

# Lotus in motorsport 2011



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04 Lotus Renault

Group Lotus has formed an alliance with the Renault F1 squad

06 The pioneers

Lotus was a byword for innovation in F1 through the 1960s and '70s

12 Indycar entry

Why Lotus is back in US open-wheelers

14 Junior team

Lotus ART will be battling for honours in the GP2 and GP3 arenas in 2011

16 Sportscar spread

The Evora GT car is here already, but get set for a Lotus prototype

18 T125 Exos

If you want maximum performance, then this is the car for you...



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# Lotus Renault GP

Lotus Cars' buy-in to the Renault F1 team is part of ambitious plans to return to the winner's circle and promote the brand on a global scale

Group Lotus's announcement of a partnership with the Renault F1 Team, to be renamed Lotus Renault GP from the start of 2011, is a tie-up from which both parties expect strong mutual benefits.

"I can think of no better platform for automotive brand communications than motorsport and F1," says Group Lotus CEO Dany Bahar. "We're well aware that there has been a lot of controversy around the usage of our brand in F1 and I'm delighted to be able to formally clarify our position: We are Lotus, and we are back."

There is understandable public confusion over the Tony Fernandes/Mike Gascoyne Lotus Racing squad

operating out of Hingham in Norfolk, and the recent revelation of the Proton-owned Group Lotus association with Renault F1. An obvious question is: why didn't Group Lotus simply form an allegiance with the team they licensed to go racing in 2010?

Deeper-seated politics apart, Group Lotus has taken the decision that it wants to use F1 as a major marketing drive behind a new era of performance-car production. The new seven-year F1 deal, which will see Group Lotus purchase a stake in the team from owners Genii Capital and provide title sponsorship over that period, illustrates a long-term commitment. Key to it, however, is performance and results in keeping with the Lotus brand.

"Formula 1 has always been part of our business plan," says Bahar. "If you can show customers technology derived from F1 it gives you additional credibility. But I know the budgets and the time needed to start a team and we don't have the resources from either a financial or personnel perspective. But teaming up with a top-five team with the potential to go back to successful times is different.

"We respect what 1 Malaysia Racing Team has achieved in being the best of the newcomers in 2010 but we have never claimed to be, will claim to be or want to be, Team Lotus. That was a successful, historical era and we will leave it in the past. We have a new programme with a new approach and new management."

#### JOINING THE BIG BOYS

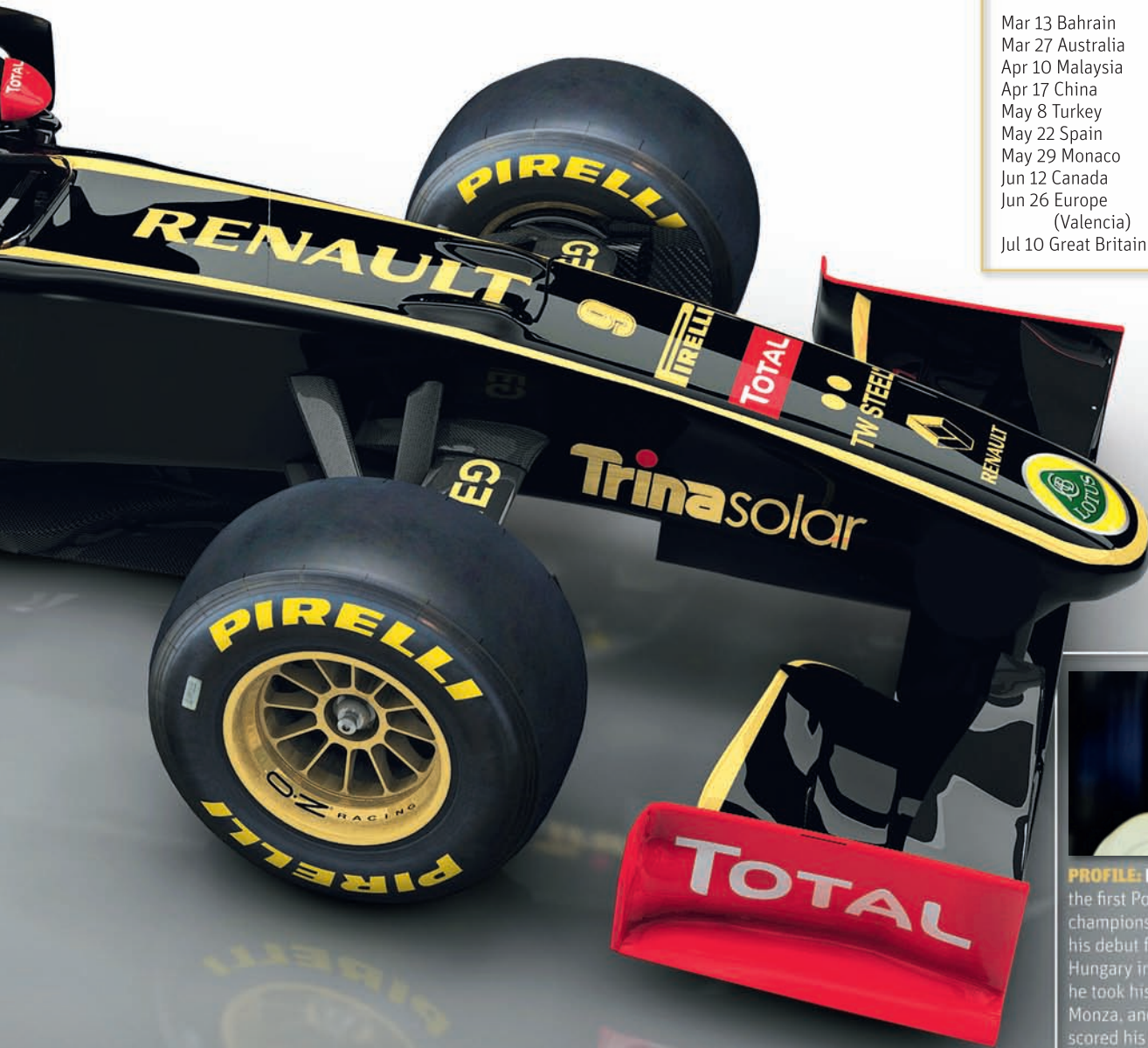
Much is made of the importance of F1 to Ferrari – a universally recognised brand through racing to the extent that it doesn't need to advertise. It would be wrong to say that Lotus is trying to recreate that story but it does have ambitions to be a 'British Porsche'.

Lotus Cars intends to go up-market and compete in the Porsche/Aston Martin marketplace whereas, historically, it has built lower-cost sportscars. It currently builds the award-winning Evora, the Elise, the Exige and the 2-Eleven. Lotus New Era was unveiled at the Paris Show on October 30, featuring the new Esprit, Elan, Elite, Elise and Eterne. It's ambitious and the tactic of using F1 as a promotional vehicle logical,

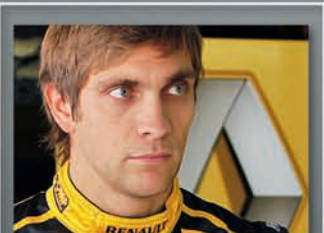


2011 F1 CALENDAR:

Mar 13 Bahrain	Jul 24 Germany
Mar 27 Australia	Jul 31 Hungary
Apr 10 Malaysia	Aug 28 Belgium
Apr 17 China	Sep 11 Italy
May 8 Turkey	Sep 25 Singapore
May 22 Spain	Oct 9 Japan
May 29 Monaco	Oct 16 Korea
Jun 12 Canada	Oct 30 India
Jun 26 Europe (Valencia)	Nov 13 Abu Dhabi
Jul 10 Great Britain	Nov 27 Brazil



**PROFILE: Robert Kubica**, 26, was the first Pole to start a world championship GP when he made his debut for BMW Sauber in Hungary in '06. Two races later he took his first podium finish at Monza, and in Canada in '08 he scored his first win. He switched to Renault for 2010, taking three podiums and eighth in the points.



