

## Growing Up Lotus Part 2

By Anthony Kimberley

After my previous article I was astonished to be asked to write a second article, I mean what can be interesting about the way I grew up? Well maybe some, here goes.

Please remember that these are my memories and may not always be 100% correct but I do try to speak to other family members to confirm them.

I was asked recently "When you were a child what did you want to be?" My reply was instantaneous, "My Dad". Here was a larger than life figure that (in my perception) lived a wonderful life. He spent all day every day at Lotus, drove the most heart achingly beautiful cars a young boy has ever seen, spent time with and met larger than life figures like Colin Chapman, The Duke of Edinburgh, Duke of Kent, Margaret Thatcher, Mario Andretti, to name just a few! He was directly involved in the design of the Europa TC, Elite, Eclat, Esprit, Excel and many others and jet-setting around the world on business. What young boy with a passion for cars wouldn't want to be him!

The reality, though, was different.

"He spent all day, every day at or travelling for Lotus", well he really did. 7 days a week, 12-14 hours a day everyday of the year bar Christmas Day. Here's a great example of what I mean. In 1978 we had some of the worst snow of the century here in the UK. I remember we were driving back from a family funeral in Dad's favourite Elite from the midlands and the trip was about 150 miles. As we drove into Norfolk we still had 30 miles to go and they actually closed the road behind us. At this time we lived down a quiet country lane and as we drove down it the snow, now blown by gale force winds, formed a tunnel through which we drove. It snowed for nearly a week and by the end of it we had 4-6ft of snow. The roads were impassable due to blizzard conditions and it was great! I got to see dad for 4 days. On the 5th day we had heard a helicopter and we ran outside to see a grinning Colin Chapman hovering a few feet off the ground "I brought your work", he shouted, while dropping off a huge bundle of paperwork. Two days later he paid for a snow plough to clear our road specifically so that dad

could go into work.

"He met with larger than life figures". He was on the design council, Dept of Trade and Industry advisory board, Director of MIRA (That's the Motor Industry Research Association) etc, at the time he was at Lotus and had many meetings in both his capacities with famous people and dignitaries. Some like the duke of Edinburgh were extremely stimulating and creative but others, like some with Maggie Thatcher were sometimes heated, as he pushed for backing for an industry that was (and still is) badly thought of and with little or no government support.

He would come home from meetings with Colin fuming about a difference of opinion they had had. Both were very strong characters and dad would only back down on those words "Who's the Chairman", "You are Colin", "Who's going to win", "You are Colin but...". Against that they were good friends and I always had the impression that he felt about Colin as I did about him. In pride of place in his house today, is a picture that Colin gave him, with the words "To the Man who made it all possible, Colin" written on it. However it wasn't all plain sailing and after Colin died the stress he was under was immense.

"And jet-setting around the world on business" he did. One year I think he was in the country for less than 3 months. He missed much of us 3 boys growing up and eventually, after splitting with my mother, moved to Malaysia, working as Exec Vice Chairman for GM OC and then head hunted to Italy as President of Lamborghini.

So back to my previous comment, "In my perception". It looked and I'm sure was a glamorous lifestyle for a while, but you get sick of sleeping in hotel rooms and not seeing your family. The stress must have been immense at certain times (like when Colin passed away) and his health has suffered over the years. But, you know what? I don't think he would have changed it for the world. His only regret? Leaving Lotus and missing us boys growing up (although I and my older brother always attended Grand Prix with him and Colin-more on that another time).

The effect it had on me is obvious. I started life in Banking and moved through until I couldn't resist the lure of the Motor industry. Working a different route (as I seem to have the gift of the Gab.....that means I talk a lot) I fell into vehicle sales and am now a Corporate Sales Manager with Honda.

Dads back where his heart has been all along, back working 7 days a week 12 to 20 hours a day, but just for a short while (he is 68 and I'm sure he wants to retire eventually!).

My "growing up Lotus" has resulted in a similar passion for the brand. I moderate (help administer) an enthusiast site (Lotus Esprit Forum) and attend many regular meetings. One day soon I will buy an Esprit just for myself and scratch that itch I've had since I was 7. That Lotus itch that gets under your skin and you just can't shake.

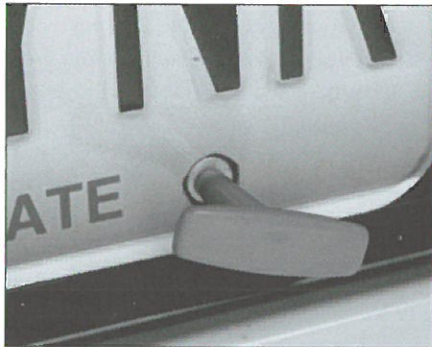
Who knows, one day I may take the final plunge and my kids could say, my dad worked at Lotus too. 🚗



TIP 2: It's also a good idea to use at least one L shape aluminum strip for added strength. The floor panel has a tendency to flex from the bottle weight.

Next, I had to find a place to run the mechanical cable pull. The kit came with a 6 foot and 12 foot cable pull. For now I have only installed the 6 foot cable. I ran the cable out through the bottom right hole of the rear license plate.

To do this you have to drill out the bottom right nut plate attached to the fiberglass rear panel of the car. You'll also have to make an X cut in the carpet to run the cable and nut through. Make the hole in the fiberglass big enough so that the threaded part of the handle just fits.



