



## Group Lotus plc

16 December 2005

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### **The Lotus Sport Exige GT3**

#### **Lotus Sport Exige GT3 undertakes testing for FIA GT3 European Championship**

A prototype of the Lotus Sport Exige GT3 race car was unveiled at the annual FIA GT Championship presentation ceremony outside the world famous Casino in Monte Carlo, Monaco on 02 December, 2005. The following day (03 December 2005), the first test for the car took place at the high speed Paul Ricard High Tech Test Track in Southern France under FIA supervision, the first stage in the Lotus Sport Exige GT3 becoming eligible for FIA GT3 competition. This latest FIA series, which will start in 2006, is for race cars that have an equal power to weight, and that have a direct lineage to their road going versions.

The Lotus Sport Exige GT3 entrant has been developed by Lotus Sport, the performance arm of Lotus Cars and is a derivative of the standard Lotus Exige coupé model. Weighing in at approximately 750 kg, it stays true to the "performance through light weight" core Lotus philosophy. The car uses a race prepared 1.8 2ZZ-GE VVTL-i engine with a Roots type supercharger and air to air intercooler which utilises the Lotus T4e Engine Control Unit to produce 285 hp (289 PS) at 7,800 rpm. This gives an impressive power to weight ratio of 380 hp / tonne or 2.6 kg / PS.

Following a brief shakedown programme at the Lotus Test Track at Hethel, factory test driver Gavan Kershaw carried out final chassis set up work on wet tyres in the morning session at the Paul Ricard official FIA test. This was followed by an outing on slick tyres on a drying track by FIA nominated test driver Christophe Bouchut.

Commenting on the encouraging test session, Chris Arnold, General Manager of Lotus Sport, explained: "We were delighted to attend the official FIA test session. Considering the car was still on the drawing board two months ago it's a fantastic achievement by the team to complete the build in such a short time. We knew this test would be a first shakedown for the car on slicks and I'm very pleased with the results. Our winter development programme starts with a wind tunnel test just before Christmas followed by further work in preparation for the next FIA test in March."

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The FIA has announced a five race European championship for the new GT3 class with rounds in the UK, Germany, Belgium, France and Italy. Various national GT Championships are also considering amending their regulations to include a GT3 class.

#### **Basic prototype specification**

Like the standard Exige, the Lotus Sport Exige GT3 comes complete with the award-winning light weight bonded aluminium chassis. This is complemented by low weight 5-spoke forged alloy wheels, carbon body panels, and a revised high downforce aerodynamic package incorporating a race front splitter and adjustable carbon fibre rear wing.

An FIA 6-point roll cage, ignition kill switches, and updated braking and suspension systems including Öhlins 3-way adjustable dampers also feature on the new race car. A 6-speed sequential transmission system, and full data logging system have been fitted to the single-seater prototype vehicle.

Availability, full specification, and price of the Lotus Sport Exige GT3 will be announced in early 2006.

Ends.

#### **Notes:**

High resolution images of the Lotus Sport Exige GT3 can be downloaded from the media centre of the official Group Lotus website at <http://www.grouplotus.com/mediactr>. The image library is for registered users only. Members of the press may register for the media centre.

**About Group Lotus plc:** The main operating subsidiary of Group Lotus plc is Lotus Cars Ltd., which has two operating divisions - Lotus Cars and Lotus Engineering:

Lotus Cars builds and commercialises Lotus sports cars, Elise and Exige; and manufactures the advanced composite front and rear crash structures for Aston Martin V12 Vanquish. Lotus Engineering provides comprehensive and versatile consultancy services to many of the world's OEMs and Tier 1 suppliers, offering a full engineering service from initial concept and project design through development to full production prototype build.

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**About Lotus Sport:** Lotus Sport is the performance arm of Lotus Cars Ltd and is located at the Norfolk Head Office next to the famous Hethel test track. The department designs and builds modified versions of the standard Lotus road cars with special emphasis on upgraded performance, improved ride and handling packages and race specific safety equipment.

Individual performance parts to customise or upgrade a vehicle are available via Lotus Sport and its workshops can service, repair, restore or upgrade a standard road or competition Lotus.

In addition, Lotus Sport provides a range of driving packages using the renowned Hethel test circuit, including driver training and corporate days, as well as offering enthusiasts a guided tour of the Lotus factory.

**About the FIA GT3 European Championship:** The FIA GT3 European Championship is an innovative new motorsport series, aimed at series Grand Touring cars with few modifications from their road-going models. Taking the form of a Cup of Cups, with six cars from each participating make competing both between themselves and between makes in order to win the overall FIA title. Reserved for non-professional drivers, and racing within the same meetings as the FIA GT Championship, the performance of the cars will be balanced in order to guarantee exciting, one-hour races.

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