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Hurry - Sale Must End Soon!

There would appear to be three main types of sale in your local shopping centre - the genuine once a year stock clearance, the bi-monthly, slightly suspicious mark down as practised by Debenhams and the permanent, totally bogus 50% off sale which MFI specialises in. Does anybody really believe they ever sell their kitchens at full price?

As you may have noticed, there is a teensy-weensy oversupply problem amongst the slot-car manufacturers at the moment and giant clearance sales are becoming the norm rather than the exception. Fly are quite obviously in the midst of a major panic - changing/adding distributors and offloading stock, particularly in Spain, at very low prices. Carrera also seem to have a problem as large numbers of their cars are being sold at £12 - £15 which would indicate a trade price around the £8 mark. My local Co-op department store has been selling current SCX items for less than half price and the UK distributorship has recently changed hands. Even Scalextric are not immune to the current round of price cutting - at the recent Milton Keynes swapmeet there was a good supply of "Challenger" cars at around half price and the three car GT40 set at less than £70.

On the face of it all good news for us but beware - manufacturers don't slash prices to this extent unless they are in serious trouble. I believe the long threatened shake-out is nearly with us and our current wonderful choice of items is about to be severely curtailed. At the very least slot-car buyers are liable to get into an MFI mindset, expect 50% off to be the going rate and delay buying new product until they can get a "bargain". I can't remember the last time that MFI made anything other than a multi-million pound loss!

And Finally - a classic quote from last month's Goodwood Revival: "I am looking for my husband." "What is he wearing?" "A tweed sports jacket, collar and tie, grey flannel trousers and a flat cap." "Well that narrows the field down to about 30,000 then!"

Till next month

Brian



by
Rob Smith



MESSAGES FROM MARGATE

This month's new releases have a very single seated theme with five modern F1 cars and the much anticipated Ferrari 156. With McLaren's, Renaults, Toyotas and Ferraris Hornby are covering the front of the grid well. They are not idle elsewhere however and there is exciting news from Japan.

Modern F1

**C2676 Ferrari F1 2004 No 2 and
C2677 Ferrari F1 2004 No1**

The most demanded modern F1 car is always the Ferrari and Hornby's licence agreement with Ferrari and Mattel is now bearing fruit. Schumacher and Barrichello's cars from the 2004 season are now available in the standard versions. C2677A should be out soon too. They feature all of the latest innovations and the printing is excellent on the perfect shade of Ferrari red.

**C2667 McLaren Mercedes F1
MP4-16 No10 and C2668 No9**

The latest McLaren's are reliveries of the existing model but have been updated with a



revised chassis carrying the new guide system and the smaller motor. Disappointingly they don't feature the strange horns protruding from the airbox of this season's cars.

**C2649 Renault F1 2005
Team Spirit No5**

Perfectly timed to witness Alonso win this year's world championship is a Renault relivity in this year's colours.



**Classic Grand Prix
C2640A Ferrari 156 F1 1961
"Phil Hill"**

Everyone who saw this new model launched at the Goodwood Revival Meeting agreed that this is the best Scalextric car ever. The detail is fantastic, especially the air intakes and the suspension, and the colour is just perfect. The car is very small giving all sorts of problems for the designers when trying to fit in the necessary bits to make it move. The driver is hollow to enable the motor to stick into his back and ➔

there is no room for the Sport Digital chip. The first release is in the limited edition Goodwood branded Sport boxes which are sure to sell out very quickly.

DTM

C2684 Opel Vectra GTS V8 DTM Laurent Aiello and C2685 Peter Drumbreck

These two Vectras are only available in the German market but are well worth finding and several UK suppliers are stocking them. The C2684 car is finished in a glossy black decorated with the white Playboy design and the bunny logo. The C2685 car is fabulously finished in Valvoline colours and really shows just how fine decoration on modern Scalextric cars can be.



Japan

Very exciting news is emerging from Japan where Hornby have formed an alliance with Takara Toys which is one of Japan's biggest toy producers. Takara have designed the cars themselves with lots of input from Hornby and are licensing all of the other technologies from them including Sport Digital. Initially there will be three cars, each with two liveries but more are planned for next year. The first ones are the Toyota Supra, Honda NSX and Nissan 350Z from the JGTC Championship. In Japan they will be branded as Takara Scalextric QuattroX. Time will tell if they will be available elsewhere in the world. They should be in the (Japanese) shops before Christmas.

Visit www.takaratoys.co.jp/quattrox for more details and some images and look out for more news in the forthcoming months.

Buildings

The new range of buildings were on display at Goodwood in their final forms and they look very good too. They are made of plastic and are modern designs. There are three of them, a control tower, grandstand and pit. All have a border at the front allowing them to be clipped on to the track edges and the pit garage has slots in the base so that the cars sit properly. I wonder if there will be a SportDigital version so that the cars can be driven out of the garage onto the track. The Grandstand is very modern and looks great – but contains no spectators. Several people at Goodwood made the joke that an

empty grandstand and only four cars racing must have meant they were at the US Grand Prix.

Coming Soon

Lots of new product is still expected before Christmas and we have some exciting new items to look forward to. The P4 is with Ferrari in Italy at the moment for final approval and the McLaren Mercedes SLR is at the first test shot from the mould stage. One car dropped from the expected range is C2645, the Red Bull liveried Skoda. Apparently the licence was not forthcoming from Red Bull. ■



This month has to be one of the most exciting this year in terms of Ninco releases. A totally new Raid vehicle is launched hot on the tail of last month's Toureg, a fantastic livery for the final NSX scheduled for this year and news of the limited edition 2005 Catalunya Rally car. To accompany the cars, the ProRace range of racing components finally arrive in our stores and a new electronic controller is introduced. However, the exclusive scoop this month must be the launch of the Pro-Race *Rally* and Pro-Race *GT* "kits". Intrigued? Well, read on...

