

BUILD AYRTON SENNA'S

LOTUS RENAULT 97T

Ayrton Senna

27



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ORIGINAL VERSION

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Formula 1 chronicles

The start of the 1986 Formula 1 season saw the debut of the new Lotus 98T with a six-speed gearbox



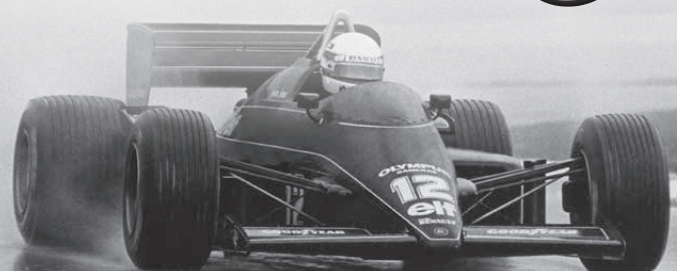
Life of an idol

Promoted to number one driver at Lotus, Ayrton wielded his influence by opposing the idea of hiring Derek Warwick as his teammate



Assembly

Left bank air intake system



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THE LOTUS 98T

An updated classic

Designed by Gérard Ducarouge, Ayrton Senna's new car for the 1986 season featured a six-speed gearbox

Great expectations:
Ayrton Senna and his
teammate Johnny Dumfries
with the new Lotus 98T



On January 12, 1986, Ayrton Senna landed in Rio de Janeiro for the start of the Formula 1 season's first practice sessions. His car had arrived four days earlier, but it had suffered an accident at the airport, when it broke free from the tow truck and plummeted nose-first to the ground.

When asked if the mishap would lead to mechanical issues, the Brazilian replied with good humor: "Since the car withstood all the bumps I gave it last year, a little tumble won't harm it. It has already proven it is incredibly sturdy."

Nevertheless, that was not the model that the designer Gérard Ducarouge had been working on. Ayrton Senna's new car for the 1986 season, the Lotus 98T, would feature a six-

speed gearbox. It would arrive in Rio de Janeiro about three weeks later, in early February, when the car was unveiled to the press on the scorching asphalt of Jacarepaguá. Once again boasting the eye-catching black-and-gold color scheme of the John Player Special sponsorship, the car was a natural

evolution of the 97T – it featured an enhanced version of the previous Renault V6 engine, and it pleased Senna during initial tests.

There were two significant differences compared to the previous version. The first was in response to new regulatory changes, which saw a reduction in the fuel tank size, which now had a maximum capacity of 195 liters (51.5 gallons) as opposed to the 220 liters (58.1 gallons) permitted in 1985. The second

The Lotus 98T was the team's last model sporting the iconic John Player Special black-and-gold livery



High-flying: Senna's first tests in the Lotus 98T gave him a great deal of hope

difference was the introduction of a new six-speed gearbox, replacing the previous five-speed version. This was a positive development, as declared by Ayrton in an interview published by *Folha de S.Paulo* on February 19, 1986: "The car's performance has improved significantly compared to last year."

NEWS DIGEST

The first race of the year, the Brazilian Grand Prix, was scheduled for March 23. There, motorsport fans could for the first time see some of the stars of Formula 1 in their new teams. Keke Rosberg had left Williams for McLaren; Elio de Angelis had moved from Lotus to Brabham; and, in what was perhaps the biggest news of the season, Nelson Piquet, after winning two World Titles with Brabham, would now race for Williams, alongside Nigel Mansell.

Commentators were almost unanimous in viewing the favorites as Williams, a team that had been on the rise since the end of 1985 when Mansell and Rosberg won the last three races of the season. Its latest model, the FW11 with an exclusive Honda engine, proved during the first tests of the year to be even faster than the previous car.

