

Lotus Engineering

Exciting Niche Vehicles







Exciting Niche Vehicles – a passion for the product

In the face of new legislation, technology and customer demand, car markets are changing and fragmenting. Mainstream models continue to be important, but increasingly there is a call for more specialised, imaginative cars – exciting niche vehicles.

Through design, performance and individuality, niche vehicles can enhance a brand, redefine a market and be highly profitable. But they do present a very different set of challenges; to be viable you must carefully balance product, commercial and manufacturing considerations.

Throughout its history, Lotus has used and developed its expertise to produce dynamic sports cars of its own and exciting niche vehicles for its clients.



Lotus Elise extruded door hinge

A platform to build on

Typically, niche vehicles are either sports cars or have a sports-oriented character. It is a sector where visual impact, strong performance and driver enjoyment combine to create a product with enormous appeal.

And when it comes to creating niche sports cars, Lotus is in an enviable position – the platforms of our own products can quickly and cost-effectively become the underpinnings for our clients' vehicles.

The Elise platform has proven its flexibility as the basis for a wide range of sports cars, all of which are superb to drive and are recognised leaders in their sector.

The product advantages of vehicles based on such a successful platform are numerous: it allows class-leading driving dynamics, the integration of conventional or alternative powertrains and it provides strong proportions for visually captivating exterior design.

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Lotus Elise interior structure

Short cut to success

The most crucial benefits of the Elise platform are that its technology, quality and commercial viability are all proven and its engineering design and manufacturing investment are already in place. Only modest further expenditure is required to create new, exciting and clearly positioned products.

The added advantage here is the speed with which a client can get high-quality, extremely desirable, brand-enhancing products into the showroom.

The next generation platforms that are the basis for future Lotus products are currently under development. Again, industry-leading driving dynamics and a low-investment philosophy are at the heart of their design. They will provide the perfect foundation for clients to design and manufacture their own breathtaking sports cars.

Exciting Niche Vehicles

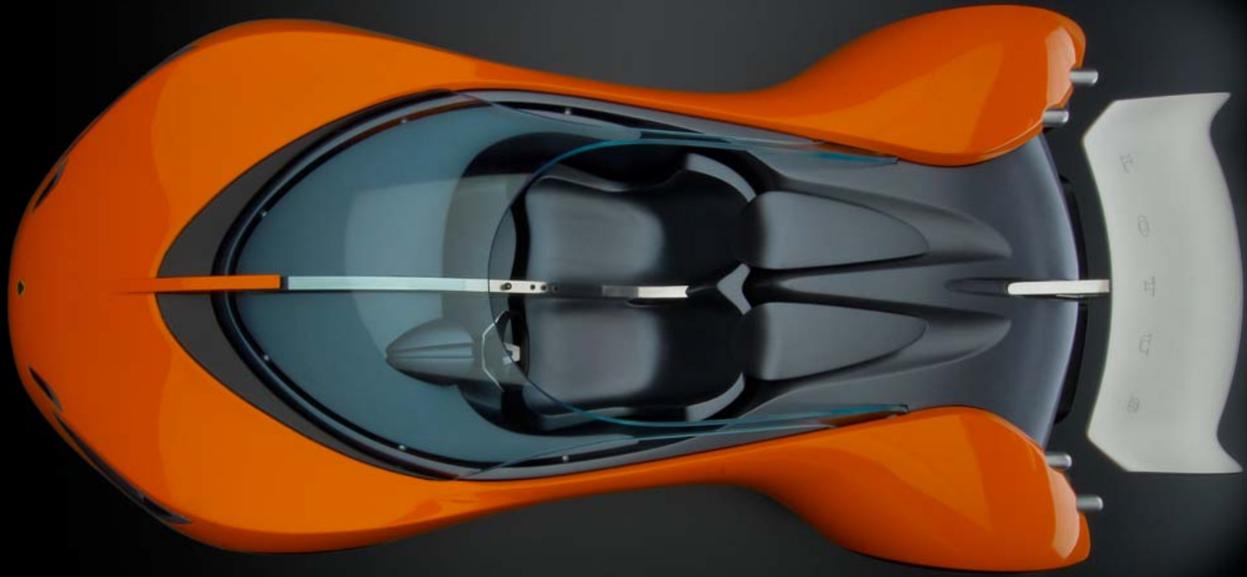


Daringly different yet sensibly managed

By their very nature, niche vehicles must be distinctive. This means visually, in performance and through the total driving experience. For a niche vehicle to be special, attributes of performance or character must be prioritised.

However, commercial pressures mean that many vehicle manufacturers base them on current mass-market cars. Sometimes this works, but more often it results in undesirable compromises.

At Lotus we have the culture and experience to engineer thrilling, eye-catching cars that also make sound business sense. We are able to create bespoke vehicle architectures using our own techniques, processes and methodologies that are unfamiliar to many in the industry.