Dakar Evolution

When the Ninco catalogue was released at the Nuremberg Toy Fair in February this year, an un-numbered Mitsubishi Pajero EVO was pictured leaping over a sand dune during testing for the 2005 Dakar Rally. "This is the best looking *Raid* car yet", I thought, and it was promptly added to my wish list. This exclusive first picture of the Ninco model (50392) shows the number 320 car of Spanish driver Joan 'Nani' Roma and French co-driver Henri Magne. Roma won the bike category the previous year so was very happy to finish sixth overall with his first ➤



attempt at the rally on four wheels. The bright orange, red and white livery are from chief sponsor "Repsol", one of the top ten oil companies in the world. The 2005 Dakar Rally began in Barcelona, the home of Ninco, and included fifteen competitive sections in five countries. This rally saw Mitsubishi make history by becoming the first team to win five consecutive Dakar Rallies. As with all Ninco Raid cars, ProShock suspension, drop-down ProArm guide, big chunky tyres and a powerful NC-7 motor are fitted as standard.

Golden Wonder

Ninco's JGTC line up for this year is completed with the team M-TEC Honda NSX (50387) issued in a stunning gold, red and black livery. The no.16 car competing in the GT300 class of the 2004 season was driven by Tetsuya Yamano (*who also drove the no.15 Amprex sponsored BMW in 2003*) and Hiroyuki Yagi. The familiar NSX chassis houses an angle-winder NC-5 motor, removable super magnet and 32:12 crown and pinion.

Super Throttle

Development of the new electronic hand controller is now complete and Ninco bring to the market the N-Tronic throttle. Using the built-in digital display and push buttons, the throttle can be programmed to accommodate various strength magnets and motors as well as allowing the racer to tailor the throttle response to their own individual driving style. Adjustable brakes, dual polarity and turbo-boost are additional key features. It is also fully compatible with the Scalextric "Sport" system and can be easily adapted for use on club circuits. So if you want to upgrade your controller... this is what you've been waiting for!

Mobile Workshops

The hot news this month is Ninco's launch of ProRace Rally and ProRace GT sets for the serious racer as well as those who like to experiment. Each kit includes the following:- a complete body, fully painted, assembled and ready to mount on a chassis; a plain white,

unassembled body with all necessary interior and exterior components; a chassis fitted with a ProRace NC-6 motor, four pairs of lightweight ProRace wheel hubs (large and small), highly detailed brake disc and wheel inserts, four pairs of tyres (treaded and slick), interchangeable ProRace crown and pinion gears, ProRace axles, guide and braid, Allen tool and, for the Rally set, interchangeable suspension and 4WD system. All of these components are neatly stored in a robust plastic carry case - red of course - with crisply printed logos. True racers cannot afford to be without one!



Top Secret Test

And finally, yet another totally new Ninco car has been sighted undergoing track tests in Barcelona! Testing has so far produced some astonishing results and original performance expectations have been exceeded.

It looks absolutely gorgeous too but beware; if you spot it, you're likely to start wiggling your bum! ♪ "I see ya baby..." ♪ ■



After all the excitement of the release of Pro-X things fell a bit quiet last month and consequently there wasn't much to report.

This month sees a bit of a turnaround and new releases are in abundance. Unfortunately, Nikko has only just received stock of the models so they haven't managed to get samples to me before this month's deadline.

Still, at least I can give you details of the new models and we will have something to look forward to over the next couple of months as these new cars are tested and reviewed.

Ferrari Fever

Carrera have definitely caught a new disease, known only as Equine Prance-us Maximus, as all the new releases are from the never-ending Ferrari range. Bearing in mind that Hot Wheels have the licence to use the Ferrari name on toys, hence the "Hot Wheels" logo on the display case, they must be laughing all the way to the bank.

Out of the six new models four are past and two are present cars. The drop dead gorgeous Ferrari 575GTC is the modern car and is now available in the following guises:

25752 Ferrari 575GTC - JMB-Racing Monza) 2004

25753 Ferrari 575GTC - Giesse Squadra Corse Monza 2004

25771 Ferrari 575 GTC - Giesse squadra Corse Spa 2004

25772 Ferrari 575 GTC - Baron Connor Racing Le Mans 2004

The first two are previous releases and the second two are the latest addition to this range.

Now I'm the first to admit that I complain when a slot car manufacturer like Fly keeps churning out re-liveries of a certain car, but when it comes to the 575GTC you could issue it in every conceivable colour and I'd want them all!

I'm obviously not alone here, as Nikko has sold out of 25771 and 25772 already.

Oi! Ugly!!

The four remaining cars, listed below, represent the past and have to be one of the ugliest Sports/Endurance cars ever to grace the tarmac. Of course, this is only my view and I'm sure there are plenty of collectors who can't wait to add a Ferrari 512BB to their cabinet:

27100 Ferrari 512 BB LM3M, Le Mans 1979

27101 Ferrari 512 BB LM EMKA

25727 Ferrari 512 BB LM NART 1979

25728 Ferrari 512 BB Beurlys LM 1979

Credit where credit's due. Carrera have yet again managed to find and produce a car that is totally different to the other four big slot manufacturers, as they did with the classic Nascars.

You'll notice that one of these cars raced at Le Mans in 1979. The Le Mans 24 hour is my all time favourite race and I like to collect historic cars that have raced there, so that means I'll buy one of these, ugly or not. ⇨⇨



Lottery Win

When I get the six numbers up this is the real car I'd like to own. The Ferrari 250GTO SWB.

To be honest, I'd probably be disappointed, bearing in mind how much they cost.

Come December, when Carrera release this little beauty as part of their Limited Edition Exclusiv range, I won't be disappointed.

Nikko emailed me this picture and I knew straight away that the 1/24th god was looking down on me. You may remember me reporting that Carrera 1/24th cars would be few and far between and that is still the case. If you miss this it means you'll have to dig into your lottery win to pay inflated prices on a Euro eBay site.

So, a bit like buying the real thing then!

Red Bull Flip

At the end of my previous Carrera Corner I announced the news that Carrera had signed a deal giving them exclusive rights to manufacture models featuring the Red Bull sponsorship.

Immediately after that, Red Bull F1 driver Christian Klein, decided to flip his car at the first corner of the Hungarian GP on July 31st. Fortunately Klein escaped unhurt, proving that Red Bull really does give you wings.



Personally, I think he should have used a deeper guide and not relied so much on the magnet.

If you can think of an amusing caption for this picture (PLEASE don't use "Red Bull gives you wings") then I'll give one of the listed new releases to the funniest one.

Send your entries to me by post (see R/S Slot Racing ad for address) or email :

colin.spark@btinternet.com

Closing date 20th November.