Winner of the Drivers' and Constructors' World Championships in the two previous years, Ron Dennis' McLaren arrived with its MP4/2C model, the latest in a line of successful cars; it meant that the team would be challenging at the top once again. The presence of then World Champion Alain Prost and the super-quick Keke

Rosberg further reinforced that status – even if Prost struggled to detach himself from the limelight. "Of course I will do my best to win a second consecutive World Championship, but, without a doubt, McLaren seems to be coming to the end of a successful period, while Williams is on the rise," the Frenchman contextualized in early February.

Among the possible surprises for the year, the biggest was the Brabham BT55. Gordon Murray's project was considered to be revolutionary car – with a wedge-shaped body and a lower center of gravity than other models, it allowed the driver to drive almost lying down. The car had an exclusive BMW engine, but it had so many problems at the beginning of the year that its true performance capabilities were still unknown.

TIME WILL TELL

And where did Lotus stand in the 1986 Championship fight? A confident Ayrton Senna offered his perspective as reported in *O Globo* on February 2: "I can assure you that I am one who is in with a shout of winning the Title. But the battle for the it will be the same for everyone, as there is a lot of top secret information among the teams and no one knows how each car is prepared for the season. As for the drivers, no change at all; it's the machine that changes. It's only after four or five races that a more detailed analysis can be made."

So, fans had to wait for the first green light to see how the season would begin.



LOTUS' TOP GUN

Ayrton's new role as team leader

Now Lotus' number one driver, Ayrton Senna objected to the team hiring Derek Warwick, so rookie Johnny Dumfries was signed as the second driver

As the 1985 season came to its conclusion, speculation about Ayrton Senna's future in Formula 1 began to intensify. Rumors of a move to Brabham gained strength after the Brazilian hitched a ride on the helicopter of declared fan, Bernie Ecclestone, at the end of the Austrian Grand Prix. Subsequently, the Italian press reported that Enzo Ferrari's desire to secure Senna's services led the *scuderia* to heavily invest in trying to sign the Championship sensation.

Ayrton still had one year left on his Lotus contract, but Peter Warr acted swiftly to thwart the competition. In London on September 10, the team boss announced that Senna would be Lotus' number one driver for the following season — publicly granting the Brazilian the coveted position he desired: "Ayrton Senna is a driver of exceptional talent. In my opinion, he stands on the same level as Jim Clark and Jackie Stewart."

With this announcement, Elio de Angelis, who had already been feeling sidelined due to Senna's impressive results,

was effectively pushed aside. Behind the scenes, the Italian had even begun receiving offers from other teams.

Peter Warr already had a replacement in mind: Derek Warwick, a talented, experienced, and British driver, as preferred by the sponsors, John Player Special. Ironically, despite possessing such admirable qualities, Warwick was prevented from becoming a Lotus driver in 1986.

