up on your chosen subject. A full history is absolutely vital, and ideally the car should come with a thick wad of bills and receipts too. The service history should carry the stamps of either a main Lotus dealer or a recognised independent specialist - your best guarantee that any work has been done correctly and with proper parts. These specialists will also have the correct equipment for checking the management system, which although expensive is the only means of doing the job properly. Every year saw improvements in terms of strength and longevity of parts, so early SEs will require more TLC than an S4. Bad cars cost a lot just to keep running, and restoring a rough one can prove a financial nightmare. Engine The engines themselves, as long as they are serviced regularly, are reliable and strong, but there are some points to note. Most specialists, however, recommend that you stick to the original schedule. Not having it done could prove an expensive mistake. Owners should always allow the engine plenty of time to warm through. Remember that these are low-capacity, high-output engines and revving them from cold will seriously reduce their potential lifespan. If cared for, they can see the far side of , miles before needing a rebuild. Specialist dealer Paul Matty says that he has seen Esprits with , on the odometer, although he admits they were breathing quite heavily by that stage. If the temperature starts to rise, stop and let the engine cool before continuing your journey. There is no excuse for allowing this to happen though, as the facia has both a temperature gauge and fan failure warning light. Another SE problem regularly seen in Lotus service bays is leaks from the water pumps used by the chargecoolers. Again a fairly straightforward fault to

put right, but it pays to catch it early. The engine mounts should be examined and replaced promptly if in poor condition - the ones on the left side suffer most, and failure to replace them can damage other items such as hoses and even the exhaust. Clutch replacement is an even more time-consuming task as the gearbox needs to come out, taking around 11 hours. The clutch should be replaced at the first sign of it slipping to prevent further more costly damage to the flywheel. Suspension Very strong and can easily run for , miles before the shocks need renewing. Occasionally, small fracture-cracks on the front springs develop - something that should be picked up during service. Steering, wheels and tyres The combination of large front wheels and a small rack means the the rack is put under a lot of stress, resulting in wear. It therefore has to be replaced every other year, but this can be done economically with the installation of exchange unit. Exhaust Examine the exhaust and wastegate manifolds for cracks, which can be caused by the constant expansion and contraction from the extreme temperatures they reach during extended periods of hard running. The studs can also get stuck in the manifold and these are very expensive and complicated jobs to put right. Brakes The brakes last well, considering the performance, and should feel strong. As always, wear rates will vary considerably, but because the car is relatively light it will resist wear and fade well enough to survive a track-day outing. Non-functioning electric windows are often down to failing switch rather than the motor, so always swap that cheap part first. The headlight pods occasionally fail - when they do the culprit is usually a short circuit caused by water ingress, which will need to be dried out. The paintwork on some of the older cars can show signs of cracking as the glassfibre ages, and red paint can start to date to a pinkish hue. Underneath those panels there should be no problems as the chassis is fully galvanised. If the car is not used for a long period, the air conditioning system breaks up and needs to be replaced, which will be very expensive. The simple solution is to run the car for a while every other week or so.

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