Let's see if you can manage to make the effort to enter this time. As a further incentive I'll publish the winning caption. So a free car and fame! Can't be bad? ■



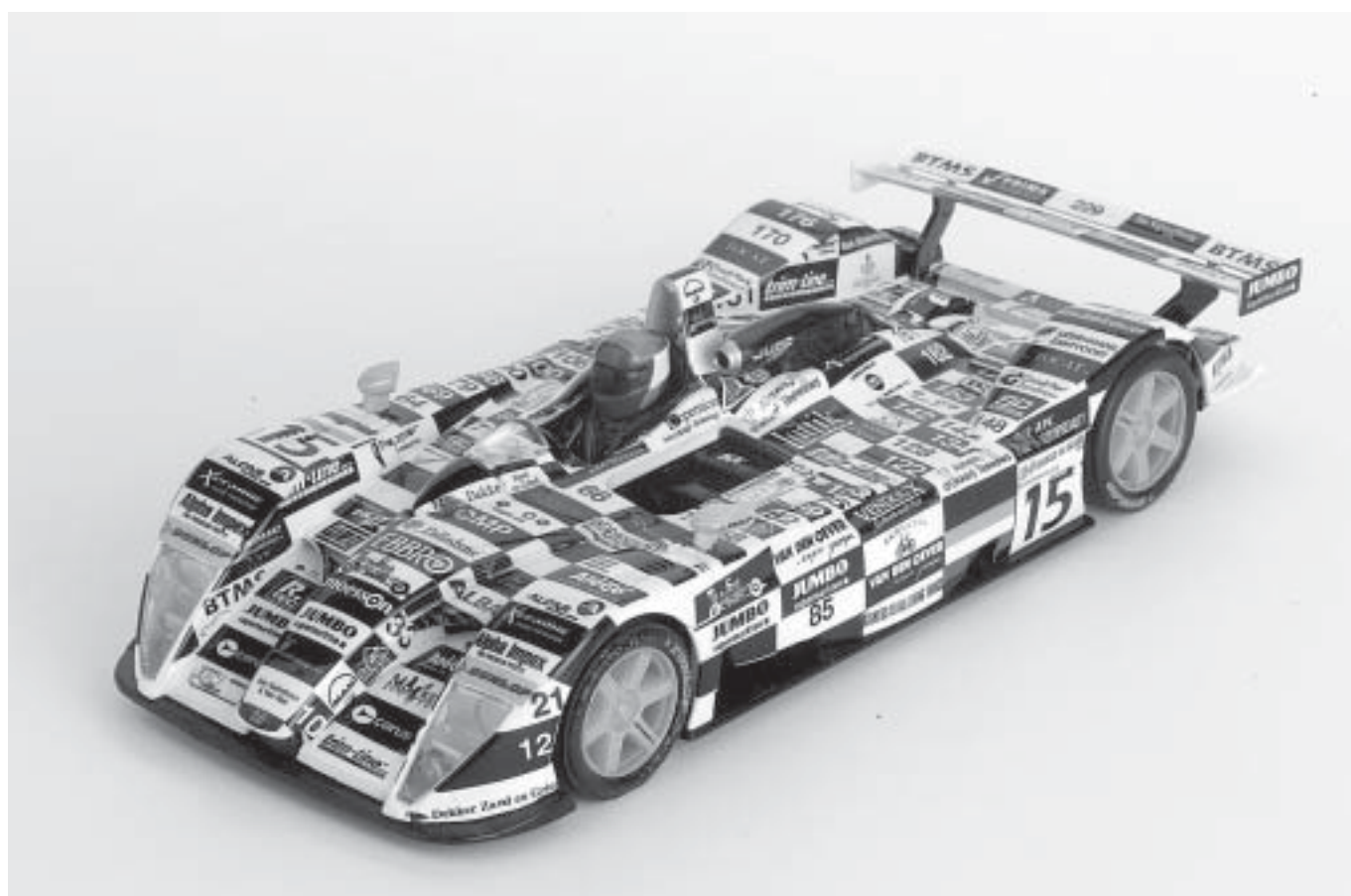
61820 SCX Dome Judd 'Lammers'

SCX

Reviewed By Tony Secchi

Last year SCX Tecnitoys brought out the stunningly liveried Dome Judd S101 that Jan Lammers drove in the LMP1 class at the 2003 Le Mans.

SCX have now issued the same car albeit the 2004 Le Mans version. The livery of the current model sent to me for review by Gareth Jex, our publicity guru, is just as breathtaking.



The model livery at that time (and even now) was fantastic, setting a standard of tampon printing for other manufacturers to aspire to. The livery comprised of hundreds of alternate black and white rectangular logos approx. 9"x3" (225x75mm) in real scale size. For close scrutiny of the body you needed a magnifying glass to appreciate the definition - it was an awesome job.

Once again the logos are alternate black and white rectangles but this time they are almost twice as big and the car has wing mirrors, windscreen, headlamp and rear wing trimming in yellow. Along with the six spoke yellow wheels it makes for a more distinctive and less fussy look. As before, there is a full length driver seated in the cockpit module (Jan Lammers). ➡➔

The body is a single plastic piece with very good dimensions and, apart from the necessary raised cover at the rear to accommodate the crownwheel, has a very good, accurate and realistic shape. It is very light and well balanced which contributes greatly to the overall model weight of 19.5g including the lighting system. The mounting stalks of the rear wing were poorly attached but a dab or two of superglue soon fixed that. The lighting system is perfect - great visually and does not impede the car's performance in any way.

The chassis is fitted to the body via four screws - one front and rear and one each side which, with the removal of the latter and the loosening of the former, allow the body to tilt effectively. The chassis itself, despite the two full length stiffening ribs, is quite flexible.

The front axle is contained in housings which allow only a tiny amount of tilting movement. This is because the pick up guide is the self centering type with vertical movement controlled by the two full length metal strips which carry the electrical input. These are anchored some 25mm behind the axle and cantilever over the top contacts of the pick up.

A profiled bar magnet is positioned at the rear in a vertically adjustable housing situated between the back of the motor and the front of the crownwheel. This is the standard SCX Tecnitoy's system and works well. You can adjust the level of the magnet by manipulating two small setscrews within the housing.

