

LotusElan.net Buyer's Guide

Part 1: Introspective

So you want to buy an Elan. Here are some questions to ask yourself to help determine the car you want to buy.

Why am I buying this car?
What do I intend to do with it? Road Car? Autocross? Hill Climb?
Will it be my daily driver?
Do you want a coupe, convertible, or a 2+2?
What service and support is locally available?
Will I be driving it year-round or summer only?
Do I want to work on the car more than driving it?
Am I willing to pay a premium because someone else has already done most of the serious work on the car?
What is the most that I'm willing to pay for this car?
What is the least that I think that the car can be had for?

As you start your Lotus hunt, keep the following in mind.

1. Collect all the technical information as possible. Obtain the workshop manual. Join the local Lotus Club. Sign up for the LotusElan.net mailing list. Visit LotusElan.net. You can not have to much information. They all provide useful strategies and cautions that go far beyond the scope of this list. Also, review this list carefully before using it.		
2. Always inspect/take delivery of the vehicle in the broad daylight, never in the evening/night or in the rain.		
3. A clean piece of cardboard placed under the engine/trans after the test-drive will help show fluid leaks.		
4. In some states, older non-titled vehicles may be titled with just a bill of sale. Other states may require an additional security bond to be posted. Use extreme caution in either of these cases!		
5. Require seller have the vehicle pass all state inspections (safety, emissions) at a mutually agreeable shop (NOT one of his choosing) before you pay for it. Old (>30days) inspections are of absolutely no use to you.		
6. A general guide to reading exhaust smoke:		
	Black smoke	unburned fuel Valves bad or out of adjustment? Carbs out of adjustment?
	Blue smoke	burning oil Accelerating: Piston rings bad? Decelerating: Valve seats/guides bad?
	White smoke	burning coolant! Bad head gasket? Warped or cracked Head or Block?\$\$