Lotus Hotwheels concept

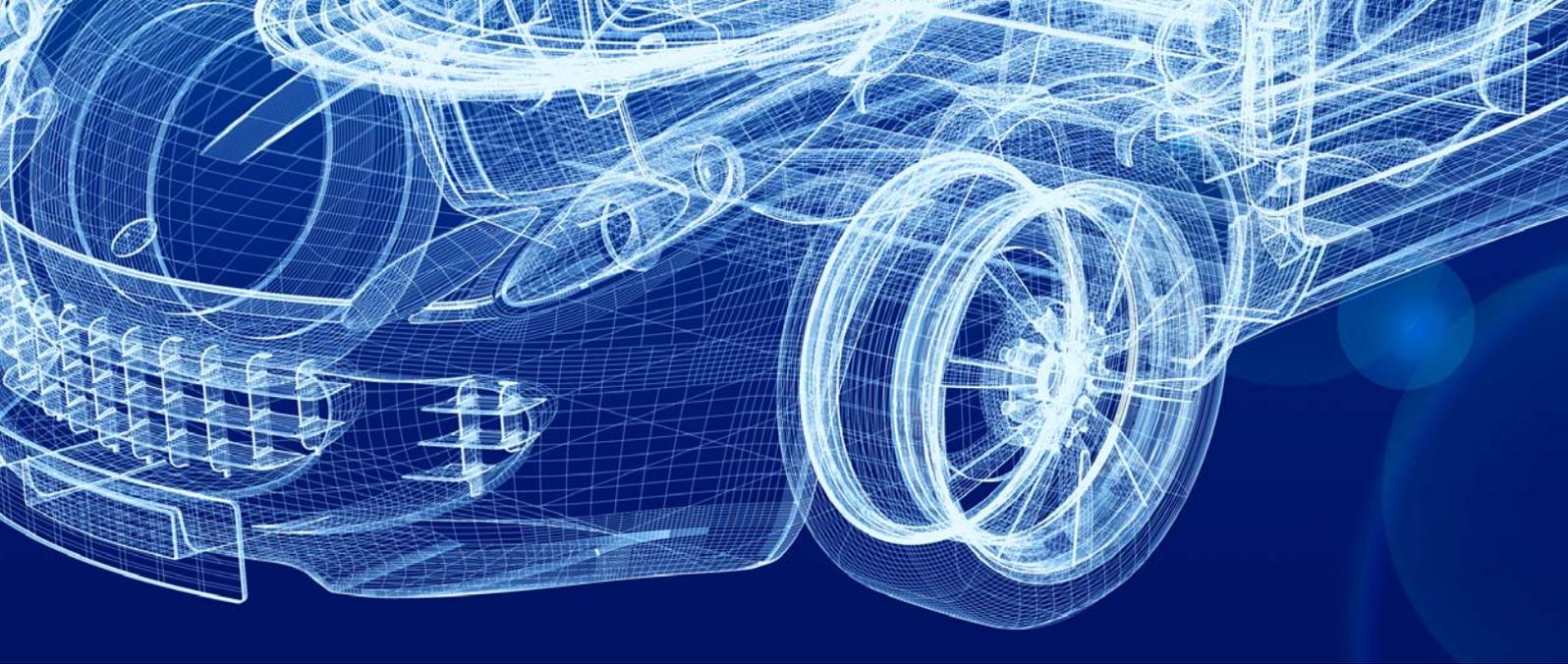
Standing out from the crowd

Our designers and engineers have a passion for developing exciting niche cars. And they have a deep insight into what is important for the driver. They know that through an enthralling blend of exterior and interior design they have to stimulate the customer on an emotional level, and then impress them still further with an extraordinary driving experience.

That, of course, is in the ideal world. In the real world things are never so simple and there are always difficult decisions to be made. However, through our long-term experience in dealing with just such issues, we understand which elements are essential to the vehicle's character.

Our unique blend of passion and commercial pragmatism means that we can produce a truly individual niche vehicle within an economically viable programme.

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Lotus Elise CAD wire frame model

Greater than the sum of the parts

Much of Lotus' long-established ability to make exciting, desirable cars stems from bringing together our world-renowned expertise in driving dynamics, design and performance.

This unique combination of skills is not reserved simply for sports cars – it can also be used on a conventional car for our clients, to create sensational range-topping variants.

This is where Lotus' sensitivity to brand identity and character helps us to engineer a vehicle that is not only eye-catching, but also accentuates the positive aspects of the brand.



Lotus Aluminium Performance Cross-over (APX) concept

Superb design – the vital starting point

Whether a client's niche vehicle is built on a Lotus platform, a bespoke platform or adapted from their own existing production model, striking design is essential.

Through styling Lotus' own cars, Lotus Design has a clear understanding of what is required to produce beautiful, iconic vehicles.

This understanding goes beyond the immediate visual impact, so that the design is sympathetic to the wider attributes of the car. And the emotion generated by the car's design can be echoed by the emotion of owning and driving it.



Exciting Niche Vehicles



Maintaining leadership in the field

The Elise showed how Lotus could harness new technologies – bonded aluminium extrusions and composite crash structures – to create exciting niche vehicles. And the Versatile Vehicle Architecture (VVA) displayed the evolution of ideas that will continue to keep Lotus at the cutting edge of niche vehicle technologies.

Meanwhile, current research into lightweight structural composites for medium volume will provide a new solution for many future niche vehicles.

Our future breakthroughs will come from harnessing the creativity and ingenuity within Lotus. This will involve the use of novel materials and manufacturing processes to provide alternative routes for producing niche vehicles.

The emerging niche vehicle challenge for the future is to integrate alternative powertrains. Lotus is already experienced in this area and is therefore uniquely positioned to help create special vehicles that capture the imagination and answer environmental needs.



Lotus Hotwheels concept

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