The motor is contained in a cradle which supports both it and the rear axle. It is anchored at two points running longitudinally in the chassis. I found that this system gave too much play and enclosed the motor underneath which could affect cooling. I will return to these points later.

The rear axle is fitted by two brass spherical bearings, once again an SCX feature. These move within their housings giving some measure of axle flexibility, irrespective of position - this also works well. The final drive ratio is 9/27 with a plastic crownwheel and brass pinion.

The last two features of the car are the tyres and the motor which, in my opinion, are the

weak spots of an otherwise excellent model. The rear tyres are pretty standard stuff, with a relatively low grip level that does not contribute to confident/relaxed driving. They are too hard and have a ribbed tread which reduces the footprint by about one third. The fronts are probably the correct scale size but they are of the same hard compound, also ribbed and in my opinion too large.

The RX-62C motor is acceptable but I found it to be lacking in power over its entire range. In real life this is a very fast car, at times leading races, including Le Mans, and the motor does not reflect this.

A possible future point for manufacturers generally - surely it is possible in this day and age to produce and install motors with the speed and power to give parity to cars of the same era, not the same engine in cars of different eras. What is the point (say) of having a motor in a 1950's C-type Jaguar that is quicker than this Dome Judd? The latter should be (and is in real life) faster. That is what manufacturers should concentrate on. We are thankfully inundated with superbly detailed bodies and liveries yet we cannot get the motors to match the cars.

On The Track

I started by driving the car straight out of the box. It had reasonably good behaviour but, as stated before, low power. This caused me to maintain a faster pace by hanging onto the throttle longer than I normally would. 'Pushing' the car like this revealed and highlighted its limitations - the front end continually de-slotting under braking and the rear end spinning out under power.

It became obvious that, at the front, the large diameter tyres were causing the pick up to bounce and the lack of free movement of the front axle was adding to this imbalance. Speed and stability around the bends was adequate, but the ability to exit a bend quickly was poor and lost me a lot of time.

If you combine both these faults you come up with an average performance of speed and roadholding that belies the merit of the car, although the overall balance was good.

Modifications

I race one of the earlier Dome Judd S101s so I have been through all of this before and have come up with a few cheap modifications which can transform this car into a really competitive racer.

Starting at the front, I enlarged the axle retaining slots to give a bit more vertical play. I fitted a set of 'Pink Kar' 17mm dia low profile front tyres and added a modicum of lead sheet underneath the chassis in front of the pick up. Further back I added a larger weight of lead just in front of the engine but inside the chassis. I replaced the engine with a Technitoys 'Pro Turbo Plus', cutting the base out of the motor cradle to allow for some cooling. I lowered the standard rear magnet to 2mm below the chassis, then I superglued the engine cradle to its supports thus eliminating any movement.

At the back I replaced the standard tyres with a pair of R/S Slot Racing 'Ortmann' slicks which, as readers of my articles will know, are the best thing for a slot-car that you can buy. They greatly improved the rear end grip and because they are of a slightly smaller diameter, increased the final drive ratio giving more acceleration. Details of these superb tyres can be obtained from Colin Spark who advertises in the Journal and distributes them.

In its 'out of the box' state I managed (with difficulty, patience and prudence) to record times for a ten lap stint of 42.71 secs on lane 1 (inner) and 43.61 on lane 2 (outer).

After my modifications the Dome recorded the following times for the same ten lap stints. 38.68 secs lane 1 and 39.36 lane 2 - 'Nuff said!

Don't get me wrong. The Dome Judd is an excellent car and in standard trim on a wide open long club or national track could do well, even though I think it needs more power. At the moment I would place it between fair and good.

On my smaller, tighter circuit it was a bit of a handful, but after the modifications described it became a fast, stable competitive car and a pleasure to drive, (between good and great).

It is still not quite at the level of the other cars in our LMP1 category but it now has impressive pace in and out of bends and a good

turn of speed. It will become much more competitive in time as things bed in, friction reduces and the drive train loosens up.

I have a personal interest in these cars as, when I regularly visited Le Mans and the sports car circuits all over Europe, Jan Lammers was driving the Jaguar V12 XJR/9LM for Tom Walkinshaw's Silk Cut racing team of whom I was (and still am) an avid fan.

Along with Johnny Dumfries and Andy Wallace he won Le Mans in 1988 and I was there to witness it (the first Jaguar win at the Sarthe circuit since the 'D' type triple in 55/56/57). Apart from the Dome Judd, he still races in the Grand American Rolex sportscar series for Daytona prototype cars, which is well worth watching on TV.

As for me, my days of galivanting around Europe's racing circuits are over. Nowadays I get my thrills and excitement from racing against my old friends on my own slot car track and the Dome Judd S101 will, I hope, help me to keep doing so. ■



**Subaru Impreza WRC
Monte Carlo Rally 2005 'Solberg'
(Revised model with lighted bonnet
spotlamp cluster)**



Reviewed By Phil Upton

Good starting point for this review is to thank Tecnitoys for supplying the car; moving on, or should I say flooring the throttle when I see the green light.

Standard SCX box although it looks like they have made an extra high plinth to mount the car on, and a new mounting screw which at first gave me a bit trouble removing the car.

First impressions, the Subaru looks very shiny and all the relevant bits in order with tampo printing as relative to the price. Nice little detail is the three black aerials on the roof. This particular model sports a headlight cluster which is fed from two LEDs in the front lamps, the light is transferred from the lamps to the cluster via clear plastic moulding. (see picture)

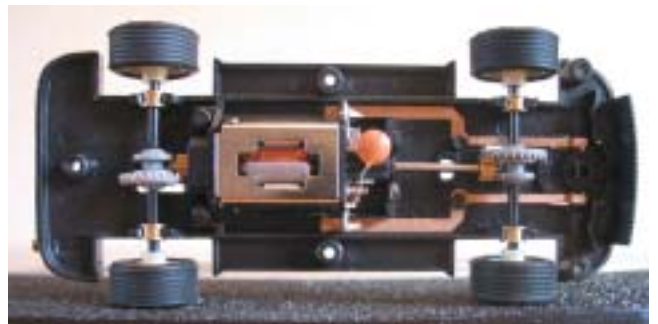


The tyres will need truing with some sandpaper as the track test shows later. The chassis is a standard SCX layout inline motor with a pinion at each end to drive the front and rear axles.



