



Dave's Lotus is better put together now than the day it left the factory.

“Getting recognition from the guys at the PV Show was superb — I couldn’t stop grinning all day!”



The speedo ‘only’ goes to 180 mph. Off-the-clock action ahoy.



Carlton styling has aged well.



although it looks black unless you catch it in the right light.

With the bodywork done, Dave focused on the details. “I painted the underneath three times with POR15, and sent the brake lines off to Goodridge so they could make me up a set with steel lines throughout,” he explains. “All the suspension was sent off to be bead-blasted and powder-coated — apart from the shocks, which were stripped and painted.”

In the meantime, Dave was busy on the engine. “I completely stripped the engine and found a blown head gasket on number six cylinder, which had leaked water into the pot and eaten into the bore,” he reveals. “A specialist engine builder said it could be overbored and sleeved without putting pressure on the other bores, so I was convinced that this was the way to go. The others were simply rehoned, had new rings, gaskets, pistons and were OK.”

Now more than a year and a half into the project, Dave was getting close to finishing — but then disaster struck. “Two weeks before Easter 2005, the old man’s workshop got burnt. I lost the whole engine, all the ancillaries, prop bellhousing, driveshafts, diff, front sub frames, airbox, the lot.” To make things worse, the back-up drivetrain he’d found at a scrap yard was also burnt. Gutted but not demoralised, Dave got straight back to it and tried to find

replacements. “There were rumours of brand-new engines in a crate somewhere at Vauxhall, but I could not find them — and other people wanted horrendous money for engines,” he says. “I went out and bought a left-hand drive with a good engine, brought it home, stripped it and, because I had all the bits I needed, rebuilt it.”

By now, another year had gone by and it was just about ready in time for the PV Show, which was literally the car’s first proper outing since Dave started the project three years earlier. “Just driving it there without a problem was reward enough, but getting recognition from the guys at the show was superb. I couldn’t stop grinning all day!” he beams.

Take a close look at Dave’s Lotus and you can see why so many thought it was the car of the show. It’s absolutely faultless, right down to the chromed nuts and bolts and flawless paint job — and although Dave never meant to go quite as nuts as he has restoring the ultimate Vauxhall, he’s glad he did. “The whole idea as I went along was that whenever I had to do something, I’d do it then. The last thing I wanted was to scrimp on something and find I’d have to do it later,” he says. Now all he’s got left to do is run it in properly before he really starts getting familiar with the awesome potential of this timeless king of saloons. ☉