**PROFILE: Vitaly Petrov**, 26, heads into his second year with Lotus Renault GP after finishing his impressive rookie season on a high with a stunning sixth place in Abu Dhabi. The first Russian to race in F1, Petrov started racing in Ladas in 2001 before moving to Europe and winning regularly in Formula Renault, F3000 and GP2.

especially given the recent experience of Bahar with Ferrari and Red Bull.

For Renault F1 and its base at Enstone, England, the Group Lotus partnership provides financial and hence technical stability and security at a time when parent company Renault scaled back its involvement with the majority sale to Genii in '09.

Other than Ferrari, McLaren and Williams, the team that entered F1 as Toleman 30 years ago this November, is the only existing one to have shown the longevity and capability of taking world titles across different decades. Ted Toleman's start-up team became Benetton in the mid-80s, took its first drivers' title with Michael Schumacher in 1994, repeated the feat in '95 and then triumphed again in 2005-06 with

Fernando Alonso, now as Renault, ironically bringing to an end the dominant Schumacher/Ferrari era.

**RENAULT READY**

In November 2009 Renault F1 shut down its windtunnel for four weeks to install a new steel-belted rolling road, replacing the previous polyester belt that had been limiting, particularly with regard to tyre modelling. The team also reaped the rewards of commissioning an impressive new CFD facility, three times as large in terms of staffing, which produced a continuous stream of reliable development throughout a season in which the F1 testing ban and resource-restriction agreements began to bite.

As well as the marketing benefits of

the F1 tie-up, Lotus and Genii plan to quickly incorporate synergies from F1 into Lotus road cars, including hybrid technology, Kinetic Energy Recovery Systems (KERS), aero advancements and lightweight materials. Added to which Genii, an investment holding company with plenty of automotive technologies, can contribute things like lightweight braking systems, variable-compression engine technology and on-board software.

Dato' Sri Mohd Nadzmi Mohd Salleh, Chairman of Proton, said in summary: "We know that Group Lotus has much to offer Formula 1 and vice versa. After careful consideration, we believe this arrangement will be fruitful, both from a commercial and marketing point of view." ■



Chapman with his talisman, Jim Clark

# Revolution, not evolution

Lotus founder Colin Chapman was the ideal man for Formula 1's pioneering era of the 1960s and '70s, but the team still enjoyed success in the '80s after his passing. By PAUL FEARNEY

They were John Player Specials; I was not yet six and knew no better. But though the Lotus thing had passed me by, the cars' bad-hat black with gold-bling piping and wheels, wedgy outline, hipster rads and sculptural airboxes had not. I was smitten and demanded the Corgi model – the smaller, 50p one – for a birthday present in four days' time. Modern Formula 1 – technologically and commercially – was a conjoined twin to the Gold Leaf Team Lotus 72 of 1970. The basic design was in its fourth season when I gawped at it at Silverstone, yet, amazingly, was the fastest thing in the place – in Ronnie Peterson's crossed hands at least. Its fifth season would be a winning one too. That was Lotus made flesh: giant leap, several stuttering

steps, giant leap. It was a team carved in the image of its iconic boss. With his Flash 'Arry 'tache, spivvy business dealings and sharp temper, Anthony Colin Bruce Chapman was a man to be wary of. He was also a design genius and an inspiring leader – a man to admire. Initially from a small lock-up, then from part of a stable block behind

Keith Duckworth, both at Lotus before they formed Cosworth, were sucked along in his never-look-back wake. The two decades from 1960 were F1's most troubled, on and off the track. And that ongoing metamorphosis was the Chapman Era; and Lotus was its team.

My old man had witnessed Lotus's Green Era – with funky central yellow

1962 Lotus 25's game-changing monocoque around Clark's snaky hips, the Scot with the shiny black hair and flashing white smile became the sport's poster boy and benchmark. Blessed with a preternatural talent and a gossamer touch, he won race after race in cars many of his peers believed to be too fragile. He scored all but the first of Team Lotus's 26 world championship GP victories between 1960 and early '68. All but four of its 37 poles and four of its 32 fastest laps were down to him too. His death at a footling Hockenheim Formula 2 race on April 7 '68 was a JFK moment, a thunderclap end to an era.

Chapman shrunk-wrapped the Lotus 25 around Clark's snaky hips, and the Scot became the sport's poster boy”

his father's North London pub, his drive, vision and grasp of structures, their strengths and stresses, allowed him to rewrite the laws of motor racing engagement. The resultant British Racing Empire was too vast to be the work of one man, but Chapman was undeniably its viceroy. The rest of its 'builders', most notably Mike Costin and

stripe from the 1963 British GP on – and my mum, I subsequently divined, had had a crush on the team's other vital cog. She wasn't alone. Jim Clark's public persona was everything Chapman's wasn't: shy, humble, quiet. But both men were winners and got on famously, most of the time. From the moment Chapman shrunk-wrapped the

#### MISSING IN ACTION

Chapman, often accused of being an uncaring user, of taking insufficient care of the irreplaceable Clark, was devastated. Replacement Mike Spence's death while testing a Lotus 56 turbine at Indianapolis in May was the final straw. Chapman went AWOL. ▶





Peterson gave 72 its last successes

◀ He missed the subsequent Spanish GP – won for the no-longer-green Team Lotus by the tower of strength that was Graham Hill – and it seemed he might be lost to the sport. But at 9pm on the Thursday before the Monaco GP, he breezed into the garage as if nothing had happened. It was his way of coping. He would never again allow himself to become so close to a driver, but his team would survive, indeed prosper. Chapman’s charm-and-chutzpah ability to raise the money his tight-knit squad of groundbreakers required, and to then inspire them and to direct his grafters – nobody in the paddock worked harder for longer than a Lotus mechanic – was unique. Even without a Clark, the gap between Lotus and the rest would on occasion be cavernous. But on occasion you have to mind-manage those gaps too.

**LOOKING FOR THE NEXT BIG THING**

Chapman was incapable of keeping himself in check. If it wasn’t new, he didn’t want to know. Not only did the 72 remain as competitive for as long as it did because it was so advanced to begin with, but also it did so because it had to; its potential replacement was not up to scratch. The automatic-clutch, left-foot-braking 76 of 1974 was too far ahead of its time, while the all-ways-adjustable 77 of ’76, which did replace the 72, was all over the place until a freelance designer simplified it – by which time, of course, Chapman was imbued with his Next Big Thing.

Like a number of Lotus’s Next Big Things, the 78 ‘wing car’ and ground-effect 79 were not his, exactly. Rather

they were the results of Tony Rudd and Peter Wright extrapolating their late-1960s experimentation with BRM. Although Chapman sometimes claimed, or was awarded, credit for others’ innovations, his real genius lay with his boundless capacity to grasp any idea proffered, to swiftly assimilate its potential, and then to suggest ways of maximising it. The hothouse environment and fecundity of Team Lotus were entirely his doing. He wasn’t big on detail, but he was a Michelangelo

when it came to the bigger picture.

Certainly the 78, according to Mario Andretti, was “painted to the road”, and the 79, with its sliding skirts – an idea copied from rival Wolf – would hit the ground sticking. Crude yet fragile, they won through only by the sheer force of their downforce. Some considered that consolidation would surely have set Lotus on the path of continued domination. The team plumped for blue-sky thinking instead.