The rear lights are lit from a standard SCX circuit board as is the front. The body is held in place by five screws, two in the middle of the chassis help keep the sprung metal contact for the lights in place, two at the front and one at the rear.

The walls of tyres are coated in what I can only describe as PVA glue presumably to stop the printed lettering wearing off. But while taking the tyre off the rims the PVA coating wrinkled up and went cloudy, I pulled it off and unfortunately the printing went with it!



Track test timed against my SCX Xsara with straight axles, glued and trued tyres and same motor from the Subaru.

Track test, I tested the Subaru as taken from the box and placed onto my Ninco track which works out at 14.36 metres (47.10 feet) in length. The first lap was a bit sluggish with a de-slot on the first tight corner, removed car and flattened the braids and moved them so I had one length of braid showing, started again and this time no problem, built the speed up and noticed right away the front end was jumping up and down=>



violently enough to dislodge the front light cluster! I took the body off and put the chassis on my rolling road. My first thoughts were “clay not centred on potters wheel” in fact the axles were bent and the contrate was osculating so much I was amazed it actually worked. Not much I could do other than change the two axles for some straight ones from my SCX Xsara which I decided not to do as they were glued in.

Back to the track with sanded tyres which helped a little and with 20 laps under its belt the car became much quieter and less sluggish. The Subaru was fun to drive like any other SCX Rally car with the standard magnet in place and with two new straight axles it would be even more fun.

With the magnet removed the Subaru began to produce some very controlled power slides and as mentioned above TWO NEW AXLES would make life even better. Why SCX can't manufacture straight axles and contrates I don't know, most of the SCX cars I own all have the same problem.

That said I do like the Subaru, a bit of work to make the body rock will bring it up for a partner for my SCX Xsara.

The track test shows there is room for improvement,
Track test Magnet
Inside lane - 5.790 seconds
Outside Lane - 5.510 seconds

Magnet removed
Inside Lane - 7.546 seconds
Outside Lane - 7.460

Magnet removed with sanded tyres
Inside Lane - 7.014 seconds
Outside Lane - 7.030 seconds

SCX Xsara without magnet sanded/glued and trued tyres, body loose and motor from the Subaru.
Inside Lane - 6.803 seconds
Outside Lane - 6.841 seconds

Would I buy this car?
Only if it came with straight axles! ■



Sir,
Following the success of this year's Swindon swapmeet we are running a 2006 event on Sunday, 8 January. We are currently in the detailed planning stages to ensure we continue the well-received mix of attractions we had in 2005. We would like to encourage a presence from the race club scene and are therefore prepared to offer free table space to any club.

At this year's event we had (400+) people come along from a catchment area that covered the whole country south of the Midlands. So this could be a great, no cost chance to promote your club. If you would also be interested in bringing along a circuit please talk to us!

Email Swindon@slotcentral.co.uk or call Jon on 01793 497778

I am, yours etc,
Robert Learmouth

.....

Sir,
Just a quick note to thank all racers who attended the 9 hour event held at GT Raceway (Essex) on the 14th of August. This event was put together at short notice and full marks to all concerned for helping to make it a good day.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank The Hobby Company for donating some excellent prizes and no doubt they will be pleased to know that both the Ninco track and cars (Honda NSX and Toyota Supra) ran faultlessly.

I am, yours etc,
Graeme Thoburn

Sir,
Most UK Slotracers will be well aware that Tom Marsh and I have raced in the BSL under the team name Get Slotted since 1996, and that prior to Tom's involvement, I raced as Get Slotted with Johnny Mills from 1994 - 95.

I've just been very surprised to discover that a company in the Midlands has been trading as a Scalextric-type slot car retailer on the web under the name "GetSlotted.co.uk" for a year or so. It's a genuine coincidence, they weren't aware of the history of Get Slotted Racing when they set their company up and they did not wish to cause any confusion.

I wish them well in their business venture, as I love slotracing in all its forms and I always like to see success for any attempts to further our sport or the hobby of collecting. In fact, their website looks very good, and I'm sure they offer an excellent service, I hope it's a success for them.

But please can I make it clear to the slot-racing and collecting communities that the retailer, who also seems to trade as Midland Model Centre, has no connection with either Tom or myself, and that the Get Slotted racing team has no connection with the retailer in question. The retailer is posting a similar friendly disclaimer on his site to this effect also.

I am, yours etc,
Paul Hackett-Evans
(former NSCC Secretary)

COX

By Osvaldo Pace

For newcomers to the hobby, whether they race the cars, collect them, or both perhaps, Cox may be just a name from the past, but for dyed-in-the-wool collectors, those of us who happened to be teenagers in the mid-sixties, this is a mythical name in a sense, one that truly carries the distinctive aura of that epoch. Ask any serious slot-car collector to list five major brands, and Cox will invariably be cited.

Beginnings

Cox entered the slot-car market in late 1964. As a leading hobby company, founded in the mid-forties by LeRoy Cox, it specialized in the manufacture of top quality die-cast aluminium

glow plug engines, which were used in U-Control and R/C aeroplanes, large scale cars and boats. With their casting techniques being so well mastered, making the first die-cast magnesium chassis and wheels must have been a cinch. These parts were absolutely superb. For us, it was pure space-age technology! It was an avant-premiere of things to come.

The first two models launched by Cox in 1964 were the same year's Ferrari and BRM Formula 1 cars, both in 1/24th scale. These were offered firstly in kits, and were soon followed by RTRs. They were an immediate success, and were reviewed in most model car and hobby magazines in the USA and Europe. ➤➤



1964 - 1/24th Ferrari and BRM F1s

Following these two models, a pair of 1/24th and 1/32nd scales Ford GT40s were introduced in 1965. Both cars sported a magnesium chassis with drop arm for the pick up guide and magnesium six-spoke wheels, the 1/24th being a side-winder for the TTX200 motor (Mabuchi FT36), later replaced by the improved TTX250 (FT36D), whereas the 1/32nd was an in-line version for the TTX100 motor (Mabuchi FT16). Product quality and packaging were fantastic.