OPEN RACE

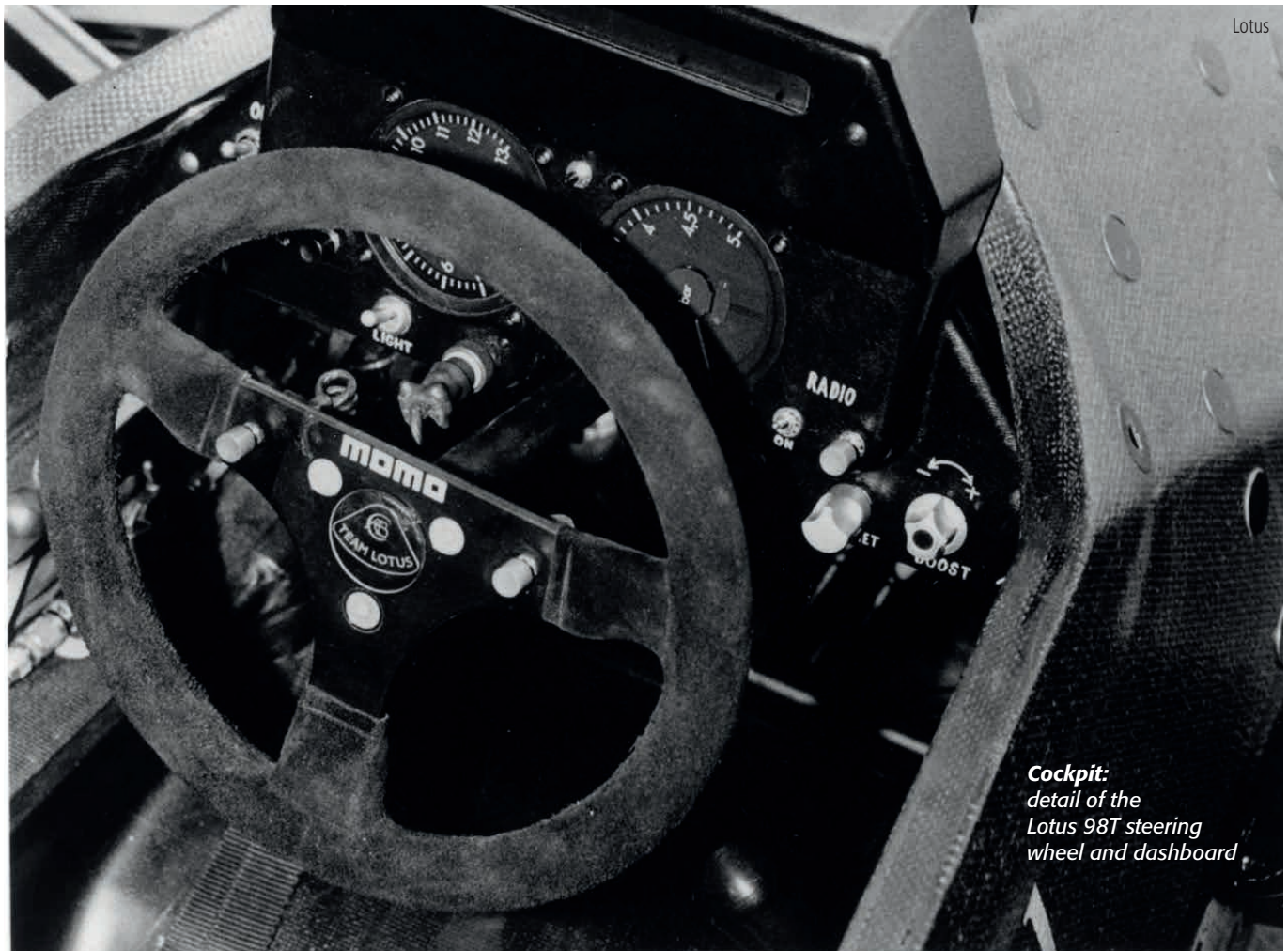
"I did object to Derek Warwick as my second driver. I don't have personal objections against him, but I don't believe a driver with such a rich Formula 1 heritage should be subjected to being a team's second driver," declared Senna, as reported in *O Globo* on February 1, 1986. "At first, he might accept the situation, but I am certain that in the near future, he would cause problems. And I already have enough on my plate."

Senna's frank views drew a torrent of criticism from the outraged British press, including former driver James



"Lotus had a formal commitment to dedicate full effort to me this year. The inclusion of another competent driver would undermine that effort"

Ayrton Senna



Cockpit:
detail of the
Lotus 98T steering
wheel and dashboard

The new Lotus driver Johnny Dumfries had won the British Formula 3 Championship in 1984, a year after Senna's victory in the British Formula

Hunt, who claimed that by rejecting his colleague, the Brazilian was effectively expressing his lack of faith in his own talent. Displaying great composure, Senna clarified that his concern was not Warwick's competition but rather the allocation of the team's resources: "What nobody has mentioned is that Lotus had a formal commitment to dedicate its full effort to me this year," he argued on February 12. "The addition of another competent driver would dilute that effort."

A NOBLE CHOICE

Brazilian Mauricio Gugelmin, the British Formula 3 Champion in 1985 and a personal friend of Ayrton, was briefly considered for Lotus' second car. However, given the circumstances, Peter Warr could not entrust the car

to a non-British driver. Hence, the Scottish driver Earl John Colum Crichton-Stuart, the seventh Marquess of Bute – but known in the motorsport world as Johnny Dumfries – was selected... with Ayrton's approval.