The wingless 80 of 1979 was a leap

too far and no match for Patrick Head’s Williams FW07, a nut-and-bolt reworking of the 79’s concept. Poised on the highest ledge, Chapman, as he did with the buckling ‘skyscraper’ wings of the late-1960s, had leapt without hesitation. Looking was for others.

**LIFE AFTER CHAPMAN**

The twin-chassis 88 of 1981 was Plan A for the 80, but that was a chassis too far for the rulemakers, much to Chapman’s chagrin, his enthusiasm for an increasingly hidebound sport on the wane. Planes and boats beckoned. But Plan B revived his F1 techno mojo.

A modified Lotus 92 was wheeled out into a December chill at Snetterton in 1982. At its electro heart lay F1’s future: computer-controlled active suspension, another Wright-led innovation. But before F3 racer Dave Scott could shake it down came the news that Chapman had succumbed to a heart attack the previous night. He was a younger-than-he-looked 54. It was an ACBC moment. The test went ahead, and the team carried on, riding the brainwaves of Chapman’s legacy, but over the years its lifeblood would drain away.

Chapman’s last strategic act had been to strike a deal with Renault for its turbo V6. Ayrton Senna, the team’s last great signing, used it to mesmerising qualifying effect – a Clark-like 15 poles from 1985-86 – but scored only four wins. After a switch to Honda power for ’87, he made history by registering the first pole (San Marino GP), victory and fastest lap (Monaco GP) for an actively-suspended ▶

“Chapman wasn’t big on detail, but he was a Michelangelo when it came to the bigger picture”



Andretti won 1978 title with Lotus 79





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# LOTUS IN F1

◀ F1 car. He won and set fastest lap in bumpy Detroit too, and finished third in the championship behind Nelson Piquet and Nigel Mansell of Williams, a team that used a more pragmatic version of active more sparingly than had all-or-nothing Lotus.

Unfulfilled, Senna, the most Chapmanesque of drivers, switched to McLaren where, driving a car far too simple for Chapman's tastes – the MP4/4 – he and team-mate Alain Prost carved up the next season in a way that had proved beyond even the Clark-Era Lotus.

## NEW AGE, NEW METHODS

Formula 1 was shifting away from Lotus's ilk. Whereas the rulebook had once been a series of loopholes strung together by dodgy syntax, its ever-tightening mesh now formed a formidable bulwark against innovation. That skill was still important, still possible, but it had been overtaken by in-depth analysis and careful optimisation, for which Lotus had neither the structure, manpower, financial clout nor will.

Despite the best efforts of loyal Chapman lieutenants Peter Warr, Rudd and Wright, Lotus became mid-gridders. Without Chapman to woo them, the car manufacturers now vital for success turned their backs, and so the team had to make do with Judd, Lamborghini and Mugen-Honda power from 1989 on. Toughnut Derek Warwick did his damndest; Mika Hakkinen showed why his was a talent that a struggling Lotus could not hope to hang on to; and perky Johnny Herbert popped up with several gutsy performances. Herbert's fourth on the grid at Monza in 1994 was hailed as the team's last chance; Jordan's Eddie Irvine sideswiped Herbert's 109 into retirement at the first chicane, forcing him into the slower spare car for the restart; it retired with a failed alternator after 14 laps. The bumptious Irvine's over-ambition was not the reason for Lotus's demise, but it was indicative that it had become just another team. A name was no longer enough. As Bernie Ecclestone coldly concluded, the sport owed Lotus nothing. Chapman, who sided with Henry Ford's dismissive assessment of history, probably would have agreed.

Lotus's new design was halted, staff were laid off, and it was all done, dusted – and gathering dust – by December 1994. Except it wasn't. Quite. The name, no matter how battered, wouldn't go away entirely. It took 15 years before F1 realised that it did owe Lotus something, and that it might be better off with it. That is Chapman's most lasting creation: the brand. How very modern F1 of him. How very typical of this untypical man. ■



Senna and Lotus: F1's fastest combo

## Black-and-bold power

McLaren, Williams, Ferrari and Brabham met with more success, but for many the iconic image of Formula 1's Turbo Era is a black-and-gold Lotus-Renault, boost wicked-up to the max, charging a kerb in qualifying. The focal point of that image will be Ayrton Senna's tilted fluorescent lid pinging out from a dark cockpit. The Brazilian's intensity and throttle-tapping cornering technique reset the sport's driving parameters – and gave Lotus an Indian summer.

Its first season with Renault V6 power, 1983, was turbulent. Still reeling from Chapman's death, its 93T was cumbersome and uncompetitive. Enter Gerard Ducarouge. An outsider with no emotional baggage, he was exactly what was required. His 94T – lower, slimmer, and with better weight distribution – was constructed



Senna brought Lotus's final F1 victories

in true Lotus style (ie in a matter of weeks) and made its debut at Silverstone, where Nigel Mansell finished fourth in his first GP in a turbo car. Team-mate Elio de Angelis would grab pole for the European GP at Brands Hatch, but it was Mansell who set fastest lap and took third.

Building on that, Lotus enjoyed a strong 1984. De Angelis comfortably outperformed Mansell to finish third in the drivers' standings with 34 points, but it was the theatrical Englishman who provided the most memorable moments. In Monaco he tossed away a potential victory by pushing too hard in the rain and slapping the barriers; in Dallas, having led the majority of the race from pole, he collapsed after pushing his driveless 95T – he'd clipped one too many walls – across the line in searing heat.

Mansell was replaced by Senna for 1985, and although the consistent de Angelis almost matched the Brazilian in terms of points – 33 to 38 – and inherited a victory at Imola when Alain Prost's underweight McLaren was disqualified, he had no answer to the newcomer's speed. In only his second outing with the team Senna defied horrendous conditions at Estoril to score his maiden GP victory and fastest lap. Another win, in Belgium, was poor reward for his seven poles, but he had made the team his own.