TIP 3: Take off the plastic panel between the tail lights and the license plate. You will also need to make these bottom right holes big enough for the ENTIRE metal part of the handle to go through. The threads only go up 1/2" up the handle. It's just enough length to mount directly to the fiberglass body of the car.

The next step is to run the Decabon tubing and mount the nozzles. The kit comes with 15' of tubing. After my install, I still had 7 feet left. The tubing is just plastic coated aluminum, so when you cut it let the saw do the work don't press to hard. (a fine toothed hobby saw works best) Make sure any burrs are cleaned off so debris does not clog a nozzle. When you push the tubing into a nozzle or fitting, you will hear it click. Give it a tug and make sure it is set. If you want to take it out just push in on the black ring, push the line in and then pull it out. Almost like a quick disconnect. From the bottle nozzle a line goes to a bulkhead fitting mounted on the vertical wall of the trunk.

When drilling the hole for the bulkhead fitting, pull the carpet back and cut another X later. (Do not try to drill through the carpet.) Then run a small line from the bulkhead fitting to a tee fitting on the other side of the wall. From here your line will split. One along each side of the engine. Specifically, I aimed a nozzle at the fuel manifold, each turbo, the area between the firewall and engine block and a nozzle directly into the area where the fuel charcoal canister is. There should be some distance between the nozzle and its target. Follow the manufactures instructions carefully. Also, when mounting the nozzles, don't just mount the lines or the nozzles can spin and spray the wrong direction. It's best to use a clip that will fit around the entire nozzle. The clips I found are rubber coated. Be creative but secure the nozzle well.

Overall, I saved about \$300-\$400 completing the install myself. On a difficulty scale of 1 to 10 this is probably a 3. Mostly due to the time it took to figure out the layout. The bottle uses a retaining pin so Joe Blow can't just pull your fire handle. You'll have to take the pin out prior to your track session. The kit comes with some big E stickers so a track worker will know where your fire handle is. If you hit a wall and are dazed and confused while your engine ignites this system may provide a little extra time for a safety worker to get you out of the car. It beats trying to spray Halon into your engine boot vents or worse yet opening the boot. If anyone finds a good way to mount a fire handle in the cockpit let me know. Good Luck. 🍀

## Lotus Car Care Tips

Article and Photos by Atwell Haines

Part 4 of 5

Polishing and Waxing

Your car and its paint are very much like a woman and her skin: Both benefit from frequent, gentle caressing. You feel better too!

There is a right way and a wrong way to keep a smooth shiny coat on your car's paint. We started with that crucial step, Paint Cleaning Clay. This removed the grit and contaminants and now the surface is smooth.

Now you can evaluate the surface gloss. Is it dull and lifeless? Then you need to polish it. Does it have swirl marks? Most visible on darker colored paint, swirl marks are the circular reflections of minor scratches, from rubbing your paint too hard. Remember (in case this is the first article you are reading): Paint is SOFT.



So, once in a while you should polish your paint. After using detailing clay, polishing will bring up that show-car shine. Remember, wax will fill swirls and scratches but polishing will minimize them for a long time.

There are many varieties of polishes. Use a fine product to bring up gloss, or a SLIGHTLY rougher one to correct weathering or dullness. You never want to remove more paint than you have to; after all you have a finite thickness of paint on the car. Save it if you can! For this reason I rarely use polish on my Esprit, I think I have polished it two times in 18 years. A daily driver (or a car that is new to you) would surely benefit from the polishing step.

I have always polished by hand, so if you want to know how to use a machine polisher, this is not the article for you. Once you decide on a product, apply it to a foam pad. Use back and forth strokes (not circular) and again, do NOT press down. Let the weight of your hand and the polish do the work. As soon as the polish starts to whiten, remove it all before it dries, using a clean terry towel. This towel MUST remain clean, as dried polish will scratch. Some use several towels to buff out the polish. Always use a clean towel surface for each section.

Do a small area at a time (about two square feet), and make sure you do it in moderate temperatures away from the sun. Right now I'm using 3M Swirl Remover polish and Griot's Fine Polish.

Now, you have shiny paint that has no protection. That's where the Wax comes in. It is a transparent barrier between the world and your car's paint.

These days there are two broadly defined types of waxes: Synthetic and Natural. The synth waxes provide a tough coating but the natural waxes provide a deep shine. For car shows, I use a natural wax like Griot's Best Of Show. For protection, a product like NuFinish is good.

For the best protection, it pays to wax your car twice about two weeks apart. This gives the paint two levels of protection that will last. I wax my Esprit only once a year (before LOG) but I do it twice, the first with NuFinish and the second time with Carnuaba. I apply it the same way as I do the polish: On a washed and clayed, cool surface, a dollop of wax on a foam pad is applied to a two square foot area (NOT heavy, and don't press down). Follow the directions on the wax container, there is no need to put it on thick since you will just be buffing it out again. Again, light, frequent buffing strokes with a clean terry towel will bring out the best shine.

If, at a later date, you find white streaks from dried wax, use a quick detailer or a spray bottle full of distilled water to soften the wax, then buff it out. Applying the natural wax over a layer of synthetic wax is the secret for a long lasting, durable finish that looks great. 🍀