"I know Dumfries well; we competed in the British Formula 3 together in 1983. He is now getting a fantastic opportunity in Formula 1. We have a good relationship, and his contribution to the team will be valuable in the car's development," assured the Brazilian at the beginning of February before departing for France, where he would begin testing the Lotus for the start of the 1986 season. "He is a young man with great enthusiasm, whom we will meet in Marseille. However, he will need to temper the natural excitement that comes with entering Formula 1."



LEFT BANK AIR INTAKE SYSTEM

PARTS

27A



27B



27C



27D



27E



27F



27G



DP



27A Left bank air intake chamber 1

27B Left bank air intake chamber 2

27C Left bank air intake hose 1

27D Left bank air intake hose 2

27E Air intake sensor

27F Fuel return line 1

27G Fuel return line 2

DP Screws 1.7 x 4 mm, 4 pcs*

Publisher's note: the finish of the parts in the pictures may differ from the parts enclosed in this issue. This in no way affects either the product quality or the assembly instructions.

* Including spares



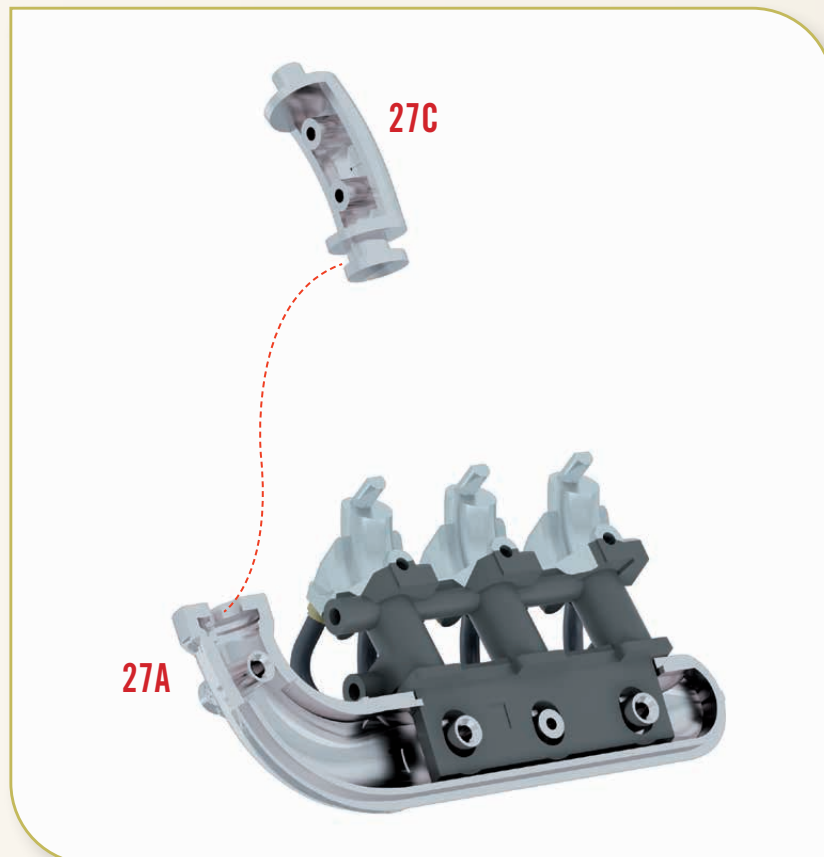
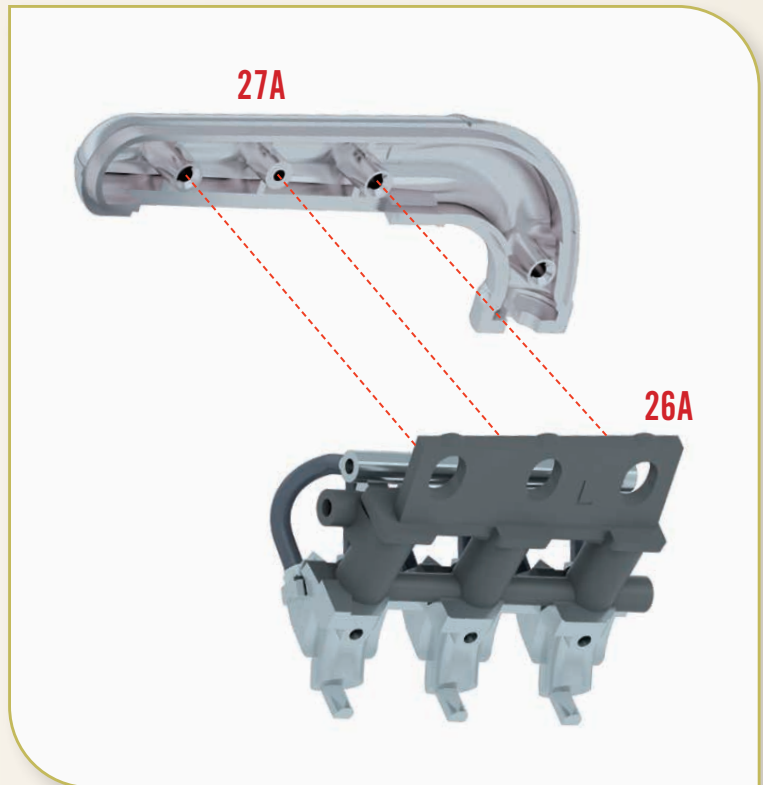
Left bank air intake system

