



Lotus Elite, Eclat and Excel: An Enthusiast's Guide

Matthew Vale

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Lotus introduced the Type 75 Elite in 1974. Being a full four-seater coupe with an opening glass tailgate, it was designed to carry a family in comfort while retaining Lotus' trademark, excellent road holding and handling. Perhaps most importantly, it was the first - and successful - step in Colin Chapman's plan to move upmarket and away from Lotus' kit car image. The Elite gave rise to two derivatives, the Eclat and the Excel. The Eclat was a restyled coupe version, sacrificing the Elite's unique rear styling and good rear passenger headroom for a more stylish exterior. With its conventional coupe styling, the Eclat was more mainstream than the Elite, and it was in the end the better seller. In turn, the Eclat spawned the Excel, the last of the Elite-inspired family. Matthew Vale looks at the history of these unusual Lotus models, and gives a thorough guide to buying and owning the cars today. Of interest to all motoring enthusiasts and Lotus owners in particular, it includes information on buying and owning the cars today, specifications, owner's experiences and technical information. Superbly illustrated with 130 colour photographs, both period and contemporary.

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