1965/1966

At the end of 1965, Cox announced the Chaparral 2, Cheetah and Lotus 40. They were released in early 1966. All three were made in 1/24th scale and powered by the TTX250 motor (Mabuchi FT36D). Cox also issued a 1/32nd scale Cheetah which was powered by the new TTX150 (Mabuchi FT16D - can drive

instead of the previous end-bell drive). These models were soon followed by their RTR counterparts. The Chaparral 2 became one of the best selling slot-cars ever in America. It was the only model officially approved by Jim Hall himself.

A market growing at a vertiginous pace, applying a steady pressure on all manufacturers willing to stay on top, generated an incredible competitiveness, and forced most of them to constantly launch new products. Cox was no exception and designed a new chassis with adjustable gear ratios which equipped the new 1/24th scale Ferrari Dino “double kit”. It could be assembled either as a spyder or a coupé, and was powered by the smaller TTX150. It sold very well.



1/32 scale Cheetah

Then a Mk 2 version of the Ford GT40 was planned, prototypes were made, one of them using the variable gear ratio chassis, and the Ackermann steering previously used in the RTR versions of the Ford GT40 and Lotus 40. Although announced in the November 1966 Car Model issue and pictured on the cover, it was sadly never released. A Chaparral 2D coupé was offered in its place.

in the pivoting central part of the chassis, exerted a downforce on the pick up guide while in motion. The outside part of the chassis carried the front axle with ball bearing equipped wheels and the body, attached by means of moulded snap-fit lugs which slid into purpose-built slots in the chassis. No screws, no clips. Very simple and very efficient! The rear tyres were made of grey sponge glued on the wheels.



1966 Chaparral 2D Coupé

Thingies

But the seeds of new times to come had already been sown. This would dramatically change the market, and was partly due to Classic's breed of "concept cars" (Gamma Ray and others of the like). It forced Cox to follow the market trends and demands for pure speed. The answer came at the end of 1966. "La Cucaracha" was born. For most slot-car purists it was the beginning of the end. Actually, I believe it was solely a response from Cox to keep its share of a market in which the "thingies" would eventually rule inexorably. Conceptwise, it was a fantastic design, simple yet efficient, a true demonstration of ingenuity. With the "Cucaracha", Cox had managed to really innovate once again, creating a new type of chassis that would be widely imitated and copied all over the world. The model was available in all good hobby stores as of January 1967.

The "Cucaracha" sported a radically new type two-piece aluminium chassis, named Iso-Fulcrum, in which the TTX150 motor, located

The polypropylene, CanAm inspired body, was indestructible and handling was out of this world for that epoch. The second series of the "Cucaracha" had a plain orange body, instead of the first series' translucent one, and side tabs on the chassis to allow mounting of other "realistic racing bodies", quoting a Cox period advertisement. ➡



The shape of thingies to come



Chaparral 2E with adjustable rear wing

Cox hit the market once again with a major breakthrough; their new kit, the Chaparral 2E, had a functional wing. The motor, which could slightly rotate in its carrier, actuated the wing through a connecting rod. Under acceleration, it stood flat, but when the brakes were applied, the motor flipped it against the airflow. It acted exactly as the aerodynamic brake on the "big" Chaparral. Fantastic, yet mechanically simple. It was also the first kit to use the 36D-sized new motor from Hong Kong and named NASCAR. Like all previous Cox motors, it had a black end-bell and a chrome-plated can. Cox, once again, advertised this model as the "ONLY authentic, authorized Chaparral 2E".

1967

Around May 1967, Cox released a new series called "Team Modified". It consisted of a reissue of the Ford GT40, Cheetah, Lotus 40 and Chaparral 2. The cars were equipped with the

variable gear ratio chassis, and black sponge rear tyres glued to the magnesium wheels. They were powered by the large 32,000 RPM NASCAR motor instead of the former Mabuchi one. Sales were poor. Still in the second quarter of that same year, a 1/32nd version of the "Cucaracha" followed. It was called the "Li'l Cucaracha", and it kept its "big brother's" features. The principle of motor downforce on the pick up guide was the same, the main difference being the front axle and independent wheels (no ball-bearings here) clipped directly onto the body. The 'A'-shaped central section of the Iso-Fulcrum chassis was a smaller version of its 1/24th scale counterpart, and it snapped into body-moulded lugs. This small rocket was powered by the slim TTX50 motor (Mabuchi FT13UO). The wheels were beautiful little American Mags, with glued grey sponge tyres at rear and narrow knife edged hard rubber tyres at front. The body was injected in metallic purple polypropylene.

Since sales of the “Team Modified Series” were a far cry from expectations, Cox launched the “IFC Series”. It was a recycling of existing parts, and consisted of the reintroduction of an extensively modified Ferrari Dino, plus the reissue of the Chaparrals 2D and 2E, and the Cheetah.



IFC Dino (above) and Cheetah (below)



The Ford GT40 and Lotus 40 were deleted. The “Cucaracha” chassis with a new 16D-sized NASCAR motor was fitted to these four cars. Tyres were black sponge at rear and the knife edged hard rubber at front, all mounted on American Mag wheels. Sadly, the Cox magnesium reproduction of Jim Hall’s beautifully designed web-spoke pattern wheels, sort of trademark of Chaparral cars, had been deleted, as well as the Campagnolo wheels on the Ferrari. The new and smaller tyres that replaced the accurately scaled previous ones brought the cars closer to the “thingies”. The Ferrari Dino had flared

fenders and new mounting slots in the body sides for the Iso-Fulcrum chassis. Side mounting holes were also made on the Chaparral 2D body, and the rear wheel arches were reduced for the smaller tyres. The Cheetah also was modified, receiving side mounting holes and a new front valance.