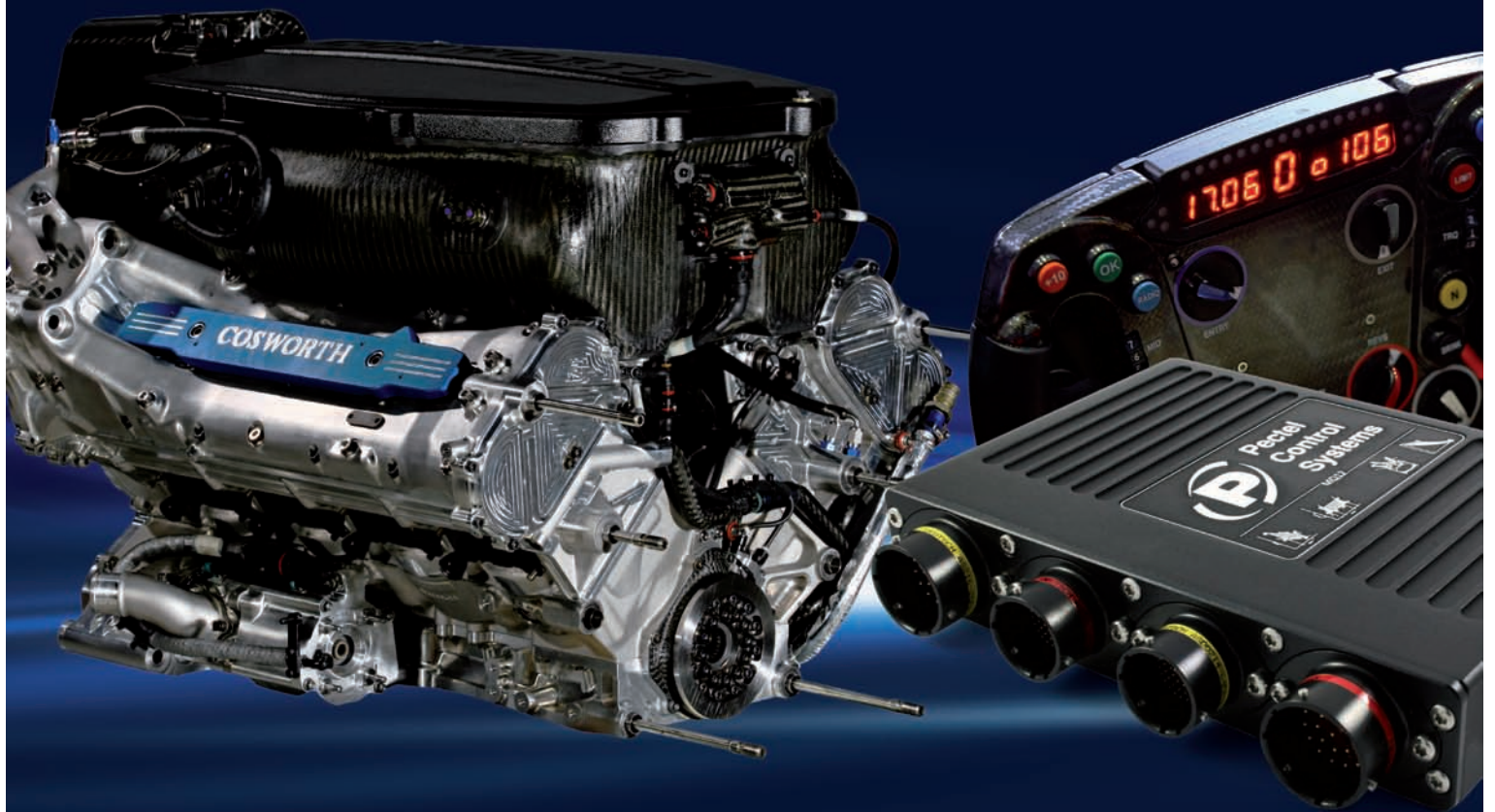
Having blocked Derek Warwick's signing, Senna was ready to become world champion in 1986, his belief bolstered by the arrival of Renault's revolutionary pneumatic-valve engine. By doing away with valve springs, it had increased the safe rev range by up to 1500rpm and improved reliability.

Sure enough, Senna put his 98T on pole for the season opener at Rio, but got a shock when Nelson Piquet's Williams-Honda breezed past in the early stages of the race and romped to victory. The fuel allocation had been further slashed from 220 to 195 litres, and Honda's more-efficient V6 was able to run higher boost pressure in races. A frustrated Senna set pole after pole – eight this time – but, as in 1985, won only two races: Spain – by a whisker from Mansell's fresh-tired Williams – and Detroit. The team's efforts centred on the engine, and the chassis suffered as a result – and in comparison to the well-balanced 97T. By mid-season Senna was making 'noises' and, desperate to keep him, Lotus acceded to his wishes and did a deal with Honda for '87.

In four seasons with Renault, Lotus secured four wins, four fastest laps and 19 poles. It racked up 188 points in the process and finished third three times in succession in the constructors' championship.

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# American dream

Lotus had a brief but successful relationship with US racing many years ago. Now, the company is returning. By JEFF OLSON

**D**ario Franchitti's first encounter with the Lotus 38 that his hero Jim Clark drove to victory in the Indianapolis 500 in 1965 wasn't enough to satisfy. It also wasn't at all what he expected.

"I first saw the Lotus at The Henry Ford museum in 2007," Franchitti wrote in US magazine *Road and Track*. "We were doing an appearance and I was walking around the museum, saw the car and thought, 'Oh, nice replica.'

"'No,' they said, 'this is the real thing.' They allowed me to go over the barrier and I stood there and touched the side of the car. I remember putting my fingerprints on it and thought that was as close as I'd ever get to it.

"Sometimes it's nice to be wrong."

Sometimes it's nice to return, too.

Two months after Franchitti drove Clark's Lotus around Indianapolis Motor speedway for a photoshoot in late September, Lotus officials announced they would bring the legendary brand back to Indy for real by supplying engines and aero kits for the IndyCar Series engine/chassis overhaul in 2012.

## FIGHTING WITH THE BIG GUYS

It will be the first time Lotus has produced an engine for IndyCar racing (Ford powered Clark's winner) and puts Lotus and Cosworth – which will build the engine – up against Chevrolet (which will team up with Ilmor), and Honda, which is currently the sole engine supplier in the series.

"We want to really fight and compete with the big guys, but we have a Lotus way to do things," said Lotus Group CEO Dany Bahar during the November announcement at the Los Angeles Auto Show. "We always try to understand what we are getting into. That's why we started this year with a very small activity with Takuma Sato with one car to understand IndyCar racing and to see whether there was an opportunity

for us to become a real contender."

Lotus eased back into US open-wheel racing last season by sponsoring a KV Racing Technology entry driven by former F1 driver Sato. It wasn't the best of seasons – Sato struggled with ovals in his rookie year, with a best finish of ninth, but Lotus officials were said to be pleased with the attention generated by the return of the brand.

"I think they were extremely satisfied with bringing the Lotus name and brand back," says Mark Johnson, general manager of KV Racing

Technology. "They were extremely satisfied with the experience. Obviously we didn't perform as well as we could have, but we knew what we were up against."

The recurring themes for the famed car company are Formula 1, sportscars and Indycars.

Chapman first brought Lotus to Indianapolis in 1963, and the company had a strong run there for several years. Four decades later, Lotus turned heads by returning to IndyCar racing.

"There was a good buzz around it at just the right time," Johnson explains. "They probably couldn't have timed it any better than they did. For an iconic brand to come back the way they did – slowly at first, then taking advantage of the new rules to go all out – is a matter of timing. It's not a trickle-down thing. They're carrying momentum from the sponsorship plan to the engine/chassis plan. They've got some aggressive ideas. The level of commitment is impressive."

So, too, is the response to the IndyCar Series' changes for 2012, which include a 2.4-litre turbocharged platform for potential engine suppliers.

"We made the brave decision, and yes, this is where we want to be," says Claudio Berro, director of Lotus Motorsport. "We believe in the series. We believe the series is developing very, very well. I think it fits perfectly with our activities and strategies in the US, which is our biggest market."



## Lotus: the history at Indy

In 1965, Clark's Lotus 38-Ford made extinct the front-engined 'dinosaurs' that had roamed Indianapolis since WWII. His victory was one of the most comprehensive in the 500's history. Beaten to pole position by the modified 1964 Lotus of AJ Foyt, he jumped ahead at the start and led for 190 of the 200 laps.

But had it not been for a leaking

oil tank on Parnelli Jones's roadster, Clark and Lotus might have achieved the feat two years earlier. While Chapman argued the toss with the blind-eye observers, Clark dropped back as he struggled to keep his slip-sliding #29 machine out of the wall. Jones was allowed to continue to victory, and the Scot had to settle for second.

On pole in 1964, Clark was let down by Chapman's insistence on using unproven Dunlop rubber, chunks from a failing left-rear smashing the 34's suspension when it was leading on lap 48.

In 1966, however, Clark only had himself to blame, two miraculous but time-consuming saves from mid-race spins costing him victory – no matter



**MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY**

When Chapman brought Lotus to Indianapolis, it was the first British-built car to compete in the famed 500-mile race. The match with Ford and the huge, 2.5-mile oval track was perfect, as was the notion of innovation. For 2012, the IndyCar Series plans to match a standard Dallara chassis to individually designed aero kits – sidepods, engine covers and wings – to allow manufacturers to experiment and innovate while keeping costs low. That’s part of what drew Lotus back into the fray. “The history and DNA of Lotus is all about extracting the most performance out of a car in return for maximum efficiency,” says Berro. “We will be using the knowledge gained from our extensive research into E85 biofuel and turbocharged engines to ensure we



Artist's impression of 2012 Lotus racer

extract the maximum performance.”