BEFORE STARTING

Make the necessary checks to identify each of the parts. Read all the steps beforehand to get an idea of what to do during assembly.

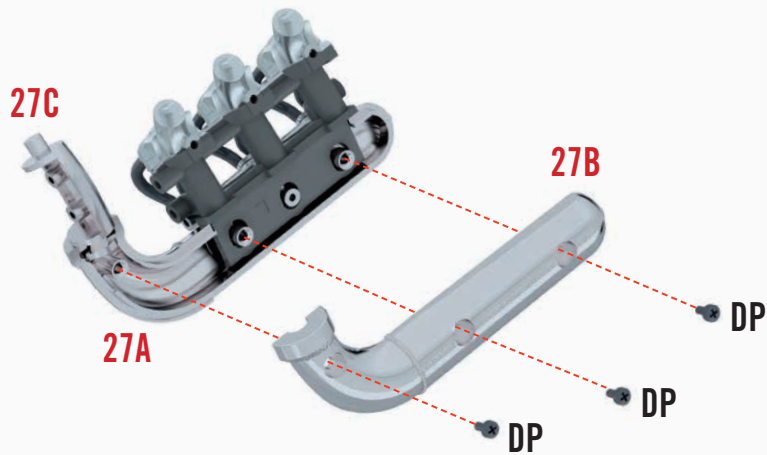
STEP 27-1

Retrieve the assembly from the previous issue and place the three pivots on the inside of the left bank air intake chamber 1 **27A** through the three highlighted holes on the left bank intake manifold **26A**.



STEP 27-2

Slot the protruding end of the left bank air intake hose 1 **27C** into the semicircular indent on the left bank air intake chamber 1 **27A**.

