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Happy Evora after

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MOT Review. Lotus Evora. Pic. Iain Gillespie The West Australian

Lotus has made its name on fast, lightweight sports cars with great handling aimed at those who like a raw and hard driving experience.

And while the Evora 400 fits this brief, it does also add something new: it's a Lotus you

can actually live with day-to-day.

Lotus has made the doorsills lower than on the preceding Evora S to make getting in and out easier and, while the interior is still sparse, there are some creature comforts: a reverse camera, touch-screen infotainment system and premium surfaces.

The test car also had a \$7499 Alcantara Pack to add to the interior's ambience, plus an \$899 cruise control for convenience. Yep, 900 clams for cruise control.

Really, there are two ways to look at it: either it's well short of what rivals in this pay bracket offer, such as the Porsche Cayman or even 911, or you could say the Evora still manages to offer the hardcore sports car interior many Lotus buyers want while making it a little easier to live with.



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Being a Lotus there are plenty of quirks, which again are rage-inducing annoyances or charming traits adding character. There is next to no rear visibility, which isn't aided by a driver wing mirror which doesn't angle out far enough and a passenger wing mirror obscured by the A-pillar.

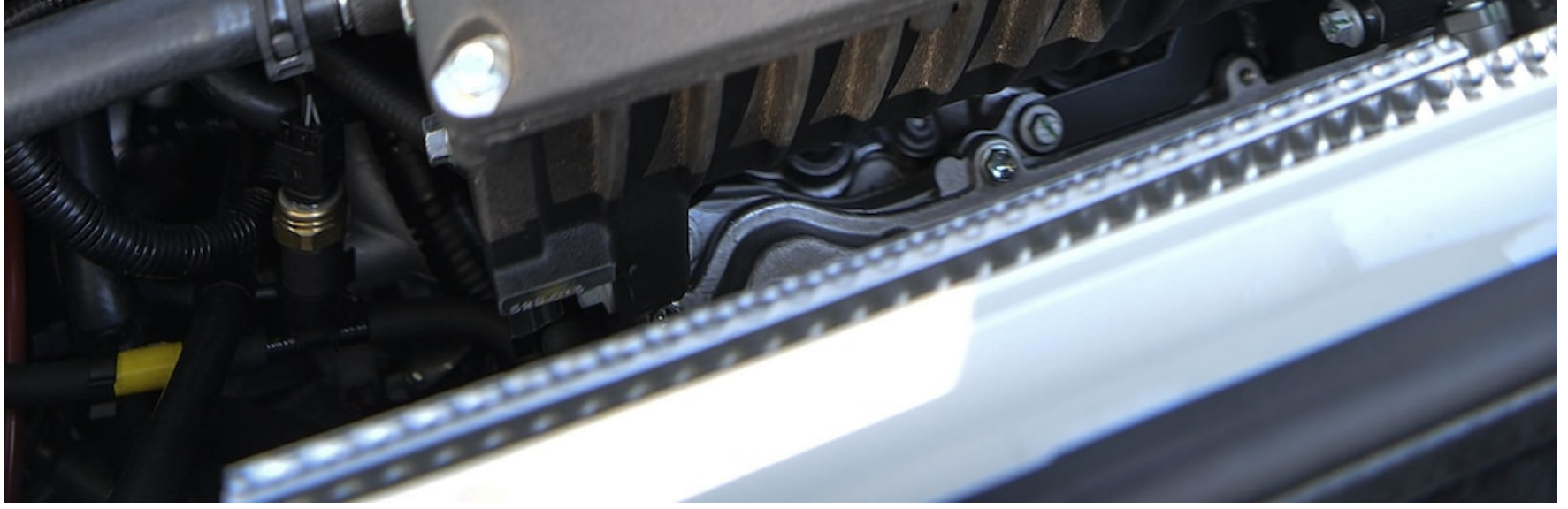
The low roof means those over 180cm will feel the need to hunch over to see, the

gearstick is in the way of the climate controls and the infotainment system is slow and cheap with a reverse camera with the definition of a 1984 VCR.

There's push-button start but only after you've already inserted and turned the key ... so it actually takes longer to start than a car without the feature.

But! Lotus has made some other changes which are definitely easy to love.





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The supercharged 3.5-litre V6 cranks out 298kW — up 41kW on the Evora S — despite the 1395kg dry weight being 42kg less. Also, the brakes are bigger and there's a limited-slip differential on the manual to help handle the power boost.

Press the start button (yes, after turning the key) and the Evora barks into life. Slipping it into sport mode sees the exhaust grow more angry and the engine response more immediate — and then you plant your foot.

Past 4500rpm or so the Evora 400 wails like a banshee. Like the best mid-engined cars, what makes it so enjoyable is how immersed you feel in what's going; in the Evora you can even see the throttle linkage moving about behind you as you put your foot down.

The lack of bonnet in your line of sight makes you feel like you're at the forefront of the action; like being on the first carriage on a rollercoaster.

The manual gearbox is superb: short throws which land with a satisfying clunk each time a gear's engaged.

The handling lives up to expectations. Even going into corners a bit hot, it really is point-and-go stuff, aided by a quality suspension which lets you know what's going on underneath you without feeling like you're going to have your fillings shaken loose.

It should be pointed out we didn't opt for the Race mode, which turns the traction control off — car makers and insurance companies don't appreciate you finding out the limits of a car on public roads.

Which brings us to a negative: the Evora 400 only really comes alive high in the rev range and with an engine that pulls this hard, you're up to legal speeds very quickly.



Past 4500rpm or so the Evora 400 wails like a banshee. Picture: Iain Gillespie

Picture: Picture: Iain Gillespie

Also, while the ride isn't as harsh as you'd expect and you can live with it day-to-day, we'd bet a lengthy road trip on coarse surfaces would become tiring very quickly.

So you really need to head to the track to enjoy this to its fullest, which raises the question of whether you're better off going for a rival with a nicer interior with equal performance for equal or less money.

VERDICT

A Lotus with everything you want from the brand but that you can also handle as a daily driver — though you need to head to the track to truly enjoy it and there's a lot of competition for the price.

LOTUS EVORA

Model Evora 400

Price \$191,477 (as tested \$221,828 drive-away)

Engine 3.5-litre supercharged V6 petrol

Outputs 298kW/410Nm

Transmission Six-speed manual

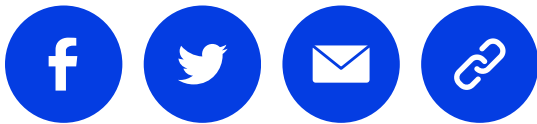
Thirst 9.7L/100km

0-100km/h 4.2 seconds

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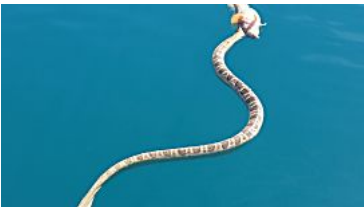
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