Time, however, will be of the essence. “It wouldn’t matter if it’s Lotus or anyone else, there are time constraints,” Johnson adds. “You’ve got to design, build and test a new engine within a year. There are very few on the planet who can meet that task, but Lotus is equipped to do it.

They’re not going into this blind.”

Lotus’s first team, of course, is Kevin Kalkhoven and Jimmy Vasser’s KV Racing Technology, with its obvious connection to the part-Kalkhoven-owned Cosworth. However, other teams are expected to be on board when Lotus makes its engine and aero kits available. The dark green

colour that Lotus made famous is likely to return to more than one car in 2012.

“What we tried to do with the Lotus brand is to pay our heritage and our past justice,” Bahar says. “I believe our heritage is all about motor racing. We believe that our road car should have a significant connection with the motorsports programme. That’s why we have also announced recently that we will be racing at Le Mans.”

It’s all part of careful preparation. “Our approach is that it should be a seamless integration,” Johnson says. “They’ve got a business plan that’s very detailed. It explains not only how it will happen but why it will happen.”

It’s nice to return, certainly. But sometimes it’s even better to return with a plan. ■



Lotus brand returned to the US in 2010

what Chapman’s lapchart showed.

In Clark’s sad absence, Graham Hill, a winner with Lola in 1966, led Lotus’s assault in 1968 and qualified the controversial 4WD 56 turbine in the middle of the front row; team-mate Joe Leonard was on pole. Hill crashed when the front suspension broke on lap 110, and Leonard was leading when a fuel-pump shaft sheared as he accelerated at a green-flag restart with just nine laps to go.

Lotus’s aborted 1969 campaign with the 4WD 64 turbo was one of the most

unifying episodes in its history, while its planned mid-’80s return resulted in the beautiful but never-to-be-raced 96.

Clearly, an innovator’s lot is not always a happy one, and it was the later UK winning marques – Lola, McLaren, British designed-and-built Penskes, Chapparral and Galmer, March, Reynard and G-Force – that laid the bricks on Lotus’s Indy foundations. But none of those surpassed the insouciance and dominance of Clark’s epochal victory.



Clark and Lotus 38: Indy winners in '65

# ART exhibition

The most successful team in GP2 history has joined forces with Lotus in a deal that extends to its GP3 junior arm. MARK GLENDENNING takes a look at Lotus ART



If you happen to be one of ART Grand Prix's rivals in GP2 or GP3, you might want to skip this page. Having already watched the French squad become the most successful team in GP2 history (three titles, 24 victories) as well as claiming the inaugural teams' and drivers' championships in GP3, the last thing you'll want to hear is that it could be about to become even stronger.

The new partnership between ART and Lotus Motorsport was announced back in September, but it will be just starting to take effect as you read this. For those involved, the benefits are obvious: Lotus gains a presence in Formula 1's main feeder series as well as in an increasingly prominent junior category; ART gets to tap into Lotus's

technical knowhow. According to team principal Frederic Vasseur, it was this desire to keep innovating that made the deal so appealing.

"We performed well in the past few seasons because we were perhaps more innovative on the technical side than our competitors," Vasseur says. "I think that the worst attitude would be to say, 'Okay, we are in a leading position, we have to stay like this and wait for next

season and try to develop a new partnership'. This new partnership with Lotus could be a boost and will give us an advantage in the future."

At this stage there will be no explicit links between Lotus ART and Lotus's F1 activities, although at the time that the deal was announced, Lotus Motorsport Director of Operations Miodrag Kotur highlighted the development of young talent as a priority.

"The move into GP2 and GP3 solidifies Lotus Motorsport's commitment to promoting driver development and supporting the search for the world champions of the future," he said in a statement.

Vasseur recalls this desire as being the basis for the first discussions between the two organisations.

"I don't remember exactly when the first contact was, but Lotus decided that they wanted to be involved in junior series," he says. "We discussed what sort of opportunities there would be to do it, and decided that it would make sense first for ART to have a strong partnership with a big company, and also to be able to develop a technical partnership, because Lotus has huge technical potential compared

## 2011 GP2/GP3 CALENDAR

May 6-8 Istanbul  
May 20-22 Circuit de Catalunya  
May 26-29 Monte Carlo\*  
June 24-26 Valencia street circuit  
July 8-10 Silverstone

July 22-24 Nurburgring  
July 29-31 Hungaroring  
August 26-28 Spa-Francorchamps  
September 9-11 Monza  
\*Monte Carlo is provisional for GP3

# Lotus and the junior ranks

On a bracing mid-March day at Goodwood in 1960, the opening race was a 10-lapper for Formula Juniors. On pole for his four-wheel debut was 'bike star John Surtees in a Cooper. Alongside him was a boxy Lotus 18 driven by a Scot named Jim Clark, making his Team Lotus debut. The 18, Lotus's first mid-engined car, had made its debut three months earlier at Brands Hatch. It was unsorted – as was its new Ford-Cosworth engine – and was off the pace.

Goodwood proved very different. Clark and Surtees passed and repassed before Clark scored a memorable victory – the first for the Lotus-Cosworth combination.

Formula Junior had been founded in Italy in 1958 but, by the end of '60, Lotus, Cooper and Lola had overwhelmed the opposition. Lotus produced a raft of models with which Clark, Trevor Taylor and Peter Arundell scored win after win.

It was the same when, after a three-season absence, F2 was cranked up in 1964, and Clark won the prestigious Trophees de France in '65.

The bitter truth, however, was that Lotus was not great at producing customer cars, which needed to be easy to work on and to repair as well as fast. Brabham and later March, for whom this market was fundamental, did better jobs. Lotus, with its road-

car side, wasn't as hungry or focused.

There was a twitch in its tail, however. Lotus Components was created in 1959 to look after customer racing cars – and road cars – and at the end of the '60s bullish MD Mike Warner had it humming.

The 59 and 69, designs by Dave Baldwin, put Lotus back on top of the F2 and F3 piles courtesy of Jochen Rindt, Emerson Fittipaldi and Dave Walker. It even built the first Formula Ford, the 51 of 1967. Yet Chapman had little time for it. In fact, he appeared almost jealous of it. Renamed Lotus Racing for '70, 'Components' was wound up at the season's end, its customers high and

dry, Chapman persuaded that F1 should be his sole racing focus. Disappointing campaigns in F3 ('72) and F2 ('73) drove the point home. A tough decision, but the right one. *PF*



Fittipaldi in F2 69, Thruxton '70

different Lotus programmes. I think that would be a mistake on both sides. We have to do our own job properly before we do something else."

That said, Vasseur is open to input from Lotus on drivers, although with the team's three-car GP3 line-up already filled for 2011, and Jules Bianchi expected to stay on to partner Esteban Gutierrez in GP2, this will likely have to wait until 2012.

"We concluded the partnership quite late," he says. "But it makes sense in the future to collaborate in this. If they have some ideas, why not? We are open to discussion, for sure."

Traditionally, one of ART's strengths is that it has been very quick to get a handle on new cars. It won the first season of GP2 in 2005 (although on the flipside, it suffered its worst year in the series when the second-generation car was introduced in '08), and was the only team to be consistently fast right through the first season of GP3. With the third-generation GP2 car being pressed into action this year, the

additional technical input from Lotus may seem particularly timely.

