

Lotus Esprit Sport 350



Specification

ENGINE

Layout: 8 cyls in a vee, 3500cc
Max power: 349bhp @ 6500rpm
Max torque: 295lb ft @ 4250rpm
Specific output: 100bhp per litre
Power to weight: 268bhp per tonne
Torque to weight: 227lb ft per tonne
Installation: Mid longitudinal, rear-wheel drive
Construction: Aluminium alloy head/block
Bore/stroke: 81.0/83.0mm
Valve gear: 4 valves per cyl, dohc
Compression ratio: 8.0:1

Ignition and fuel: Lotus 918 ignition, multi-point injection, twin Garrett T25 turbochargers

GEARBOX

Type: 5-speed manual
Ration/mph per 1000rpm
1st 3.36/5.5 **2nd** 2.05/9.0 **3rd** 1.38/13.4
4th 1.09/17.9 **5th** 0.76/25.5
Final drive ratio: 3.89

MAXIMUM SPEEDS

5th 175mph/6850rpm (claim) **4th** 129/7200
3rd 96/7200 **2nd** 65/7200 **1st** 40/7200

ACCELERATION FROM REST

SURFACE WET

<i>True mph</i>	<i>sec</i>	<i>speedo mph</i>
30	2.1	33
40	2.8	43
50	3.8	53

60	4.7	62
70	6.0	73
80	7.5	84
90	8.8	94
100	10.7	105

Standing qtr mile: 13.0sec/109mph

Standing km: 22.8sec/142mph

30-70mph through gears: 3.9sec

ACCELERATION IN GEAR

mph	5th	4th	3rd	2nd
10-30	–	–	4.6	2.6
20-40	8.9	5.4	3.6	2.0
30-50	8.0	4.4	2.9	1.7
40-60	7.3	3.9	2.5	–
50-70	5.8	3.4	2.6	–
60-80	5.3	3.3	2.9	–
70-90	5.6	3.5	3.2	–
80-100	6.1	3.7	3.5	–

SUSPENSION

Front: Double wishbones, coil springs over dampers, anti-roll bar

Rear: Upper and lower links, coil springs over dampers, anti-roll bar

WHEELS & TYRES

Wheel size: 8.5Jx17in (f), 10Jx18in (r)

Made of: Forged alloy

Tyres: 235/40 ZR17 (f), 295/35 ZR18 (r)

Spare: Full size
Pirelli P-Zero

BRAKES

Front: 320mm cross-drilled ventilated discs

Rear: 320mm cross-drilled ventilated discs

STEERING

Type: Rack and pinion, power assisted

Turns lock to lock: 3.1

The Sport 350 is the most extreme version of the Esprit ever to reach the market. Developed from the already awesomely rapid V8 road car but encapsulating much of the brake, suspension and handling technology gleaned from two decades of GT competition experience. This is designed for the Esprit owner who wants the ultimate track day car.

In total Lotus will construct just 50 cars, each will be fitted with a limited edition aluminium plaque at the base of the windscreen in the centre of the dash, all of which will be offered in the same silver/grey/blue colour scheme with blue, not red painted cam covers, and priced at £64,950. 2 out of the 50 have now been commissioned in White, 1 in metallic Black (which will be the Company Directors Car), 2 in Black and one in Ice Blue. 8 units were also shipped to the U.S. Badged as 350 they were really spruced up V8-SE and even had the engine covers in red instead of the 350 blue and aren't really considered as true Sport 350's.



Visual changes from the current Esprit V8 SE & GT include a newly styled front end and a huge carbon fibre rear wing on aluminium uprights, designed around a similar wing worn by the Type 115 GT racer, 340 decals appear on the doors and roof. New OZ Racing alloy wheels covered in Pirelli rubber increase grip and reduce weight. Beneath the exterior AP Racing brakes improve stopping power. Stiffer suspension & engine bracing provide extra rigidity. Revised mapping of the ECU system produces an increase in torque in the 3 lower gears, and a reduce kerb weight of 80kg makes this the most accelerative Esprit in history.



1 Aluminium gear knob is freezing on cold mornings; gearshift not a strong point 2 Air conditioning costs £1185 extra 3 Alpine stereo is much improved 4 Carbon fibre is used extensively; it's the real thing, too 5 Seats are partly covered in grippy Alcantara 6 Sport 350 buyers can choose between airbag wheel or this Momo item at no extra cost

Body 2rd coupe **Cd** n/a **Front/rear tracks** 1520/1520mm **Turning circle** 10.6m **Min/max front leg room** 1060/1250mm
Max front head room 880mm **Interior width** 1430mm **Min/max boot width** 1240/1870mm **Boot height** 280mm
VDA Boot volume n/a **Kerb weight** 1300kg **Weight distribution front/rear** 43/57 per cent **Max payload** 227kg



STANDARD EQUIPMENT:

The standard equipment for the 350 sport includes: leather/alcantara sports seats, leather/alcantara trim, carbon fibre/aluminium trim, Momo steering wheel, electric windows, central door locking/remote, alarm/immobiliser, electrically adjustable heated door mirrors. 24 months/unlimited warranty and 8 years anti-rust.



