

THE FIRST 250,000 MILES

During a recent conversation with the Renault-Europa tech rep, Glenn Davis, he seemed kind of surprised to find out that I had put over a quarter of a million miles on my Series One Europa since I purchased it new in 1968. he suggested I chronicle some of the major milestones in my ownership of the car for possible interest of the Lotus Limited members.

Basically, the car is boring. It doesn't run hot, the electrical system is super and the fan motors all work, as does the wiper motor. The oil pressure is high, and, except for a few wear items, the car is original. However, here are some incidents in the car's life (which are all very true).

Minus 20 miles: May 1968. Ask mother to drive me to dealer to pick up new Lotus Europa 46-0491. Since totaled Healey is already there, she tells me to thumb.

Zero miles: Am one of eight people to receive delivery out of 20 or so wanting car. Refuse offers on the spot for \$5500 (\$1000 more than I paid), and have often regretted stupidity.

+50 miles: Show up at work during lunch hour in new Lotus. Besieged by office staff, including several beautiful young things. Sink into total embarrassment when I can't find reverse. Push the car backwards into space to tune of giggles.

+150 miles: Call salesman and tell him that *it* can be done in a Europa! He laughs so hard I hang up. Stop by showroom on the way home to show him bruised elbows. He still laughs.

+1000 miles: Drive car to Ohio to attend wedding. Get drunk and am stopped by police. Cop agrees to follow me to motel only if he drives Lotus; I follow in cruiser. No ticket.

+9000 miles: Car is three months old. Drive to Lime Rock to see races. Spend rest of time pulling people off car. Burn out rear wheel bearing on way home, but think this must be just a fluke.

+20,000 miles: Bruised elbows chronic and severe; must find new position. Burn out rear wheel bearing again; must be the cheap replacement.

+50,000 miles: Find girlfriend with apartment; elbows improving. Burn out wheel bearing and u-joints. Definitely problem is being caused by u-joint failure leading to bearing failure.

+100,000 miles: Decide to start using heavier grade motor oil, because the engines probably just broken in. At this same time, I feel that I could rev the engine a little higher.

+125,000 miles: Truck backs into left headlight. Damage minor, but big trucker calls me little bastard and calls car piece of s--- because he didn't see me. Fight averted when he finds out I'm good friends with his boss.

+130,000 miles: Next door neighbor backs into side of car with his tailgate down. Damage minor, but he says he finally has to tell me that anyone who owns one of those things has to be queer. I show him bruised elbows, but he doesn't understand.

+150,000 miles: The year of the accident. Stopped at red light in down town Lowell, Mass., and watching girl with beautiful "Hermes". Teenager plows into rear end. I scream, "What the hell are you doing?" He says, "Did you see the t--s on that?" I laugh, damage is minor, girl in nice Hermes comes over to see commotion and I drive her home. She wants to know what elbow pads are for.

+170,000 miles: Disaster! Clutch release bearing burns out. Replacement cost is \$22. Beginning to think car's not a good investment. Decide, since motor removed, to rebuild entire engine myself. Get married. Wind up in hospital after honeymoon. Rebuild takes two months. Only have two extra pieces left over. Engine runs super.

+200,000 miles: Thinking about trading for a Camaro SS. Dealer offers me \$500 for toy car. I tell him to sit on it. He does, right on roof, and laughs like hell. I tell him what SS stands for; he tells me to leave.

+210,000 miles: Loose carb linkage on Mass. Pike. Didn't need second barrel anyway.

+225,000 miles: See stock market report on growth of ball bearing company. Feel proud to have contributed to strong America in such a big way. Move to Portsmouth, New Hampshire and commute only one mile to work. Car should last forever!

+250,000 miles: Salt air in coastal N.H. likes frame in Lotus. Frame falls in love and goes to pieces. Series One #46-0491 currently undergoing top-to-bottom overhaul. Am shooting for another 250,000 miles. If only I could find out how to cure the wheel bearing problem.

EPILOGUE: When overhaul complete, car will be for sale. Got divorced when wife noticed new bruises on elbows. make offer or will swap for stock in bearing company. Call Dave (603) 431-4346 evenings.

- David Cordeau