"I hope so. We'll see!" grins Vasseur. "It's difficult to know ahead of time. But to be honest the partnership we are anticipating, it's not as if we will go to the first test and they'll say, 'Okay, you have to change the rear wing.' We will have access to the data-analysis tools and it will help the team to develop the

specifics, but Lotus projects such as the GT4 Evora hint of something sportscar-related somewhere on the horizon.

"The opportunity for us to develop beyond single-seaters was part of the decision," Vasseur admits. "Okay, the situation was not really clear with F3 [ART withdrew from the F3 Euro Series at the end of last year]. We will try to do something with this kind of project,

“The first contact was because Lotus wanted a partnership, and we tried to extend that to a technical cooperation”

technical resources. But it won't have any immediate effect on the track."

Where the relationship will really bear fruit, at least from ART's point of view, is when the team decides to spread its attention beyond the world of single-seaters. At this stage the deal is for three years, which should prove ample for ART to try something new. Vasseur wouldn't be drawn on

and we're looking at it now."

So an iconic name (re-)enters the upper echelons of the junior formulas, and Europe's best single-seater team outside of F1 takes a technological step forward and gains the means to find other types of racing to rule in the future. Great news for them – but some sleepless nights beckon for their opposition. ■

to a small company like us. So the first contact was because they were looking for a partnership, and during the discussion we tried to extend that to include a technical cooperation."

The driver development side will remain Lotus's department, leaving ART to concentrate on the business of trying to add to its trophy cabinet. Vasseur believes that one of the keys to making the partnership work will be to make sure that both sides play to their respective strengths.

"Driver development is a separate thing," he says. "This partnership is just built around the GP2 and GP3 teams and technical resources. The most important thing for me is to build up a strong basis to this partnership, and not to want to collaborate on the

## GP2 DRIVERS



### Esteban Gutierrez

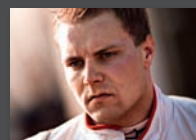
The 19-year-old Mexican dominated the inaugural GP3 season in 2010, picking up five wins with ART on his way to the championship title. He will remain with the team for his promotion to GP2 this year.



### Jules Bianchi

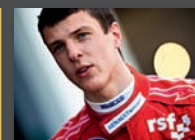
The 2011 season will be the Frenchman's fourth with ART. Bianchi took the F3 Euro Series in 2009 before moving up to GP2 last year. He took three pole positions and finished third in his rookie year, and will start 2011 as a title favourite.

## GP3 DRIVERS



### Valtteri Bottas

The Finn makes his GP3 Series debut in 2011, after two seasons as part of ART's F3 Euro Series line-up. His victories in the 2009 and '10 F3 Masters made him the only driver ever to win the prestigious Zandvoort event on two occasions.



### James Calado

Calado arrives in GP3 on the back of a strong British F3 season, taking five race wins on his way to finishing second with Carlin. In 2011 the Racing Steps Foundation-backed Briton races against his old team as part of ART's line-up.



### Pedro Nunes

The 22-year-old Brazilian is the only member of ART's line-up with GP3 experience. He'll hope to build on last year's points-scoring finishes at the Circuit de Catalunya, Hockenheim and Spa in the coming campaign.



# Evora the explorer

The new GT4 Lotus is only the start of the marque's attack on sportscar racing, as driver Johnny Mowlem tells GARY WATKINS

**T**he feet of Johnny Mowlem have barely touched the ground over the past six months, and they're unlikely to do so again over the next year or so. That's not surprising given that he's been signed up as factory race-and-development driver for Lotus Motorsport. That means he's going to be at the centre of the manufacturer's plans to take sportscar racing by storm over the next couple of years.

Mowlem has been testing the new Lotus Evora GT4 Cup since June, first in the privacy of Lotus's Hethel proving ground in Norfolk, then out in public on the circuit, and finally in the heat of competition. He's also been testing and racing the uprated endurance-spec version of this car. Then there have been trips to Italy as development of a version of the Evora built for the new

Le Mans GT Endurance class (formerly GT2) begins at Lotus Motorsport's development partners in the project, Dallara Automobili and Ycom in Italy.

"It's been pretty full-on since the summer," says Mowlem, a 12-year veteran of the sportscar scene. "It kicked off with the GT4 and we're now at the point where we have signed off the specification in which it will be delivered to customers for next season."

The first racing version of the aluminium-chassis Evora, powered by a Toyota V6 engine, hit the track in the GT4 European Cup at the Nurburgring in August. By November, the definitive

customer-spec car had notched up its first victory: Mowlem, sharing with veteran Gianni Giudici, finished 10th overall on the way to winning the GT4 class in the Vallelunga 6 Hours in Italy.

"It's always important to win," says Mowlem, "but we proved what the Evora can really do. It was gratifying because Lotus Motorsport only finished this first customer car hours before it had to leave for Italy. It then ran trouble-free for three hours of practice and qualifying and right through the six-hour race."

There's going to be no let-up for Mowlem and the Lotus Motorsport

team. Development of the Evora GT4 endurance car will continue in the Dubai 24 Hours in mid-January. This project has run in parallel with GT4 development and included a race debut in the Britcar 24 Hours at Silverstone in October and a second start as part of a two-car Lotus entry at Vallelunga.

#### ARABIAN NIGHT - AND DAY

The Dubai event, in mid-January, will be the final development work-out for a car that's lighter and more powerful, and has more downforce than its close cousin. It is scheduled to be signed off after the UAE event, after which production of customer cars will begin.

A month later, the first GT Endurance Evora is scheduled to test. Development of this car is running at full speed at Lotus, its Italian partners and famed engine builder Cosworth Racing, which will be responsible for a new version of the Evora's powerplant.

Mowlem is already involved in this process, and there have been trips to Italy to offer a driver perspective: "It's good to have input into how the car develops, especially at such an early stage that you get to chose seating and cockpit-switch positions."

This car could be racing in the hands of a yet-to-be-announced development team as early as the start of the Le Mans Series in Europe in April, and Mowlem is expected to be one of the drivers. That could give him the honour of taking the Lotus name back to Le Mans after an absence of 13 years, subject to the team gaining an entry for the 24 Hours.

They'll be no let off, even after Le Mans. By June, the most ambitious of the sportscar projects underway at

“They say that all young boys decide before they're 10 what 'their' marque is. I had a poster of an Esprit on my wall”





Lotus will be in full swing. Work has already started on an all-new LMP2 prototype and, at Cosworth, a new engine to power it. The closed-cockpit coupe design will be a true Lotus, designed and built in-house, and to that effect the manufacturer has recruited a big name to head up the design team: the ultra-experienced Paolo Cantone has been responsible for a line of prototypes, including the Le Mans-winning Peugeot 908 HDi.

"The plan is that the prototype will be out testing by September," explains Mowlem. "That could give us the opportunity of doing a couple of end-of-season events."

#### NEXT STOP: A PROTOTYPE

The prototype, like the GT4 and GT Endurance racers before it, will be fine-tuned in competition by the in-house Lotus Motorsport organisation, prior to partnerships being forged with customer teams. The plan is that Lotus's partners will fly the flag in a full season of prototype racing, in both the LMS and the American Le Mans Series, in 2012.

Mowlem knows there's a lot of hard work in store over the coming year, but he's not complaining. He describes the opportunity to work with Lotus as "a dream come true".

