

Lotus 33 – R11

The Lotus 33 was a development of the earlier Lotus 25. According to the designer Len Terry, “it was stronger, stiffer, lighter and simpler” and also “it was going to be a lot quicker”. Four of them were built for Team Lotus and they gradually became the mainstay of the Lotus Formula One team in 1964-5.

This car, designated R11 made its first appearance for practice at the 1965 Race of Champions at Brands Hatch. Its first actual race was the non-championship Syracuse Grand Prix which Jim Clark won after starting on pole position. He went onto race in R11 in a number of championship Grand Prix that year, clinching his second World Championship at the Nürburgring in August.

His most notable racing achievement in R11 was winning the British Grand Prix at Silverstone. After 60 of the 80 laps Jim had a 35 second lead but started to lose oil pressure in the corners. He reacted to this by switching off the oil pump in the corners before switching on at the exit and by making sure he roared past the pits to disguise his problem. In this way he managed to control the rate at which Graham Hill closed in, crossing the finishing line with a three second lead.

The criteria for Formula One changed in 1966 and Lotus only used the 33 on slower circuits like Monaco where a smaller engine was not a disadvantage. R11 was sold after the 1967 season and was raced for a short period before going into private hands. Until going on display here at the Jim Clark Motorsport Museum it has not been seen in public for about 50 years.

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