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Vauxhall Classics No. 10 – Lotus Carlton, 1990 to 1993

Published: 4th June 2020

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Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/vauxhall-classics-no-10-lotus-carlton-1990-to-1993/>



Few cars have created so much controversy as Vauxhall's 10th model in this series looking at significant vehicles from the company, through the decades...

The Lotus Carlton, celebrating its 30th anniversary this year – was a gift from heaven for the tabloid press, the writers, and even prompted debate in the Commons. But beyond the press furore was a car with impeccable credentials – and one with Ferrari-matching performance.

All information and photographs from Vauxhall.

VAUXHALL LOTUS CARLTON

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Nearly 70 years before Vauxhall's Lotus Carlton was launched, the company's top brass were being lauded for bringing the 100 mph 30-98 to market. But in 1989, Paul Tosch - Vauxhall's then Chairman and MD - was thrown on the defensive with the mainstream press when the Lotus Carlton became the world's fastest four-door saloon car, with a top speed of 176 mph.

Using GM's 3.6 litre straight-six, with the addition of two Garrett T25 turbochargers and twin water-cooled intercoolers, the Lotus Carlton produced a quite shocking 377 bhp and 419 lb.ft of torque, giving it its headline top speed (later found to be conservative) and acceleration to beat a Ferrari Testa Rossa.

Lotus Engineering was responsible for developing the LC's MacPherson strut front suspension and multi-link rear set-up, and the result was a superbly assured and blindingly fast GT of the highest order.

Only 286 Lotus Carltons were sold in the UK, the first of which rolled off Lotus's production line at Hethel 30 years ago. Its cost when new? £48,000.

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Technical Data:

Body: 4-door saloon

Engine: 6 cylinders in-line, twin-turbocharged

Engine Capacity: 3,615cc

Top Speed: 176 mph

0 - 62 mph: 5.4 seconds

Fuel Consumption: 17.5 - 35 mpg



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VAUXHALL MOTORS

They tell us:

Vauxhall Motors started making vehicles in the UK in 1903. Today, as the oldest and most familiar of Britain's automotive manufacturers, its philosophy is to build vehicles that are relevant to all. Vauxhall's two manufacturing plants in Ellesmere Port and Luton produced 206,000 cars and vans in 2018, and its sales accounted for nine per cent of the UK market.

Vauxhall has been a Groupe PSA brand since 2017. By 2024, each of its models will offer an electrified version, part of the company's **PACE!** plan to become sustainably profitable, global and electric. www.vauxhall.co.uk

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