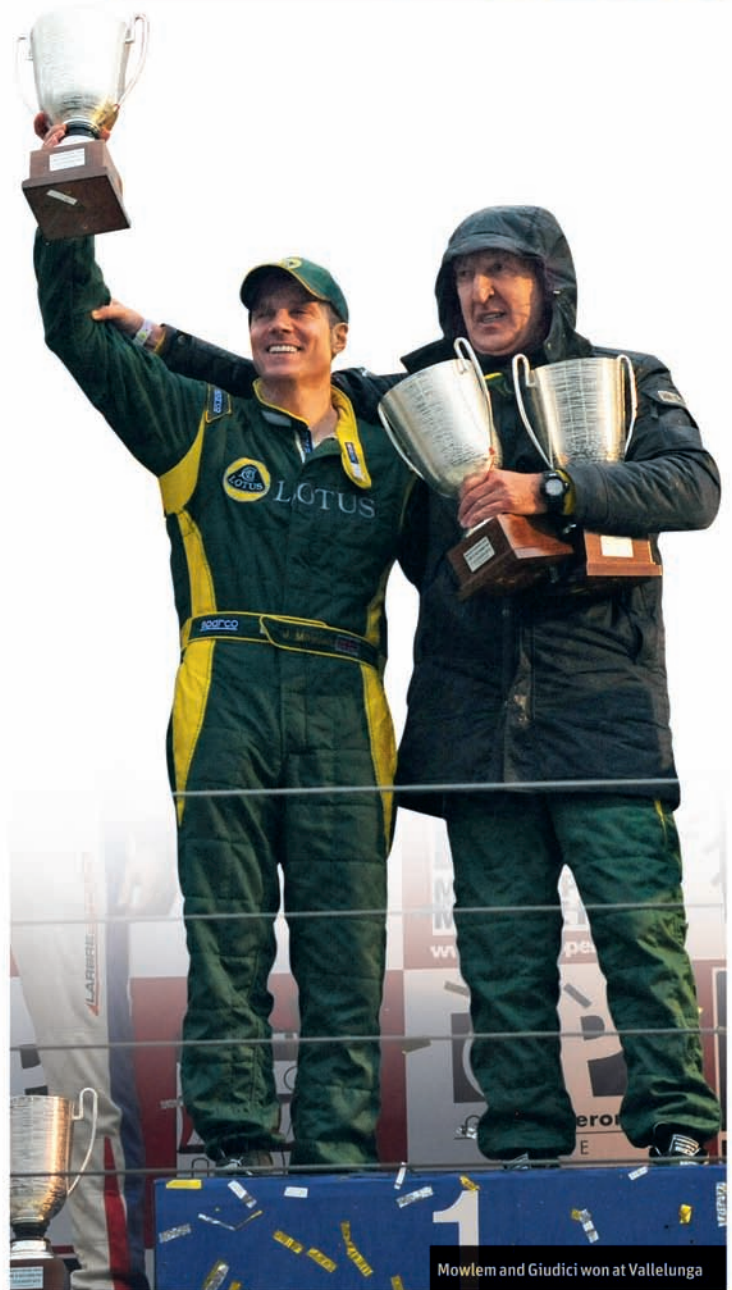
"They say that all young boys decide before they're 10 what 'their' marque is," he says. "For me it's Lotus: as a kid I had poster of a Lotus Esprit Turbo on my bedroom wall."

The opportunity to work with Lotus came "out of the blue", according to Mowlem. He was well known to new Lotus Motorsport director Claudio Berro, who was overseeing Ferrari's GT programmes when Mowlem was first racing its cars back in the early 2000s. They made contact early in the summer and, after the second phone call, Mowlem was on his way to Hethel to test the Evora GT4.

Mowlem ticked all the boxes for Lotus: he knows all about the GT arena, having won races in Porsches and Ferraris, which are going to be Lotus's rivals when it joins the GT Endurance class, and also has recent experience of the LMP category. Perhaps most important of all was his nationality.

"For a Brit, it doesn't get much better than being a Lotus factory driver," says Mowlem, "especially when you're involved in such a wide-ranging programme."

And what is he looking forward to most? "Putting the Lotus name back where it belongs." ■



Mowlem and Giudici won at Vallelunga

## Eleven has legs

Sportscars made Lotus's name. Their success enabled Colin Chapman to form Lotus Engineering in January 1952, and by '54 its MkVIII racer featured a streamlined body and tubular spaceframe that were a match for Mercedes-Benz's new W196 GP racer. A remarkable achievement.

In 1955, Chapman finally left his job at the British Aluminium Company to go full-time with Lotus, his primary objective being the Le Mans 24 Hours. But his first attempt, co-driven by Ron Flockhart in an 1100cc MkIX, involved some of the small-minded scrutineering and officiousness – Chapman was disqualified for reversing out of a sandbank without a marshal's permission – that would

eventually turn him against the race.

Team Lotus returned with three cars in 1956. Two retired, but the survivor, an Eleven (sic) driven by Reg Bicknell/Peter Jopp, finished seventh overall and won the 1100cc class.

The highpoint of Lotus's Le Mans campaign came in 1957, when four of its cars finished. The first, an 1100cc Eleven driven by Herbert Mackay-Fraser/Jay Chamberlain, was ninth overall and won its class, yet it was overshadowed by the 750cc version of Cliff Allison/Keith Hall. It finished 14th overall, won its class and, most importantly, claimed the Index of Performance, a prize jealously guarded by the French manufacturers, who had no chance of outright victory.



Allison/Hall 750cc car starred in 1957

Chapman's already waning interest in sports car racing was polished off by his Le Mans experience of 1962. Jim Clark's amazing performance at that year's Nurburgring 1000Km – he led with ease until, befuddled by exhaust fumes, he stuck his 1500cc Lotus 23 in a ditch – persuaded Chapman to enter a 1000cc version

at Le Mans. The scrutineers threw it out because, among other things, it had mismatched wheel studs – four at the front, six at the rear. To comply, Chapman's team bust a gut to make it four and four. At which point a scrutineer demanded six and six! A furious Chapman vowed never to return. He didn't.

# The fastest track-day car...

...and we're not talking about a hotted-up Elise. How about an F1-style, Cosworth racer? RICHARD HESELTINE joins the queue

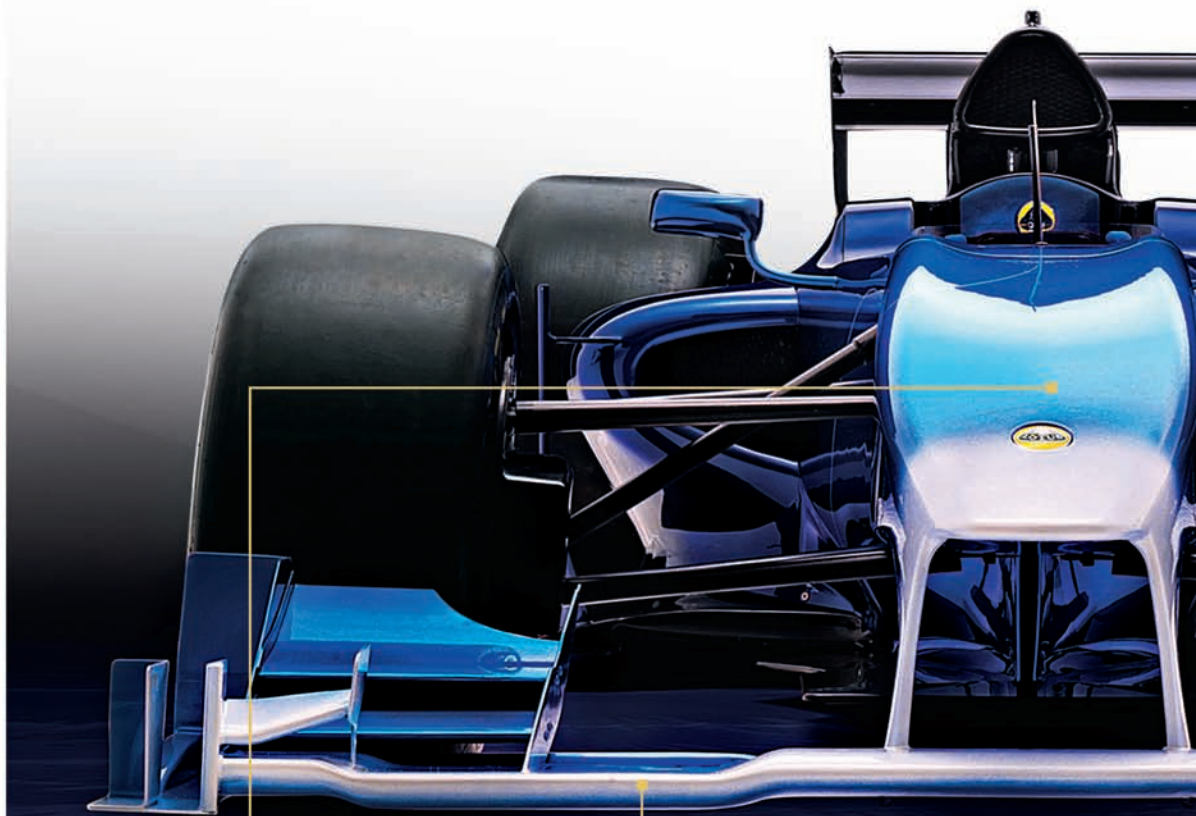
**T**he wonder of the moment was lost beneath the mass exhalation of 'huh?' When Lotus whipped off the dustsheets from its T125 Exos in August, it did so at the big-money Monterey Motorsports Pre-Reunion historics meeting. All of which is telling, as only the super-rich will ever be able to afford what promises to be the ultimate track-day tool.

