

CLASSIC DRIVER

Lotus Elise Sport 190: The elitist Elise



Many will agree that the Lotus Elise is the embodiment of the modern lightweight sports car. But with the S2 Sport 190, the Lotus Sport and Performance division posthumously applied [Chapman's famous mantra](#) to a handful of the spritely little gems - giving them a racing disposition and a new aura of collectability.

In standard form, the Series 2 Elise has rightfully earned huge respect within the automotive community for its 'back-to-basics' dynamics, afforded by the reduced weight, supreme balance and decades of Lotus suspension expertise, stemming from the Chapman days.

For this project, however, a few cars were plucked from the production line and sent to the in-house skunkworks that is Lotus Sport and Performance (LSP).





Each series of the Elise has welcomed various special editions, and the S2 Sport 190 is arguably one of the best. The familiar 1.8-litre K-Series engine benefitted from a heavy reworking which pushed power to 190HP (187bhp), and earned it the internal name of VHPD – Very High Performance Derivative.





The result was, among other things, an 8000rpm redline, a fearsome bark from the exhaust and a 'lively' idle that prompts comparison with a terrier straining at the leash. But the impressive power increase (around 60 per cent over standard tune) wasn't the only change; the LSP division also equipped a short-ratio gearbox, lowered and stiffened suspension, and upgraded brakes. When you consider the weight reduction (to below 710kg), you start to understand the sort of performance this package must offer.





Whether their owners ultimately use these cars on track or road, they're a very rare sight. Fewer than 35 examples were produced, making the Sport 190 around ten times rarer than the pared-down 340R – and, of course, this makes them an attractive proposition for collectors.



The Quartz Silver example pictured here is currently being offered by Classic Driver dealer Hilton & Moss in the UK, and is number 9 of the 33 factory-built Sport 190s. Alongside the typical Sport 190 enhancements, it also offers additional trimmings that include a carbonfibre undertray and air box, AP racing-spec brakes, four-way adjustable Ohlin suspension, and a blueprinted engine further uprated to 210bhp by LSP. Maintenance for this single-owner car has been exclusively administered at Hethel.

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