Sport 350 Production Numbers

From Lotus:

The original Proposal was to build no more than 50 cars (to keep the model exclusive) All the unique parts were ordered to a maximum of 50 (this included enough of some parts to satisfy Service needs where necessary) Production build totaled 42 cars.

I can confirm this as we ordered 50 sets of 'AP Racing' Blue Front Calipers. At a stock check earlier this year we had 8 sets in stock subsequently used on some Japanese spec. cars. The last of which goes on line next week. I also confirmed the figure by checking the Engine build records:- Between 30th Nov. 1998 (first engine) and 24th Jan. 2000 (last engine) 42 Production engines were built plus 1 for Service stock.

So in all 42 genuine Sport 350 cars were produced at the factory. Of the 42 Sport 350's produced, 2 were supplied to Germany and 5 to Switzerland the rest being U.K cars. As for colour I have 3 build books which dont have a definite colour stated. I have definitely found one white even though you know of two and I have also found two black cars listed.

I have been digging further into the Sport 350 build records - I have commandeered every piece of paper in the Factory on the subject so I will get to the bottom of the saga.

It gets a bit confusing as some cars were built or were planned to be built for Directors or Heads of Department at the time. Some cars were built to a spec. that was not the Engineering Approved / Released specification.

When cars are built for Directors etc. the build spec. becomes corrupted and what was originally specified was not always what came off the Production Line. (they had the car build spec. modified to their taste - and being the CEO or a Director they can have what they wish) When you have cars built to an odd spec. it is difficult to say it is a genuine Sport 350 as was original specified.

Since the Esprit Family is Homologated as various versions of the same car (each variation is an evolution of the originally approved Esprit Turbo) the trail of changes is very difficult to detail as many vehicles were built using several variations of Body Components, Wings, Wheels & Tyres.

As soon as I get to the bottom of things I will let you know the details - as usual nothing is straight forward at Lotus !

US Sport 350 lacks the following over the UK car:

- Blue Paint on the AP calipers(they are grey teflon as they come from AP).
- Springs(all other 350 suspension parts are there but with the standard V8 rates for our rougher roads).
- Blue paint on the top of the motor(standard orange here).
- Grey paint on the front grill inserts(they are black).
- Air Bag delete.
- Spare Tire delete.
- Thinner body.
- Seats.
- Carbon Fibre option.

Additionally, they us car included the following:

A special interior with Suede headliner with silver stitching. Silver inserts on the seats and doors with black stitching, and black leather with silver stitching. This is the nicest interior ever to come to the US and was only in the 350 to make for the lack of the sport seats.

The US Sport 350 is very much a real sport 350 and only requires that a few parts be powder coated, the removal of the spare and airbags, installation of the 350 steering wheel and springs to be almost 100% identical to UK specs. The only thing you can't change is the heavier body but my research seems to indicate that will only save 40lbs.

All of our alterations were either for marketing(it was thought that blue wouldn't work here and that the stiffer spring rates would turn people away). Or for DOT approval-the lighter body, lack of and altered seats would require the crashing of 3 cars to approve and ALL cars must have airbags from the factory.

Also, I am fairly certain that there are only 42 Sport 350s because 8 were shipped to the US at the end of the run. Instead of making them part of the 000/050 UK cars, it was decided to number them as 0/8 to make them more exclusive for the US buyers(Lotus has a history of doing this with their limited editions here). The extra blue calipers and springs are in inventory because they were not used on the US cars. I don't think there were ever any real plans to bring the 350 here until the very end. In fact, my car(1/8) only made it here in March of 2000 with the others coming later.

The Sport 350 info. is interesting. On the Lotus records the USA Cars are not designated as Sport 350s (probably due to Type Approval issues - the US authorities are very particular with model variants that may not be fully approved) To keep the car legal in the USA we have to keep the seats that were originally approved in the crash testing so we could not fit the lightweight composite seats. Also the car has to be equipped with Twin Airbags and the USA Knee Bolsters (and Spacesaver Wheel).

The European cars had the lightweight (hand - lay) body shell (not possible for USA due to crash testing) The steering Wheel is easy to change as the column is identical - Wheel and Column Switches are interchangeable. The Wing was designed to be USA Compliant from the early proposals just in case we needed to have some new parts available for use in the future.

I have all the VIN details for all the cars that were officially sold as Sport 350s. This is officially 42 for Europe. I have some VINs for a couple more that were built as Hybrids (for Directors etc.) so were not logged as Sport 350s for various reasons which I will explain later. I can also detail the RHD cars.

I should finish my investigation this week so will be able to confirm the build spec of everything that resembled a Sport 350. I will let you know the details as soon as I have them (after this you and I will be the World experts in Sport 350 build!) This situation is typical of a low volume build for a special model.

Final Figures for Sport 350 production

42 cars left the production line as official Sport 350's. These included 6 directors cars, with 2 being black and 1 ice blue. 8 US spec Sport 350's were also made, taking the total to 50. There was also 4 UK spec cars sent to Japan for track use only. Which brings the total up to 54 Sport 350.