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The New Distinctive, Mid-engined, 2+2 Sportscar from Lotus

Eagerly anticipated and making its official global debut at the British Motorshow in London on July 22nd, the first all-new car from Lotus since the iconic Elise in 1995, will enter the sportscar market as the only mid-engined 2+2 in production.

The new car, which is known only by its project name 'Eagle', is a more holistic offering than the Elise and Exige models that have been so massively popular with track day enthusiasts. The car, the name for which will be announced at the British Motorshow on 22nd July at an 11:30 press conference, is designed for people who desire exotic sportscar characteristics of stunning design, exclusivity, dramatic proportions and performance. Project Eagle also offers real-world usability and a unique sense of occasion.

Powered by a 3.5-litre V6 producing 280 PS, the new car employs innovative lightweight chassis technology to ensure visceral all-round dynamic performance, in keeping with the great Lotus tradition. Even in the very early stages of development testing, Lotus ride and handling engineers report that it is considerably faster around the famously demanding Nürburgring circuit than the Elise and more stable at speed than the Exige.

Inside, Project Eagle cocoons occupants with a sumptuous leather surfaces juxtaposed with contemporary high-tech features. With driver focused instrumentation the driver sits in cockpit-esque surroundings. A beautifully appointed dash boasts tactile details such as flush-mounted controls that glow with blue LED haloes and a stylised speedometer and rev counter ensuring that controls are both attractive and accessible.

Styled in-house by Lotus Design, the Project Eagle's sleek, sophisticated and attention-snaring lines brilliantly disguise its ability to accommodate passengers in the rear of the cabin, giving the car the external characteristics of a small, nimble sportscar whilst belying its internal space. As well as being sold in a 2+2 configuration, the car will also be available as a purely two-seater, the space in the rear being allocated to luggage storage. Other derivatives are also planned for the future, including a convertible and an ultra-high performance version.

Deliveries of Project Eagle will begin in Spring 2009, and with only 2000 of the hand crafted cars planned each year, this exclusive and unique car is creating a real stir with celebrity enthusiasts around the world. Hollywood actor and car enthusiast Patrick Dempsey is just one of the high profile collectors who are on the waiting list for a test drive.

Mike Kimberley, CEO of Group Lotus plc, had this to say about the new model: "Project Eagle is the biggest milestone Lotus has achieved since the Elise was born 13 years ago. We are currently working at broadening the



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appeal of the Lotus brand through an aggressive 5-year model plan of which this car represents the first exciting step.”

Ends

Notes to Editors

Project Eagle in detail:

Project Eagle is the first of three new models included in the CEO's (Mike Kimberley) five year strategic business plan initiated in October 2006 to support Lotus' growth.

Design

Designed in-house by Lotus Design, Head of Design, Russell Carr, explains “Project Eagle's dynamically sculptured form and dramatic proportions communicate visual drama, speed and agility even when the car is standing still. Sportscars are primarily an emotional rather than a rational purchase and so the design must seduce with its beauty and distinctive character. However, the modern customer also demands that the product offers real-world usability as well as exotic imagery. Therefore every element of the car's exterior and interior has been carefully designed to create a product that offers comfort and convenience as well as traditional performance car attributes.”

A design language of dynamic lines and fluid surfaces that flow from the ‘Lotus –mouth’ and over the length the cars toned form are unmistakably ‘modern Lotus’. They instantly convey a sense of agility and athleticism that is intrinsic to the car's driving persona. On Project Eagle they are complemented by the distinctive wraparound visor screen but have been subtly tailored to suit the more sophisticated character of the car, optimise high-speed aerodynamics and artfully disguise the unique 2+2 layout. The cab forward proportion combines with muscular haunches and optimised intake detailing to instantly inform the viewer that this is a serious mid-engine sportscar. Elsewhere a Lotus philosophy for combining function with beauty is evident in the downforce generating, top exit radiator vent, rear diffuser and rear wing.

Inside the car the forms echo the exterior with fast moving surfaces that wrap around the cockpit cossetting the occupants, the contrast colour band that flows from the instrument cluster and sweeps around the cabin highlights this theme. “We recognise that ‘touch’ not only assists with driving enjoyment but also conveys messages about quality and therefore great attention has been paid to all the areas where the driver interfaces with the car.” Carr explains. Figure hugging adjustable sports seats and flat-bottomed steering wheel instantly communicate the driving potential of the car. Project Eagle employs premium quality material and finishes to create an exclusive, British handcrafted ambience that is unique in this price segment. Modern, precision-engineered aluminium inserts and hi-fi quality, edge-lit switches are brilliantly juxtaposed against the traditional contrast stitched leather panels.



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Everyday convenience is catered for through ergonomically located touch screen SAT NAV, remote release glove box, storage bins and integrated “cup holders”.

Technology

In a world launch by partners Alpine, Project Eagle boasts a truly cutting edge in-car entertainment and navigation system. The multi-media system features a 7in touch-screen providing advanced audio, satellite navigation, Bluetooth hands-free telephone and iPod® connectivity functions; the screen also serves as a monitor for Project Eagle’s optional reversing camera. The satellite navigation element of the system has a removable hard-drive, allowing you to programme it from the comfort of your home or use it as a roaming satellite navigation unit and MP3 player.

The Alpine audio set-up is one of the most sophisticated automotive systems in the world. Called IMPRINT and using MultEQ sound enhancement technology, it is able to cancel out imbalances in the sound caused by different areas of the cabin – window glass, for instance, creates echoes, while carpets suppress mid-range frequencies – resulting in amazingly crisp, clear, undistorted sound reproduction wherever you are seated in the car.

A bespoke progressive air-conditioning system developed by Bergstrom is standard on all models, while on-board tyre pressure monitoring will be either standard or optional depending on model and market. And in deference to the American market in particular, a module in the headlining will accommodate automatic garage and gate opening remote controls.

Interior space and accommodation

The rear seats of 2+2 versions of Project Eagle are intended for children or smaller adults on short journeys. To maximise comfort in the rear, there is foot-room under the seats in front, while both back seats feature ISOFIX mountings for secure child seat fitment.

When unoccupied, the rear seats provide a convenient stowage area for briefcases and jackets, adding to Project Eagle’s appeal as an everyday car. The boot, which ingeniously features a fresh air cooling system to reduce the effect of heat ingress from the engine bay, will accommodate a set of golf clubs.

A two-seater derivative of Project Eagle is planned and will have a luggage shelf in the back replacing the two rear seats.

Safety

Lotus’ Project Eagle conforms to all regulatory standards and in addition boasts additional safety features; Lotus aluminium chassis technology applied to Project Eagle’s provides the car with immense inherent strength, particularly in regard to side impacts and a tubular steel seatbelt anchorage frame that also acts as a rollover structure.

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Anti-lock brakes are standard on all models, as are traction and stability controls; these systems have been specially developed in co-operation with Bosch to provide enhanced safety features whilst maintaining performance characteristics.

Under the bonnet

Lotus continues its excellent working relationship with Toyota, world leaders in engine development and manufacture and Formula1 competitors. For Project Eagle Lotus has modified Toyota's 3.5-litre V6, with dual VVT-i ('intelligent' variable valve timing) for optimum performance.

Performance

At the time of unveiling, full performance figures for the new Lotus will not have been compiled on a production specification car, however Lotus has a further 6 months of development time to conduct these before Project Eagle is available to test drive.

While for Lotus top speed is of less importance than stability at speed, early indications suggest a maximum speed of 160 mph; the 0-60 mph sprint from standstill is estimated at sub 5 seconds (prototype figures).

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