Make:	Lotus
Model:	15
Year:	1959
Location:	Belgium
Type:	Open Sportsracer
Chassis Number:	15/3.627-3
Drive:	RHD
Road Registered:	Yes
Competition Ready:	Yes
FIA HTP:	Yes
Interior Color:	metallic
Exterior Color:	Blue
Price:	P.O.A.

Key Features

- One of only 7 Series 3 Lotus 15 built
- Excellent period competition history including the 1959 Nassau Trophy races
- Clear and unbroken ownership history from new
- Completely restored by specialist Twyman Racing and retaining its original chassis and body
- Highly eligible for Le Mans Classic, Stirling Moss Trophy, Fifties Legends, etc..

Description

We are very pleased to offer for sale this genuine and very original 1959 Lotus 15 Series 3 with chassis number #627-3.

The 1950s was a fantastic era for sports car racing, it was pure competition. As the years passed it was becoming more and more obvious that the development route for these fantastic cars would be smaller and lighter. At the same time a handful of small English manufacturers appeared and would go on to influence and shape the design of racing and sports cars for years to come.

The legendary Colin Chapman had made his mark with the Lotus 6 and immediately set his sights on dominating the sports car racing scene. Chapman developed the Mark 8, 9 and 10 before arriving at the iconic Lotus 11, this was to be the car with which he would firmly stamp his name on the sports car racing scene. The Lotus 15 was a direct development of the Lotus 11 and would become undoubtedly the ultimate front engined sports car to leave the Lotus factory. It was more competitive, more powerful and a much rarer car than its predecessor.

Only 27 Lotus 15s were produced, compared to 270 Lotus 11s. The low, sleek, aerodynamic body was designed by Colin Chapman and Williams and Pritchard with the driver sitting much lower than previously. The Lotus 15 did retain some fundamental design success from the 11. The design of the space-frame chassis shows similarities in design, along with the front suspension. However, the rear suspension was the Chapman Strut with inboard disc brakes similar to the Lotus 16 Formula 1 car of the period.

In 1959 the Series 3 Lotus 15 was born. The series 3 boasted a reinforced frame in the areas found to be weak on the earlier series cars, the front suspension was also upgraded from the previous configuration which had come directly from the Lotus 11 Series 2. The easiest way to identify a Series 3 Lotus 15 is that it has a one-piece front bonnet which extends all the way from the grille to the dashboard. The earlier Series 1 and 2 cars have a shorter bonnet and a separate fixed cowl, similar to the Lotus 11s.

Our car, chassis 627-3, was built in 1959 and delivered new to the USA through Lotus distributor Sy Kaback of Grand Prix Imported Cars in Rutherford, New Jersey. Interestingly, the car was ordered new by another Lotus distributor, Suburban Foreign Car Service Inc in Pensylvania for their landlord, Mr Tom Fleming. The Lotus 15 was fitted new with a two-litre Coventry Climax engine, supplied by Racing Engines Limited, a Lotus subsidiary, and a MG Magnette four-speed gearbox with Elite-pattern FDU.

Original owner Tom Fleming would start racing 627-3 at the 1959 Nassau Speed Week, competing against some greats like Roger Penske and Bob Holbert. He would then go onto compete extensively in SCCA events during 1960 with success and

several class podiums.

In 1961 Fleming sold the car to John Willock in Long Island, New York. Willock campaigned the car across a number of SCCA events with similar success, retaining the car until 1970 when it was subsequently purchased by Englishman Mr Murray Smith, the well-known English historic racer residing in the USA. The Lotus passed through 2 more owners, firstly Steven Griswold who had Brian Redman race the car and then Peter Kaus of Rosso Bianco. The car stayed in his collection from 1981-1997, before being sold in 1997 to UK collector Hugh Taylor who retained the car for 18 years, racing it a lot, including a 1st at Donington Park. David Cooke then acquired 627-3 from Taylor in 2015 upon which the car received a full restoration and bare metal paint job by experts Twyman Racing in the UK and has been campaigned at the 2016 Goodwood Revival, 2016 Le Mans Classic and 2016 Silverstone International Trophy. During its restoration it was confirmed that the car's body is almost entirely original, the complicated front bonnet and rear bodywork showing its age and originality, and the chassis remains undamaged and original.

Passing through one more UK owner, 627-3 was bought by the current owner in 2020 who bought a new, state-of-the-art 2-litre Coventry Climax engine from Crosthwaite & Gardiner and competed successfully with the car in multiple Le Mans Classic, Goodwood Revival and Racing Legends Stirling Moss Trophy. (The detailed period race- and ownership history can be found in the history section below.)

627-3 is now offered for sale in race-ready condition with the engine only having 10 hours running (out of 24 hours service cycle) offering the next owner plenty of competitive outings. Same running hours for the more reliable T10 gearbox and the FIA HTP is valid until 2030. Last but not least, the car comes with good spares which include its old engine (numbers matching with the chassis plate), 2 spare wheels, 2 separate differentials (with different ratio), brake discs and miscellaneous running spares.

Sold as an EEC car and benefiting from a UK road registration, this genuine Lotus 15 with unbroken ownership history is a fabulous race winning tool for Le Mans Classic, Fifties Legends, Goodwood and the Stirling Moss Trophy while this rare series-3 example must be one of the most original cars extant.

History

Ownership History Lotus 15/627-3

10/59: Seymore "Sy" C Kaback, Grand Prix Imported Cars, Rutherford, New Jersey, USA

Lotus importer and distributor for U.S.A

10/59: Suburban Foreign Car Service Inc, Abington, Pennsylvania, USA

Lotus dealership - for resale only as new

11/59: Thomas T Fleming, Blue Bell, Pennsylvania, USA

delivered unpainted in bare alloy
raced '59 Nassau Speed Week
painted dark blue - raced in SCCA 1960/61

07/61: John Willock, East Norwich, Long Island, New York, USA

raced in SCCA 1961/62
retained in storage until 1970

70: Murray Smith, Manhattan, New York, USA

raced in historics

79: Steven Griswold, Berkeley, California, USA

raced at Riverside in 1981 by Brian Redman

08/81: Peter Kaus, Rosso Bianco Museum, Aschaffenburg, Germany

on static display - never used or raced

97: Hugh Taylor, England, UK

brokered through Coys of London - raced in historics
offered and sold at 2012 Coys "Legende et Passion" Monaco Auction

05/12: Chris Ballard, Henley-On-Thames, Oxfordshire, UK

tested only once at Donington in July 2012 by Rae Davis

15: David Cooke, Race & Road Cars Ltd, London, UK

restored by Twyman Racing in 2016
raced in historics

17: Richard Cook, UK

raced in historics

Period Race History:

	Thomas T Fleming USA			O/A	Class
04/12/59:	Governor's Trophy, Nassau, Bahamas - Prelim	#70	T.Fleming	9th	G - 2nd
04/12/59:	Governor's Trophy, Nassau, Bahamas - Main	#70	T.Fleming	22nd	G - 5th
06/12/59:	Nassau Trophy, Bahamas	#70	T.Fleming	24th	G - 1st
15/05/60:	Cumberland, SCCA National, USA	#70	T.Fleming	6th	EM - 3rd
29/05/60:	Bridgehampton, SCCA National, USA	#170	T.Fleming	6th	EM - 3rd
02/07/60:	Lime Rock, SCCA National, USA	#71	T.Fleming	5th	EM - 4th
07/08/60:	Montgomery, SCCA National, USA	#70	T.Fleming	3rd	EM - 1st
21/08/60:	Kentucky Louisville, SCCA National, USA	#72	T.Fleming	12th	EM - 4th
24/09/60:	Watkins Glen GP, USA	#236	J.Holmes	13th	EM - 6th
28/05/61:	Bridgehampton, SCCA National, USA	#70	T.Fleming	10th	EM - 3rd
	John Willock USA				
05/08/61:	Bridgehampton, SCCA National, USA	#236	W.Wonder	Rtd	EM
03/06/62:	Bridgehampton, SCCA National, USA	#75	J.Willock	14th	EM - 4th
10/06/62:	Vineland, SCCA Divisional, USA	#78	J.Willock	started	EM
30/06/62:	Lime Rock, SCCA National, USA	#78	J.Willock	13th	EM - 3rd

retired from competition

Pictures (For size reasons, we have limited the PDF-file to 10 pictures)