

Dailysportscar - Catching Up With.... Nicola Scimeca

The DSC Editor caught up with the lead designer on the new Lotus Evora GT2 on Saturday evening at Le Mans – first visual impressions of the car had been very positive, a world away from the road car based GT4 version of the little Lotus with more carbon fibre than the average spaceship and clear evidence of a vehicle that has been designed for racing, quick release major body panels and aircraft grade mechanicals.



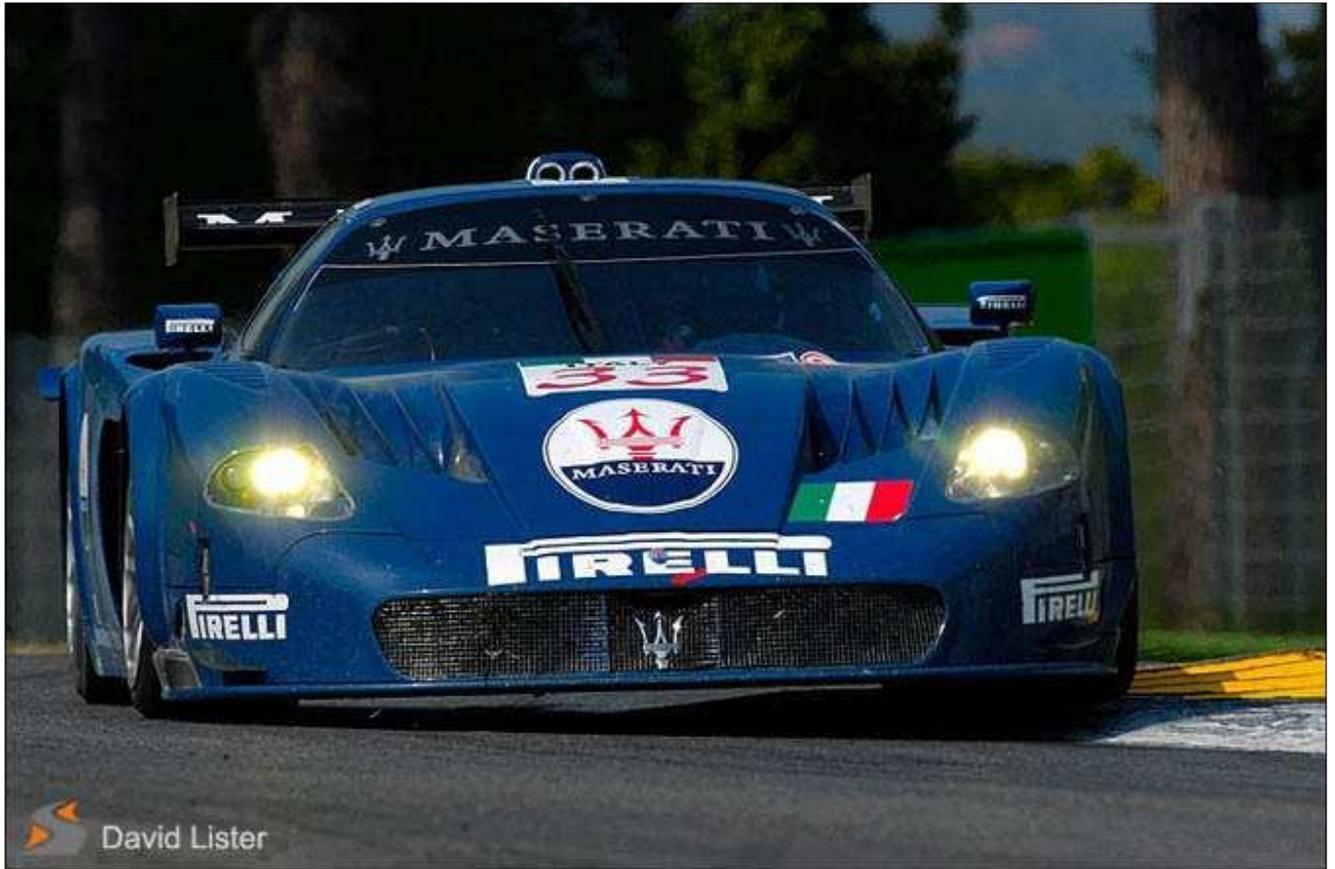
After bumping into Gavan Kershaw (left) earlier in the day – known to DSC readers as Lotus’s ride and handling guru and a nifty race driver in his own right – Gav is now the Technical manager of Lotus Motorsport and he walked us briefly around the car before introducing us to Nicola Scimeca, a familiar name, and a significant one in modern GT racing.

Previously with the ALMS, IRL and Audi Sport, Scimeca and his business partner, ex Dallara composite engineering genius Marco Saccone formed the Ycom consultancy in 2008.

Together their racing CV’s are hugely impressive – Scimeca alone was project leader on the Dallara World Series and Indy Lights single seaters before taking on the Chief Designer role for the Maserati MC12 – There’s little surprise

then that Lotus Motorsport’s Claudio Berro, the ‘father’ of the MC12 GT1 project turned in this direction to commission the Lotus factory’s most ambitious endurance racer yet.





The partner companies behind Ycom have worked alongside truly world class endurance racing programmes, collaborating (with Dallara) on every major racing Audi since the R8, designing and building the short lived but gorgeous Epsilon Euskadi LMP1 and designing the chassis of the 2005 Hybrid Pescarolo that very nearly took overall honours at Le Mans.



"You would normally be looking for around 10 months as a lead in to design a new GT car – The Evora was done in just 5 months from the first conversation with Claudio (Berro) in mid October last year."

