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## 1959 Lotus Elite

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Lot sold	<b>USD 120 478 - 131 187</b> GBP 90 000 - 98 000 (listed)	Drive	RHD
Year of manufacture	1959	Condition	Used
Mileage	16 024 mi / 25 789 km	Location	
Gearbox	Manual	Exterior colour	Other
Lot number	229	Car type	Other

### Description

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"Undeniably amongst the most innovative and enterprising of post-war automotive engineers, Colin Chapman started from grass roots with the home build of a humble Austin 7 Special for his own use in trials events. In modest premises behind his father's North London pub, Lotus Engineering was formed in 1952 and the legendary Lotus 6 and the aerodynamic 8 models followed. Chapman's horizons broadened and a series of sports racing cars and then single-seater formula cars emerged. Aided by the employment of the yet unknown Graham Hill, these led, in 1958, to the pinnacle of motor sport Formula 1. The first Lotus Grand Prix victory was achieved the following year by Stirling Moss in Rob Walker's privately entered innovative mid-engined Type 18 at Monaco. By 1963, Lotus had taken their first World Championship, toppling Ferrari's dominance of the sport, with Jim Clark taking the driver's crown, the first of seven Constructors' and six Drivers' Championships credited to the team. Although often credited with bringing commercial sponsorship to Grand Prix racing, Chapman, like Enzo Ferrari before him, built and sold road cars to fund his racing aspirations, firstly with the immortal 7 and then the Type 14 Elite. The Elite was a true road-going racing sports car with the comfort of a fixedhead coupé, in which the owner could commute to work during the week before driving to the circuit at the weekend, often returning home with a trophy carefully packed in the boot. First seen at Earls Court in 1957, the early production examples appeared in 1959 following the company's move to larger premises in Cheshunt, powered by the lightweight and spirited 1216cc Coventry Climax FWE unit, with disc brakes all round, wishbone front and Chapman Strut trailing-arm suspension. The model incorporated an innovative moulded monocoque body/chassis produced for

Lotus by Maximar Mouldings Ltd with an all-up weight of 1,500 lbs and ideal 50/50 front/rear weight distribution. This automotive milestone had performance that belied its engine's modest displacement and irreproachable handling with an exceptional degree of torsional rigidity. Aerodynamically, Frank Costin's reverse camber principle design gave a smooth air flow and increased downforce, the smooth, enclosed underbody reduced turbulence and lift. This car was manufactured in 1959 and first delivered new to the USA to Jay Chamberlain's dealership in Hollywood California, as were all Lotus sent to the US at this time. Note that all Series One cars were righthand drive and not lefthand drive. Martha and Ed Clinkscale from Riverside, California were the first owners in 1961 and owned the car until 1982. It remained in California with the next owner until it was bought by Lyle Henage from Texas, in 1996 with 15,580 miles recorded on the odometer. Lyle owned it until 2008 when it was bought by a university professor called Christos Giannikos, from whom the present owner purchased the car from in 2016. Given the car has approximately 16,000 miles on the clock, this equates to the fact that Lyle and Christos only drove it approximately 500 miles in the 20 years between 1996 and 2006, which is staggering. Chassis 1108 still has its numbers-matching drivetrain, as confirmed by Dennis Ortenburger's Lotus Elite: Racing Car for the Road. The owner informs us that he believes the car was Lime Green when new and at some point, this was changed to white. It was a well known fact that one could pay £45 at the time to Lotus and have the car painted in any colour you wanted. Option1 Sportcars, who are the fibreglass and paint specialists, had the car stripped down to the bare fibreglass which was in quite good condition overall in any case, as was the metal subframe, and then re-sprayed. The quality of the bodywork finish is beyond reproach. With the lovely interior renewal, also done by Option1 and the new period correct wheels and tyres, this Lotus Elite is beautiful in every respect. On the mechanical side, the present owner decided to have the engine fully rebuilt by INRacing, a foremost specialist in historic racing and in restoring and maintaining historic vehicles. The engine underwent a full rebuild which included new bearings and piston rings, balancing of the crank/flywheel/clutch and full inspection of the gearbox which needed very little work. All invoices and photographs of the restoration are available on file, with well over £30,000 having been spent."

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