

esprit S3



1981 LOTUS ESPRIT S3

Engine

Lotus 912 2174 cc four-cylinder in-line, 16-valve DOHC,
two Dellorto DHLA4SE side draugh carburettors.
Bore & Stroke: 9.29 x 76.2mm. Compression: 9.4:1.
Block & Head: Aluminum alloy



Power and Torque

160bhp @ 6500rpm

160lb ft @ 5000rpm

Body/Chassis

Glassfibre-reinforced plastic body with galvanised steel backbone chassis.
Passenger compartment encapsulated in a 'safety-cell structure'.

Transmission

Five-speed manual unit. Rear-wheel drive.

Clutch: 9.5in diaphragm spring, hydraulically operated.

Brakes

10.4in discs front

10.8in discs rear

Dual braking system, split front/rear circuits

Steering

Rack-and-pinion

Suspension

Front: Independent by upper wishbones, lower transverse links, coil springs, anti-roll bar.

Rear: independent by non-parallel unequal-length double transverse links, radius arms, coil springs.

Wheels & Tyres

Front: 7J x 15

Rear: 8J x 15

Goodyear Grand Prix

Front: 195/60 VR15

Rear: 235/60 VR15

Weight

kerb: 1220kg

distribution f/r: 41.2/58.8

max payload: 466kg

Performance

Top speed: 135mph

0-60mph: 6.5 sec

Fuel

Consumption: 23.2mpg.

Tank capacity: 14.75 gallons (67 litres)

Cost new

£13,461.23



The date 22nd April 1981 was the official birthday of the Esprit S3, a product that owed its propulsion to the 2.2 litre engine of the S2.2, but whose chassis and substantially revised running gear came from the February 1980 Lotus Essex Turbo Esprit. The £13,461.23 Esprit S3 was one of the most sensibly priced Lotus designs ever offered.

By the time the S3 was announced, Lotus could boast of the Esprit concept that it was 'the only practical mid-engine 2-seat sports car' made in Britain and the 2.179 Esprits from the 1975 launch to the end of 1981 had been sold. The S3 proved by far the best Esprit to appear in normally-aspirated guise and original outline. Picking up on the Turbo chassis meant vast gains in torsional rigidity, while the suspension system were tailored to the car rather than unhappy legacies of either past traditions or adapted production components.



A new interior also came with the S3, new seats (still fixed back rest) with option leather, new steering wheel, instruments from the Turbo (except boost gauge), greater sound insulation, reducing interior noise by 50%. External changes included colour coded front spoiler, side sills, air scoops and Turbo bumpers.

A total of 767 Esprit S3 were sold between 1981 and 1987