At the end of 1967, these cars were also offered as RTRs, and the “Super Cue” joined the lot. Actually, it was a 1/24th scale Cucaracha moulded in metallic blue and fitted with a roof. Later issues, in 1968 and 1969, included orange, blue and purple bodies. The frame was modified for a new pick up guide and the new motor powering it was the “Super NASCAR”. This motor was advertised at the end of 1967 in slot magazines as “new inside and out”. The closed case was allegedly a must “to pass the field of the new magnets, three to four times more powerful than in any motor of this type”. RPMs rather than torque were much improved. It was, aesthetically, a beautiful high-tech-looking motor, but a failure. The end-bell melted due to overheating, and the armature seized as a consequence. Cox also released by the end of 1967 a new Daytona Series of 1/32nd scale RTR cars, which included a Lola GT, a Ferrari P4, and a Ford GT Mk4. These cars used the “Li'l Cucaracha’s” running gear. but the Iso-Fulcrum ‘A-frame’ was coupled with a nickel-plated stamped steel chassis, a reminder of the 1/24th scale version. It carried the front axle and wheels, and the body, attached by wire clips. It was purposely heavy to compensate for the ➤



Daytona series Ford Gt Mk4



Daytona series Lola GT

light weight of the factory painted vacuum-formed bodies. These were made by Lancer, a leading manufacturer in this market segment. For the first time, Cox used this type of body and, above all, it was the first time that slot-car bodies were not Cox made items. Finally, the little American Mags, used on all three cars, were shod with harder black sponge tyres at rear.

Although they lacked the characteristic sharp detail of previous injection moulded Cox bodies, the shape and proportions of these cars were still very good. The British magazine *Miniature Auto* published in July 1968 a review on the Lola GT, and stated that “although much heavier than the original Cucaracha thingie (...), the maximum speed is higher, and the cornering is distinctly better, with the model being much easier to drive on the limit”. It concluded that it was “gentle and so predictable that you would have to be asleep to be caught out. One of the best 1/32nd scale cars yet. This is just the sort of model that we have come to expect from Cox”.

1968

In 1968, the earlier kits had been discontinued for good, but two new models were added to the “IFC Series”. These were the “Gurney Ford”, a 1/24th scale kit of a Two-Door Galaxie Coupe stock car, known as the Dan Gurney-Wood Brothers Ford in NASCAR circles, and a 1/24th scale RTR Lola T70. Provenance of these two bodies was not genuinely Cox. The Galaxie body must have been patterned after a “promo” or display model, like the ones AMT and Johan used to make, and the Lola was a look-alike of the K&B body, with the exception of the interior plate. Both cars were equipped with an in-line nickel-plated brass tube chassis, and powered by the large 36D-sized NASCAR motor. They were beautiful but technically outdated at the time of their release. The “Gurney Ford” was authorized by racing legend Dan Gurney, and the box bore a reproduction of his signature.



"Gurney Ford"

1969 - The End

In early 1969, the 1/32nd "Li'l Cucaracha" was reissued with chassis and body modifications. The Iso-Fulcrum chassis had been widened to accommodate the 16D-sized NASCAR motor and the central rear section of the body had been enlarged to make room for the bigger motor. Very few of them were made.

A new RTR version of the 1/24th scale Lola T70 was also offered. It had a light blue body and a gold anodized aluminium sidewinder chassis. It was never advertised in a Cox catalogue.

Sometime in 1968, Cox bought Eldon's tooling, and rumour goes that they dumped most of the injection moulds, but this is a story that has yet to be verified. Anyway, it would explain one of the last cars offered by Cox, the '69 Mustang Fastback, never shown in the catalogue, which was obviously an Eldon former product. It had the characteristic two-piece nylon sliding chassis, Mabuchi cad-plated 15 motor, press-fit wheels, and dark tinted glass area. The usual Eldon markings inside the body had been shaved off, as well as the side writings on the tyres. Still in an attempt to keep afloat, they also produced a series named "Super Scale" which included a McLaren M8 and a Porsche 917-10 CanAm, both being 1/32nd scale

RTR anglewinders with nylon chassis, and four slightly smaller than 1/32nd scale cars: the Matador, the Torero, the McLaren and Eagle Formula 1 cars.

1969 rang the curtain down on the slot-car golden era. The prestigious and ruined L. M. Cox Manufacturing Co., Inc. was sold. The Cox brand name still exists today and they have resumed the production of glow plug engines. Cox, undoubtedly, established a new benchmark in the slot-car market of the sixties, but it would be unfair to some other manufacturers of that time, like Monogram and Revell for instance, to say that they ruled as absolute number one on this market. Cox cars were fantastic indeed, and innovative with their magnesium chassis and wheels, full cockpit with complete driver for the 1/24th scale cars, but they were obviously American market oriented, hence the somewhat meagre 1/32nd scale line. Obviously, any Cox car is a collectable item. Some of them are extremely hard to find in mint condition, and consequently, are very, very expensive! ■

Oswaldo is a Brazilian member of the NSCC with a huge collection of the lesser known makes of slot-cars from the 60s. If you would like to see more of them then visit his website:

www.paceautorama.ppg.br

BITS & PIECES

Newark Swapmeet 30th October

Fellow collectors and traders, this is a reminder to you all that this is the last NSCC event this year so your last chance to buy that Christmas bargain under the safe umbrella of the NSCC fair trading guidelines. For those of you who have not had a go at stalling out before, please give it a try...remember we give you a free extra hour in bed before you travel to the meet! (Same deal for attendees!). If you are not sure what to do, there are plenty of people there who will help and advise you, the same applies to those of you who have not been to "a meet" before, they are great places to meet like minded enthusiasts.

There are a couple of things you need to know when travelling to the event. Firstly there will be new sign posts, kindly provided by Robbies Hobbies, which are a distinctive green with white writing and directional arrows on. Secondly, REMEMBER TO ALTER YOUR CLOCKS! We are again trying something new. There will be an auction of Scalextric goodies (at least 50 lots). If you do not have enough stuff to have a table or just the odd piece to sell you can add it to the auction. Please let us know in advance so we can allocate a lot number and have a description - remember the NSCC guidelines when describing. There will be no seller's or buyer's commission, so what it makes is yours; turn your doubles into cash and go buy something you do want!

If you know of someone who is interested in the hobby, or might get interested then bring them along. If you bring a friend you get in FREE and if they join the NSCC we pay part of the membership, everybody wins! We are doing all we can to make these NSCC events as good as they can be, they are in existence to help you to pursue your hobby, please support them, and on behalf of the organisers can I say we hope to see lots of you there.

Roger Barker

Wolverhampton Slot-Car Club

We have two upcoming events for which we have received a number of international entries.

