


# CLASSIC DRIVER



## 1961 Lotus Elite

Lot sold	<b>USD 102 887 - 123 465</b> GBP 75 000 - 90 000 (listed)	Lenkung	Links
Baujahr	1961	Zustand	Gebraucht
Chassisnummer	1864	Standort	
Zahl der Sitze	2	Kraftstoff	Benzin
Antrieb	Zweirad	Außenfarbe	Sonstige
Losnummer	12	Motornummer	8173

### Beschreibung

1961 Lotus Elite Series 2 Super 95 Coupé

Registration no. 183 XUC (see text)

Chassis no. 1864

Engine no. 8173

'The road manners of the Elite come as near to those of a racing car as the ordinary motorist would ever experience.' - The Autocar.

With the Lotus 14 of 1959 - better known as the Elite - Colin Chapman demonstrated that his skills as a racing car designer and constructor could just as easily be applied to production road cars. The Elite was, nevertheless, conceived with competition in mind - Chapman had his sights set on class wins at Le Mans and the Monte Carlo Rally - and incorporated technology developed in Lotus's single seaters. Every bit as innovative as Chapman's outright competition cars, the Elite featured a glassfibre monocoque body tub - the world's first - independent suspension all round, rack-and-pinion steering and four-wheel disc brakes, the rears mounted inboard. Its engine was the lightweight four-cylinder Coventry-Climax FWE, a single-overhead-cam unit of 1,216cc producing 75bhp, while the gearbox, an MGA unit fitted with an alloy casing and modified bell-housing, was sourced from BMC.

The curvaceously styled body - the work of Peter Kirwan-Taylor and aerodynamicist Frank Costin -

although possessing an admirably low coefficient of drag (0.29), made few concessions to comfort or noise suppression, not that that is likely to have bothered the Elite's customers, for whom its 112mph top speed and superlative handling were of far greater importance. Body production was farmed out to Maximar, a boat builder, which supplied around 250 for assembly at the Lotus factory in Edmonton, North London. With demand increasing, the company relocated to a new purpose-built factory in Cheshunt, Hertfordshire in 1960. The body contract for what would become known as the 'Series 2' Elite was given to the Bristol Aircraft Company, and by the time production ceased in 1963 an estimated total of 1,030 cars had been completed. Series 2 developments included an improved design of rear suspension and more civilised interior. Engines in higher states of tune became available and the Elite could be ordered with optional twin Weber carburettors and/or a ZF all-synchromesh close-ratio gearbox. As its name suggests, the 'Super 95' came with an engine producing 95bhp.

On the racetrack, the Elite proved every bit as successful as Chapman had hoped, scoring its first international class win at the Nürburgring 1,000km race in 1959, and would go on to win its class at Le Mans on five occasions, twice winning the prestigious Index of Thermal Efficiency competition, with best finishes of 8th overall (twice). They were a mainstay of sports and GT racing at national level on both sides of the Atlantic and many are still in action in historic events today.

A Bristol-bodied Series 2 Elite, the car offered here is an original, right-hand drive, 'matching numbers' (chassis, engine, gearbox) example of the Super 95 model, of which approximately 23 were built. Finished in yellow with silver-grey roof and grey upholstery, it has the desirable ZF gearbox and twin Weber carburettors. An accompanying letter from Lotus Cars confirms that '1864' is an original Super 95, and the car is registered with Lotus Clubs UK and USA as such. Also with the car are photographs before restoration, which show a red cam cover (a unique Super 95 detail) while the boot badge likewise original.

'1864' was sold in the UK and remained in this country until the mid-1970s it was bought by a American serviceman and taken to the USA. It surfaced again in 1999 when Richard Mandorian bought it as a restoration project (photographs on file). Richard Mandorian died circa 2005 and the immediately preceding owner bought the restored Elite from his widow, sight unseen, and in 2006/2007 brought it back to the UK. He drove the Lotus for some 7,000 miles, which included two trips to Le Mans and many in the UK, and not once did the car let him down. Mike Ostrov, Secretary for Club Elite, has confirmed that the car's details, as set out by the preceding owner, are correct.

The current vendor purchased the Elite in the UK in 2013. During his ownership, all safety critical elements were checked and replaced as necessary, including suspension, brake and steering components. New universal joints were fitted as well as five new wheels and period-correct Pirelli Cinturato tyres. In addition, a dynamo-style alternator was fitted, a new wiring loom and master switch installed, and a plug was fitted under the dashboard for a GPS connection or similar. The windscreen and rear window were replaced and the car has a complete new exhaust system and new Weber carburettors (a spare pair of SU carburettors plus manifold is supplied). All the related invoices, issued in 2013 by Tolman Motorsport and totalling over £15,000, are in the substantial history file that comes with the car.

The vendor has covered close to 6,000 miles in '1864' and describes the Elite as 'such an addictive car to drive' and a 'pure joy to use'. We are advised that it has not been raced or seen any track-day use and has never let him down; there have been no concerns with the oil pressure or water temperature, while oil consumption has been minimal (no topping up was required following a drive from the South of France to Brussels). Always in love with the Elite, the owner decided to look for one as a temporary 'gap filler' while another of his cars was away being restored. The restoration has now been completed and so the Elite is for sale to make room in his garage. '1864' is currently registered in Monaco and until 2014 was registered in the UK as '183 XUC'. Offered with a fresh FIVA passport, it will have been driven to the sale.

# Bonhams

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