

A Tale of Two Lotus: Dave Sutcliffe's 1969 Lotus Elan Plus Two and 1977 Lotus Esprit S1 V8

They were the best of cars, they were the worst of cars...



Dave Sutcliffe's **1969 Lotus Elan Plus 2** spent over 20 years parked outside in the Texas sun before he rescued her in 1988. When a Dallas dealer purchased this car from the original owner in 1998, the engine and transmission were removed. The dealer had it for about two months before deciding it was too much work and selling it to Dave. The Plus 2 was exactly the car he wanted, so even in this poor condition he was optimistic that she could be revived.

He decided to refurbish the engine bay first. That way he could survey the rest of the car while working in a limited area. The full story of this restoration is on Dave's web site at

<http://homepages.waymark.net/~bikechic/lot>

[us.html](#) but to make a long, long story short, this car won second place in the Lotus class at the 2004 All British Car Day in Dallas, Texas.

Dave's **1977 Lotus Esprit S1 V8** arrived over the cold Thanksgiving weekend in 2002. She rolled slowly up the driveway on a tow dolly, accompanied by two pickup-trucks full of "spare" parts. Three years later, this completed project car was entered in the 2005 All British Car Day. And in between these two events, we managed to buy hundreds



of bolts (some of them 1/2" Allen head air craft quality at \$1 each), dozens of cans of flat black spray paint, two gas tanks, \$3500 worth of assorted parts (that's our closest sober

estimate), hack saw blades, rubber gloves, water pumps, alternators, electronic ignition, aluminum rod, ball bearings, a new lathe, carbs, freeze plugs, bumpers and bumper covers, emblems, molding, 12mm lug nuts, wheel washers, center caps, fans, paint, oil, gas, more bolts, insurance, vinyl by the roll, contact cement, books, manuals, fuses, lamps, wire and more bolts. Oh, and gallons of chocolate raspberry crème liquor.

This car had an interesting history, starting life somewhere in Colorado (as the expired Colorado plates and title testified) and passing through the hands of three other optimistic owners in Texas. As even the most devout Lotus lover will admit, the main flaw with these gorgeous cars was their "underpowered" engines: the original Lotus Type 907 engine officially produced 160hp. Although this fiberglass car only weighs 1900 pounds, it certainly requires more than 160hp for enjoyable performance.

This car had only a dummy block installed on the day she arrived. The massive collection of parts which were part of her purchase price included two Buick 266 engines, an extra set of mags and a frightening turbo charger. Because the Buick engine would increase the horse power from 160hp to roughly 250hp (while only increasing the weight of the car by 47 pounds), this modification was an urgent and necessary improvement. The full tale of the Esprit can be read at her homepage at http://www.informationart.org/LOTUS_ESPRIT/esprit.html

Dave is also the proud mechanic/owner of his faithful 1983 Harley FXRS and his wife, Tami's, 1977 MGB Tahiti Blue convertible. He has not decided on his next project yet but rambles on dangerously about how much garage room a vintage Rolls Royce restoration would require...