"When Claudio first outlined the challenge I told him no way but then we did what people in the industry always do and got to work – At the peak in design work just before Christmas we had 18 people working just on the design alone."

"The chassis and mechanicals were built at Hethel and then the car was shipped to us – We spent three weeks on final design and build here before taking the car back to Hethel where there was a further month of assembly, building two cars in parallel."



"That adds several levels of complexity but that was the brief. We have arrived here with three cars-worth of spares on the bodywork front."

"This is a world away from the Evoras you have seen so far – as for carry over of parts – well I think the safety belts are the same as the GT4 car but I'm struggling to think of anything else!"

"It's been very hard work but to work with Lotus, a factory with a lot of history but who are learning about motorsport at this level all over again, has been fascinating."



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"They have a lot of very good people, including Gavan and his team and their mechanical knowledge is excellent."

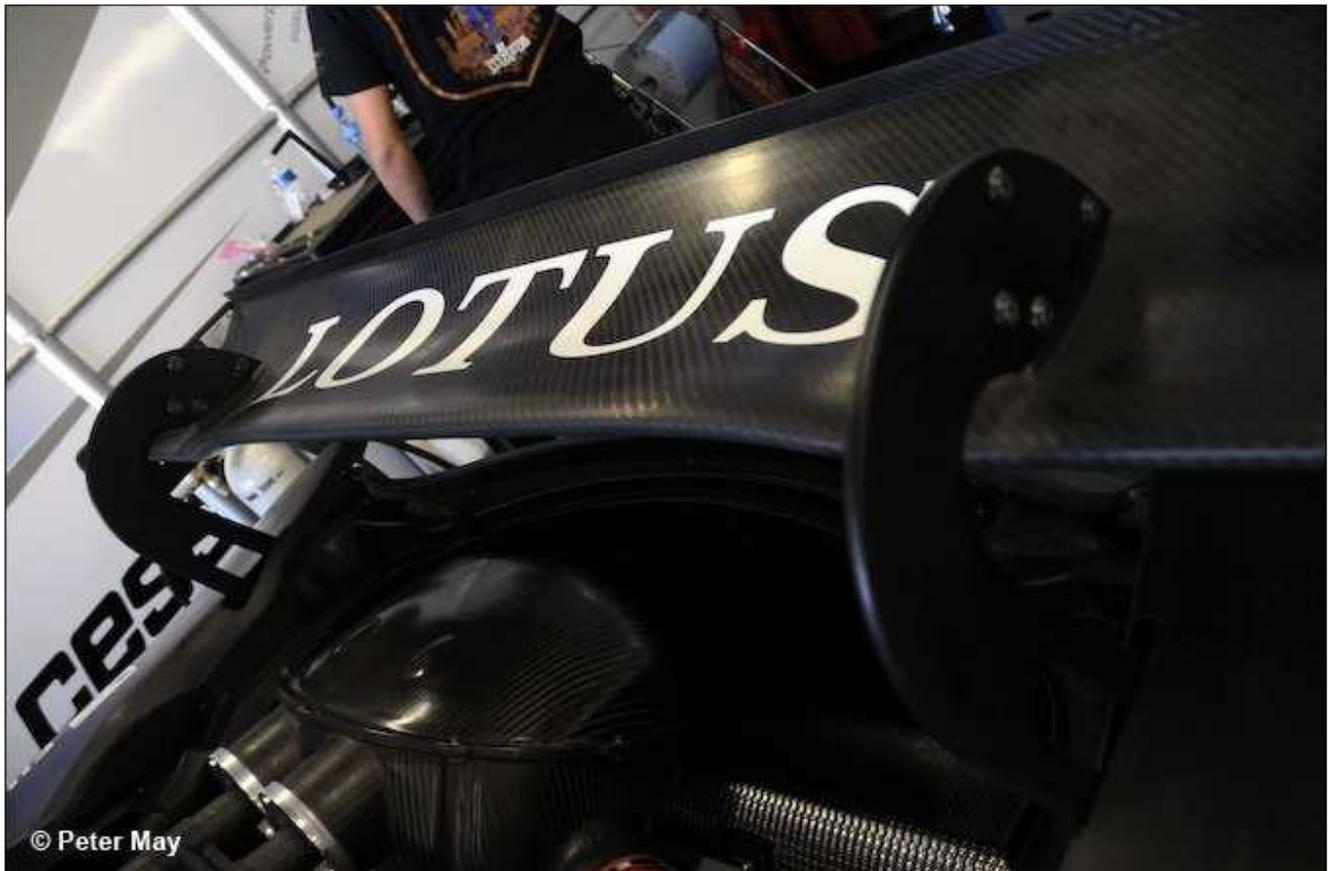
"Early tests with the car were very good indeed, no major issues at all despite pushing very hard to find some! The first car has completed around 1500 km of running before this weekend but the other car is very new."

"Our major concern moving forward is the level of power – Many GT2 cars are based on road cars with 500-600 bhp which they then have to restrict down to around 480. We are starting from a basis of a road car with 280 bhp and tuning it up to the same basic level. We'll see where we are both in terms of straight line speed and reliability soon enough! We haven't opted to ask the ACO for any waivers – yet!!"





"The timescales have been very challenging but from the start Lotus made it clear this was required to deliver two cars capable of racing at Le Mans." (which meant that Spa was the real racing deadline)



“Be in no doubt that this is a serious programme with serious commitment from the factory – They have an ongoing commitment through us to developing the car – This is only the start!”



We've seen the cars close up and need little convincing – The proof of the pudding will be in the car's reliability and later, in their pace. There has been serious resource and serious brainpower applied to the task here – and we think it deserves to succeed.

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