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Elise to make debut in '98

THE Lotus Elise will be marketed in Malaysia by early next year, Proton officials said yesterday.

Expected to be priced at around RM160,000 for the locally manufactured model, marketing for the Asia Pacific and production of the sports car will be handled by a new company called Lotus Asia Pacific.

Lotus Asia Pacific, a joint-venture company between sports car manufacturer Lotus and national car manufacturer Proton, will operate a production line at Proton's Shah Alam plant.

Proton owns the British sports car manufacturer.

The national car manufacturer, which acquired Lotus last year, plans to eventually produce 1,500 units a year.

Three units have already been built at the Shah Alam plant, Proton chief executive officer Tengku Mahaleel Tengku Ariff told reporters in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The 1,800 cc two-seater is currently on display at the Third Malaysia Capital Growth Opportunities Exposition in the DRB-HICOM pavilion.

Meanwhile, DRB-HICOM chairman Datuk Saleh Sulong dismissed rumours that Mokhzani Mahathir is interested in acquiring a stake in Lotus.

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