
1980 Talbot Sunbeam Lotus

Lot sold	USD 0 GBP 0 (listed)	Drive	RHD
Year of manufacture	1980	Condition	Used
Gearbox	Manual	Location	
Chassis number	R4DCYAL214277	Exterior colour	Black
Lot number	361	Car type	Other
		Engine number	214277
		Exterior brand colour	Black
		Interior brand colour	Grey

Description

The Talbot Sunbeam Lotus was one of the most exciting hot hatchbacks to emerge from the 1970s. Originally conceived when Chrysler Group's competition manager Des O'Dell had a desire to create a contender for International Group 4 rallying, he approached Lotus and offered them a Sunbeam 1.6 GLS as the basis for their work. Lotus supplied not only the 2.2 type-911 version of their 16v four cylinder engine coupled to a 5-speed ZF dog-leg gearbox, but also brought notable chassis and exhaust system improvements to create a car able to beat the dominant Escort RS and Vauxhall Chevette HS/HSR's at their own game.

Lotus' efforts were rewarded in 1980 when a Sunbeam piloted by Henri Toivonen won the RAC Rally of Great Britain, indeed this would be the last time a rear-wheel-drive car ever took the title. In 1981, the Constructor's World Championship was claimed by the Sunbeam for the newly christened Talbot team (having been renamed by new owners Peugeot in 1979).

Homologation rules dictated that for the new car to be eligible for competition, the car would also have to be offered to the general public and sold in a minimum number. Talbot set up a separate production line at their Linwood factory which would build the body shells that would then be shipped directly to Ludham Airfield where Lotus would then fit the engine, suspension and gearbox. The special road-going Sunbeam was more than just fast, it certainly looked the part too; initially offered

only in Embassy Black with silver stripes and Marchal spotlights and tailored 'double four-spoke' cast alloy wheels.

Launched to an eager public in 1979, the 2174cc twin-cam engine, breathing through twin Dell'Orto carburettors developed 150 BHP and delivered excellent performance. Glowing reports from the motoring press followed, noting the cars razor-sharp handling and rapid pace, indeed even when driven today the Sunbeam is still considered a truly thrilling drive, set apart from most by it's rear wheel drive balance, beautifully weighted controls and the lightness of the body.

This beautiful Series 1 example was supplied new by Cathedral Garage Ltd of Bristol in April 1980, since then it has led a very pampered life and been meticulously maintained over the years. The documented history file states that after purchasing the car in 1984, with 19,000 miles on the clock, the second owner kept a meticulous record of expenditure on the car for 29 years. MLH 944V is supplied with the original dealer pack, handbooks, 2 sets of keys and a number of bills and receipts. The mileage of 55,500 miles is warranted and the engine has been confirmed as original.

We are told that in 2001 the second owner decided that the original black coachwork was looking a little tired, and therefore decided to pay for a bare-metal, windows-out repaint, which was carried out by Falcon Restorations near Bath. A photographic record of this work is also included, merely emphasising the attention to detail the car has received over the years.

The black paintwork is currently smooth and blemish free, the shut-lines perfectly aligned and the overall stance of the car looks and feels 'right'. The level of care and attention is continued into the cockpit where the interior looks much as it did when delivered in 1980. Under the bonnet, the spotless leak-free Lotus twin-cam is complimented by a very tidy engine bay.

Reassuringly, in December 2012, MLH 944V was taken to marque specialist Skip Brown Cars in Cheshire for a major service, cambelt change and vehicle inspection report. Suffice to say, the car is reported to be in beautiful condition throughout and is offered with a fresh MOT. This has been a truly cherished vehicle and we doubt you will find a better example on sale today. Following a recent inspection by the Lotus Sunbeam Club, this specific example was highly praised and suggested to be one of the finest remaining examples.

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