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Kev's 1963 example is the second oldest surviving Lotus Cortina Mk1 and has an impressive racing pedigree both sides of the Pond

**1964 AC COBRA 289 MKII FIA
1963 LOTUS CORTINA MK1**

OWNED BY KEVIN KIVLOCHAN
CLASSIC.CARS@BAUERMEDIA.CO.UK

“Frustrated by the Cobra's slow restoration, I bought a Lotus Cortina”



Showing the Cobra at Syon Park for the Salon Privé Concours d'Elégance at the end of June was a huge contrast to racing it at 170mph on Le Mans' Mulsanne

Straight a couple of weeks earlier: you get free-flowing champagne all day long without even having to be on the podium. While there I was lucky enough to meet Michael Fisher, who became the car's fourth owner in the late Seventies. He helped to fill in some of the gaps in its history – it was he who changed the colour from the original white to blue, so it was gratifying to hear him say it now looks the best he has ever seen it.

Three weeks after that I was back in action at the Cholmondeley Pageant of Power, but not with the Cobra. Frustrated with the slow

progress of the Cobra restoration, I bought a classic touring car last year: a 1963 Lotus Cortina. Not just any old Cortina, but the first Team Lotus works car, the 17th built and now believed to be the second oldest surviving Lotus Cortina in the world – the oldest is the one Bruce Reynolds used as a getaway car in the Great Train Robbery of 1963.

Mine was the first Lotus Cortina to race, with Jack Sears taking a class win and third overall behind two Ford Galaxies at the Oulton Park Gold Cup meeting in 1963. A week later it was raced by Jim Clark to third at Snetterton.

For the 1964 season it was sent to the USA as part of the English Ford Line (the factory Ford USA team), to be raced by many of the big names: Dan Gurney, Sir John Whitmore, Bob Tullius, Peter Arundell, Trevor Taylor and Chuck Parsons, at tracks including Sebring, Daytona, Riverside, Pensacola and Elkhart Lake.

The Cortina is a car that people can really relate to and it proved very popular at Cholmondeley. Comments ranged from 'My dad had one of these' to 'I saw Jimmy race one at Oulton'. Truly fantastic enthusiasm.

I got another chance meeting relating to the Cobra too. Brian Classic, its third owner, introduced himself and put a photo in my hand showing the car in its Angolan specification – another piece of the jigsaw. Classic bought it in the late Seventies from Keith Schellenberg, who raced it at the Angolan Grand Prix in 1965.

The Cortina wasn't left out of the history trawl either. I met Andy Middlehurst, who

re-imported it from the USA in the early Nineties. He showed me a book with a photo of the car with a red flash instead of the traditional green, taken when it was raced in the USA in 1965 by Peter Feistmann and Jak McLaughlin.

I took a photo of the book's front cover on my iPhone and popped over to Chater's stand to buy a copy, only to be told by the assistant: 'Sorry, we sold the last one at the Festival of Speed. It's out of print and I doubt you'll get one.' Then his colleague bent down to the bottom shelf, pulled out a book and said: 'Looking for one of these? £20.' I didn't even haggle. What a piece of luck.



Kev (left) meets Michael Fisher, fourth owner of the Cobra

NEED TO KNOW

1963 Lotus Cortina Mk1

Miles this month 10 Costs £680 Time owned One year
Engine 1558cc, in-line four-cylinder Power 170bhp @ 7000rpm Performance Top speed: 140mph; 0-60mph: 7sec

NEED TO KNOW

1964 AC Cobra 289 MkII FIA

Miles this month 80 Costs £1200 Time owned Nine years
Engine 4727cc, V8 Power 409bhp @ 6500rpm
Performance Top speed: 170mph; 0-60mph: sub-5sec