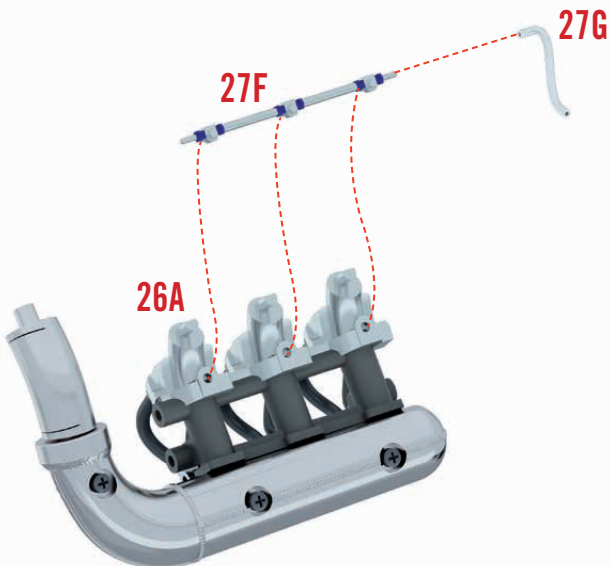
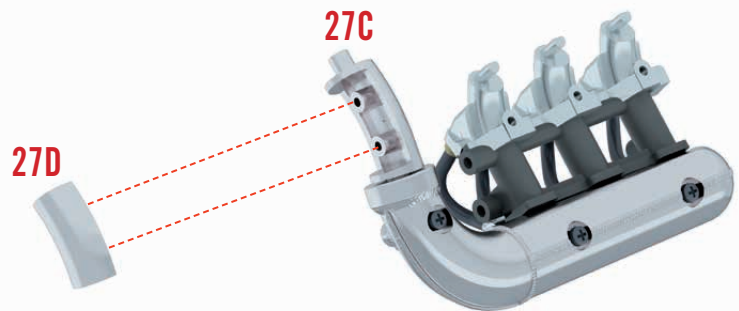


STEP 27-3

Carefully refer to the image, then attach the left bank air intake chamber 2 **27B** to the left bank air intake chamber 1 **27A** and the left bank air intake hose 1 **27C**. Secure the parts with three **DP** screws.

STEP 27-4

Connect the left bank air intake hose 2 **27D** to both pivots on the left bank air intake hose 1 **27C**.



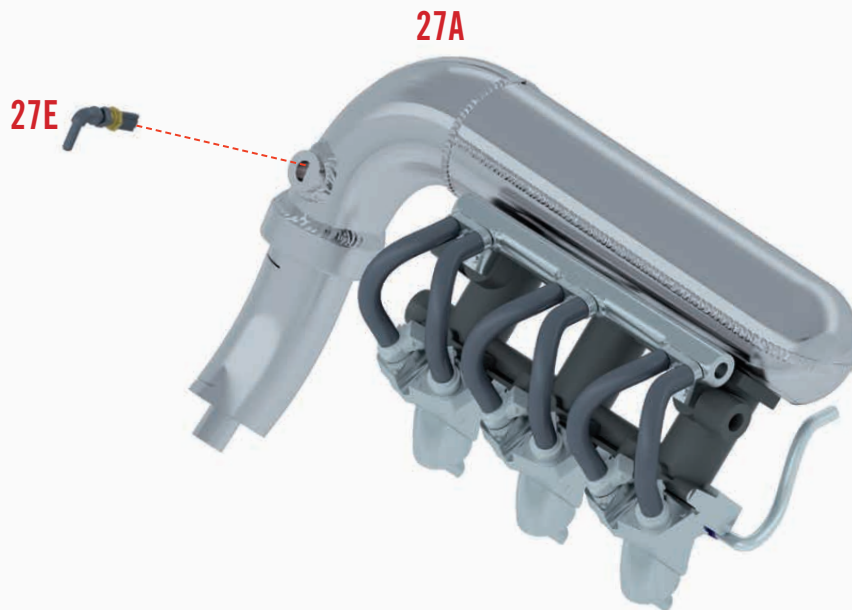
STEP 27-5

Insert one end of the fuel return line 2 **27G** into the end of the fuel return line 1 **27F**. Then insert the three pivots on the fuel return line 1 **27F** into the three holes on the left bank intake manifold 1 **26A**.



STEP 27-6

Finally, insert the semicircular end of the air intake sensor **27E** into the semicircular hole in the left bank air intake chamber 1 **27A**.



FINAL ASSEMBLY

This is the image of the set of parts that we have assembled in this issue:





