

11th

LOTUS ELISE SC
LAP TIME 65.3 SECS
(12th fastest)



PERFORMANCE CAR OF THE YEAR

CATERHAM SUPERLIGHT R500

PRICE TOTAL AS TESTED	£36,995 £38,695
ENGINE CAPACITY	2.0-litre 4cyl
POWER	263bhp at 8,500rpm
TORQUE	240Nm at 7,200rpm
KERBWEIGHT	506kg
0-60MPH TOP SPEED	2.9 secs 150mph

TRACK	★★★★★
ROAD	★★★
DESIRABILITY	★★★

NO Performance Car of the Year test would be complete without the most instantly recognisable track star of them all. This year's new Caterham is the most potent the firm has ever built. A 2.0-litre Ford engine might not sound particularly exciting, but when it's tuned to produce 263bhp in a car weighing only 506kg, the result is like throwing a match into a box of fireworks.

Even getting into the Superlight R500 is an event. You'll need your narrowest shoes to have any chance of pressing only one pedal at a time, while you can forget comfort. With a 520bhp-per-tonne power-to-weight ratio, grappling with the tiny Momo wheel and shifting the minute gearstick isn't for the faint-hearted. At least buyers can specify a windscreen and hood to keep out the weather.

On the road, the sheer volume of the side-exit exhaust must be numbed with ear plugs, while making the most of the Caterham's pace on the track is a white-knuckle ride. Some couldn't help but grin when driving – others could only grimace. The R500 is totally single minded in its pursuit of pace, but we prefer the more accessible thrills of the basic Roadsport version.



12th
CATERHAM
SUPERLIGHT R500
LAP TIME 60.1 SECS
(2nd fastest)