

Lotus Esprit



1978 LOTUS ESPRIT JPS

Engine

Lotus 907 1973 cc four-cylinder in-line, 16-valve DOHC, two Dell'Orto carburettors.

Power and Torque

160bhp @ 6200rpm

140lb ft @ 4900rpm

Body/Chassis

Glassfibre-reinforced plastic body with steel backbone chassis.

Passenger compartment encapsulated in a 'safety-cell structure'.

Transmission

Five-speed manual unit. Synchronesh on all forward gears; fifth gear is overdrive,

Clutch: 8.5in diaphragm spring, hydraulically operated. Rear-wheel drive

Brakes

9.7in discs front

10.6in inboard discs rear

Dual braking system, split front/rear circuits

Steering

Rack-and-pinion

Castor: 3 to 3.5 degrees

Kingpin: 9 degrees.

Suspension

Front: Independent unequal length wishbones and coil springs.

Telescopic shock absorbers. Anti-roll bar. Camber 0 to 0.5 degrees, 3 to 5mm toe in

Rear: independent diagonal trailing arms and lateral link with fixed-length driveshaft, coil springs, telescopic shock absorbers. Camber 0 to 0.5 degrees, 8 to 10mm toe in.

Wheels & Tyres

Front: 7J x 14

Rear: 7.5J x 14

Goodyear Grand Prix

Front: 195/60 HR14

Rear: 205/70 HR14

Weight

1980lb (898kg)

Performance

Top speed: 124mph

0-62mph: 8.6 sec

Fuel

Consumption: 26mpg.

Tank capacity: 15 gallons

Range: 450 miles

Colin Chapman (owner and founder of Lotus Cars) had a long-term sponsorship relationship with the John Players Special cigarette company. The relationship worked so well that "Team Lotus" was the most successful team in Formula one racing for its time. It still ranks near the top in most of the all-time records even though it has not raced in many years. The distinctive black and gold colours of the JPS sponsored Lotus cars is reflected in both the commemorative Esprit and the earlier JPS Europa.

The first and best known, Esprit limited edition of the early years was referred to at Lotus as 'Special' or 'Commemorative' and even simply as 'Black' but to the public in Britain, it always seemed to be 'JPS'. The latter is a reference to the gold on black colour scheme that will be forever linked with images of Lotus Grand Prix contenders of the ground-effect era.



Limited edition details included finishing the standard Lotus alloy-wheel design in gold. Another detail was to frame the bonnet badge with a wreath that reflected the success of the World Championship winning type 79 Grand Prix cars. The gold theme extended even to framing the windscreen of the special edition S2 Esprits and the use of gold for side stripes. Interior effect of the golden cloth upon the generally overcast interior of the first limited edition Esprit. The most practical addition was the sports three-spoke steering-wheel in place of the standard plastic one.



The original intention of the JPS was not just to manufacture 100 for the UK but also 100 apiece in the 'rest of the world' or USA markets that provided up to a third of total volumes when the Lotus export effort was 'on track'. One Lotus employee did provide the JPS total and information is that 147 were probably made: 94 for Britain; 10 for California; 16 for the other 49 US States and 27 for the 'rest of the world'. The first commemorative JPS Esprit were completed by 13 December 1978 as unit number 73120550G. The last was ready on 27 July 1979, unit number: 79070278J.