

# *Lotus Elise*

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**Y**OU ONLY HAVE TO DRIVE AN Elise for a few miles to know that it's a different and wholly superior driving experience. It's the purity of the steering and braking that most engender this special feeling.

Whereas every other car (Caterham excepted) compromises steering feel in favour of power-assisted light weight, and a delicate and sensitive brake pedal in favour of minimal effort, the Elise remains single-minded. Power assistance is a no-no.

The steering is especially delicious. So free from friction, so perfectly proportional, so consistently weighted. Drive an Elise after an M3, an NSX or an AMG Benz – all of which have excellent power-booster systems – and you can feel the difference. It's condom-free motoring.

The car's light weight is the key. If it had a vast V6 or V8 engine and a sumptuous

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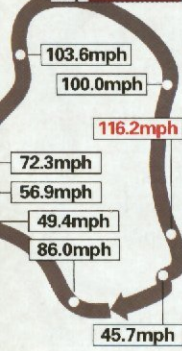


carpet- and leather-lined body to lug around, the makers would have had to poison the purity of its controls. But the Elise's bantamweight mass means that you need none of these things – nor do you need muscle to heave it about.

On the track, the Elise proves the easiest car in which to take fast corners flat-out. Its modest K-series power clearly helps here, but so does the excellent neutral-handling chassis. The brakes are brilliant – the best here. Again, low weight is the key.

There are a few failings. It is inclined to tail-out tantrums on the track in fast sweepers (the very last place you want them), especially in the wet. And the poor aerodynamics mean that, on the fast Thruxton back corners, the Elise darts around more than, say, an MGF. But that's about it. On the track, this car is very good. On the road, it is brilliant.

**CIRCUIT TIMES**  
Lap 1:34.24min



Sometimes the purity of a drive transcends accepted parameters. The Elise transcends