



very helpful: he said there were ways to make it work." The repairs were agreed and Max set to work, documenting each part of the process at Andrew's request. "He took a video of the body being separated from the chassis and that moment was horrendous to watch," Andrew laughs, "but it was tremendous to see all the work happening." Max also values his transparency. "I have a very open workshop – customers are always welcome to come in and see what's happening with their cars."

There was plenty to see as the Elan took shape, A new chassis and new bodyshell formed the central part of the rebuild, and both required extensive finishing work before they could be brought together. "The chassis comes with no mounting points," Max explains, "so it had to be fitted up with the body to have all the right holes drilled. At that point, I removed the chassis again to tap all those holes, before finally refitting it to the car."

His knowledge base was just as valuable when preparing the body. "It's not a job to be taken lightly. The new bodyshell comes without many of the holes needed; the hole for the gearlever, the clutch and brake master cylinders, the boot lock and all the wiring and pipe holes in the engine bulkhead had to be marked out and cut to the required size. The accuracy of their position and size is of the utmost importance to ensure everything fits and works correctly when the body is eventually fitted. That all took place before the body was painted and is a very time consuming part of the build." Both the

doors and the bootlid had survived the accident, so Max also invested time in refitting the originals to the new shell. Most mechanical parts have also been carried over: only the fuel tank and some suspension components required replacement.

"What really matters is the end result and Andrew being happy with his car," says Max, "though I think the whole rebuild has come out very well too." The Lotus expert is especially pleased with his work in the cabin, where the original dashboard, seats and controls have been joined by metres of fresh fabric. "I had to replace all the parts that are glued into position. That includes the carpets, all the sound deadening and the headlining. They're tricky parts to fit perfectly and I'm very proud of the result." Like an artist signing their masterpiece, he's even added a small Max500 plaque to the door sills. It's a subtle nod to the similar Bell & Colvill sticker the car wore when supplied to its first owner.

Countless workshop hours and ten months later, the Elan returned to the road in May this year. "The first drive was fantastic," Andrew smiles. "The Elan feels more together than it did before; everything is so tight and so right. My plan is to keep the Lotus until I can't get in and out any more!" Ripping through Ashdown Forest, the Sprint makes a compelling argument. The chassis shoulders into each corner in one fluid movement, the steering wheel barely deflected from the straight ahead, then the Twin Cam rips at the air to push the Lotus up and away. It's an experience Andrew has treasured for decades, come what may.



Lotus steel wheels fitted with knock-off spinners.

Lotus Elan Sprint

Chassis: Steel backbone chassis with fibreglass bodyshell.

Suspension: Double wishbones, coil springs and anti-roll bar front, Chapman struts with lower wishbones and coil springs rear.

Brakes: Girling discs with servo assistance, front and rear.

Engine: Lotus Twin-Cam inline-four, naturally aspirated, 1559cc, 126bhp at 6500rpm, 113lb ft at 5500rpm.

Wheels/tyres: 13x4.5in Lotus steel wheels finished in black with knock-off spinners throughout.

Interior: Original three-spoke steering wheel, controls, seats and polished wooden dashboard, period-fitted voltmeter mounted in dashboard, replacement carpets, sound deadening and headlining.

Exterior: Replacement Elan FHC Sprint bodyshell, original doors and bootlid, full respray in Pistachio Green over Cirrus White with gold bumpers and Elan Sprint gold decals.

I'D RECOMMEND...

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