As disorientating as it is dazzling, there really is nothing else like it. Instigated and managed by Lotus Motorsport, the Exos Experience is essentially a club; one where those with the necessary US \$1 million (around £650K) will get to play with a Cosworth V8-engined single-seater that borrows much from the grand prix arena. The lofty price tag includes days

“Those with \$1m will get to play with a Cosworth V8-engined car that borrows much from F1”

spent at classic F1 tracks, one-to-one instruction from former GP drivers (Mika Hakkinen has been linked to the project...), a tailored fitness regime and support tending to the car.

What of the car? According to the factory stats, the T125 tips the scales at just 560kg, with Lotus insiders talking up a power-to-weight ratio of an eye-watering 1000bhp per tonne. Conspicuously absent are items such as double diffusers, f-ducts, flexi-wings and the like. The car was created without regulation, so designers were handed a clean sheet. So it's not an F1 car in all but name, but it's a close proximity that promises GP2 levels of performance. ■



## Liveries

Lotus expects to make 25 T125s, with the first 10 reaching their expectant owners in spring 2011. They will also be offered in a choice of liveries, including many from Lotus's rich motorsport back catalogue.

## Dimensions

Although not exactly compact, the T125 is neatly packaged. It's 4910mm long, 1890mm wide and 1011mm off the deck. By means of comparison, Toyota's 2009 F1 challenger, the TF109, was 4636mm long, 1800mm wide and 950mm high.

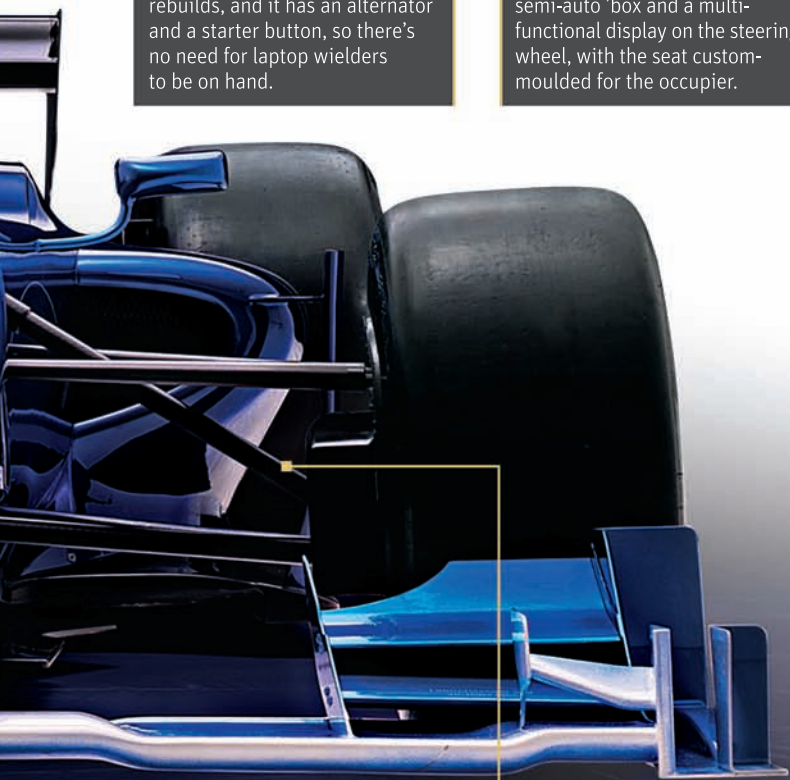


**Engine**

The 3.5-litre V8 produces an alleged 640bhp and red-lines at 10,300rpm, although there's also a 10,800rpm 'push-to-pass' button. Lotus says the engine will run for 4500km between rebuilds, and it has an alternator and a starter button, so there's no need for laptop welders to be on hand.

**Cockpit**

Your typical T125 punter is unlikely to be GP driver-sized, so the Lotus's cockpit is a bit roomier than your standard F1 racer. That said, the T125 has a paddle-shifter for the six-speed semi-auto 'box and a multi-functional display on the steering wheel, with the seat custom-moulded for the occupier.



**Body/chassis**

Borrowing much from F1 car design, the T125 has many recent GP signifiers such as its 'Coke-bottle' shape, top exiting exhaust and shark-fin engine cover. The tub is predictably of carbon-fibre, as are the 2009 F1-style front and rear wings plus the pushrod suspension. Brakes are carbon ceramic.

# Magnificent Seven

No car has introduced more enthusiasts to the pleasures of performance driving than the Lotus Seven. Introduced in 1957, it was light, nimble, cheapish – genuinely affordable if you bought it in kit form – and democratised club racing. Colin Chapman, as was his way, grew to hate it – he sold the rights to Caterham Cars in 1973 – and spent hours doodling potential replacements. But even if he'd had the time to complete the job, it would have been nigh on impossible to improve on the Seven's fitness for purpose: drive (briskly) to the circuit, tape up the headlights, have a ding-dong with a load of likeminded loons, drive (briskly) home. Perfection.

By the early 1960s, however, the Seven was no longer competitive against the likes of the rear-engined Lotus 23. Realising that the demand for thrill-a-minute front-engined fun remained, the BRSCC's Nick Syrett founded Clubmans racing – a formula that's still going strong.

Faster, more specialised cars once again squeezed out the Seven, but the success of the one-make Operation Jeunesse series in France from 1964-65 – future F1 racers Henri Pescarolo and Johnny Servoz-Gavin were among its graduates – pointed to the car's sporting future: a field of slipstreaming Caterhams remains a highlight of British club racing.

The increasing popularity of track days in the 1990s allowed the Seven another outlet, and boosted sales of the 1996 mid-engined Elise. It's no surprise that the car that finally topped the Seven was the catalyst for the renaissance of Lotus. Chapman would have loved it. For a bit. *PF*



Chapman's clubbie warhorse

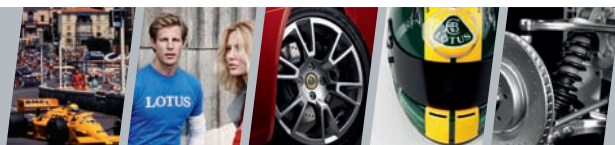


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