- 1963-1971 Le Mans Event, being held at Wolverhampton on Sunday 30th October, on the wooden International Raceway Circuit, with practice day on Saturday. Full entry of fifty racers from Europe and the United States, all cars must be based on models that raced or qualified at Le Mans from 63-71.

- Alpine Rally Event, being held on Sunday 10th December 2005, as a farewell to our old Ninco circuit that is being replaced by a new SlotFire circuit. For this event special ice sections will be added, along with "Snow" covering sections of the circuit. Race categories will be Pre 1975, 75-86, Post 86. Entrants will race against the clock across a number of stages, and may enter cars in all three categories. Entries not yet closed but filling up fast, apply to Phil Insull at jt004b2112@blueyonder.co.uk

Phil Insull

15 Seconds of fame

Spun Gold TV are currently looking for people who may be interested in taking part in a series about Christmas presents of the past, looking at the worst presents ever received but also the best kids' toys and they are hoping Scalextric will make it into the final top ten. Did you finally get that Scalextric set on Christmas morning? If you want to share your memories on TV then contact:

Gurinder Hatchard

Researcher

Spun Gold TV

45-46 Poland St

London, W1F 7NA

Tel:- 020 7292 9076

Fax:- 0870 164 7471

Email:- Gurinder.Hatchard@spungoldtv.com



Sir,
 Reading Gareth Jex's report in the Annual Review, I was taken by some of his remarks about the NSCC, which I feel are very pertinent and also very normal for a small organisation such as ours. In truth only a small percentage are ever willing to get in there and make a difference and get the work done. We, the majority should be thankful to those people, especially the committee, who make the effort for, without such people, where would this club be? That said it's up to the likes of us, the ordinary members, to support them, help wherever possible and feed back information that will give them an insight as to how we would like to see this club move forward or should it be a case of allowing them to try and second guess our thoughts!

As for the question of swapmeets, a very interesting argument has arisen with those for or against both having valid points to get across. Myself, I feel that they are a great opportunity for folk to meet and trade, that's what they were set up for. Now as to whether they should be open or closed events to me as an organiser makes no difference as no money for the proceeds enters my pockets, I do it for the good of both my clubs. What I do find strange is the apathy shown to the events which the NSCC organise with comments such as, "That was a mediocre event, great time to chat and catch up!" Talking from experience, these events are hard work to set up and run and especially to make it what I would call a success, that means happy punters with bags of goodies leaving the

event. Of course for the traders it's about profit and quite rightly so but to me, as I have already mentioned, it doesn't make a difference whether it's an open event or an NSCC one, the same traders are there selling the same wares for the same prices, to the same people whether it be new, antique etc.

I for one am with Gareth here; it is possibly time for a radical change in thinking. Why not make them all open meetings with a discount for members producing a valid membership card when buying goods, making it an incentive for people to join the club whilst they are at the event. What was started way back by the founding members was great for that time and was needed in that form but, with today's pressures on selling with the advent of eBay and the likes, we need to make the most of what we have and move with the times.

I am, yours etc,
 Tony Sandom
 (Quorn Slot Car Club)

.....
 Sir,
 Just a quick note to say how I enjoyed the recent colour article about the Dutch rally track.

I must confess to not fully understanding the captions but colour really does bring out the best in modern slot-cars and, when combined with the realistic landscape settings, all I can say is more please if the bank balance will stand it!

I am, yours etc,
 Rod Moore

Scalextric Ferrari F12004

Reviewed By Andrew Moore

Well I was told not to give it a glowing review just because it's a freebie, but that was preaching to the converted really as I'm not one that's embroiled in the Ferrari hype – if I won a real one I'd sell it and get a Lotus, so the Scalextric model would have to be good to impress.

My track is 'classic' Scalextric at about 120ft long, the main straight is 17 pieces, and there are also two eight piece straights so the car got a good run out/blast. The handsets are the 'race tuned' yellow Scalextric ones with the light blue cables, with a black box transformer and two power boost cables per lane. For a speed comparison I used a Scalextric "Bitten and Hisses" Jordan, for cornering and track holding comparison an SCX Orange Arrows.

The Aesthetics

Yes it looks good, first impression is what a long way Scalextric has come from the bland C2011 also in my collection. From what I can gather from the internet pictures, it's identical in appearance to the real thing. The sponsors logos are immaculate apart from the white patches where the cigarette logos should be (why can't other F1 teams be as inventive as Jordan?) – there is even black shading on the minute Vodaphone logo on the wing mirrors, and what my ageing eyesight initially thought was a discoloration of the wheel rims, is in fact three BBS logos. The steering wheel has six coloured buttons but is mounted on the bottom of the windscreen so disappointingly there is no dash.

As in real life, the nosecone is detachable/replaceable should we be a bit overzealous in the corners, but the nosecone is a slightly different⇒



shade of red and appears to be made from a different (tougher?) grade of plastic. The weird small fins just in front of the rear wheels look a tad delicate and vulnerable, whilst the fins just inside the rear wheels have at least half a centimetre flex in them, but are well protected by the wheels. Schumi has a full racing harness but nothing to operate the throttle or brakes with! His helmet seems as though it's been lifted straight from the C2011 above – I suppose he'd want a small fortune for Hornby to personalise it a bit.

Five recessed screws secure the upper body to the lower, for which you'll need a very thin screwdriver to remove. The skid pan picked up some very realistic scuffing during my review, and the car even has some fins inside the rear wheels. Taking the lid off reveals some very elaborate front and rear suspension, the front having a pod each side to cool the brakes, the rear unclips quite easily to allow magnet removal if you're so inclined – it looked well set in, so I decided not to risk damaging the car by attempting its removal. The white large rear side skirts are removable, but the front smaller ones look delicate and need the protection offered by the front wheels.

The wheels have well detailed 14 spoke rims with a hex wheel nut, the tyres have immaculate Bridgestone Potenza lettering, but I did seem to have worn down the tread considerably during my review – maybe it's the abrasiveness of the classic track, or it could be because it weighs a few grams more than both the other cars.

Oh and it's very shiny.

Practice - unofficial

I did several laps first with the Jordan and Arrows to get the dust off the track. I unleashed the beast after about 15 minutes, when constant clicking and deslotting caused me to remember Brian's tip about the guide being fractionally too deep for classic track, so a few shaves with Sheffield's finest and we were back out of the pits. What a shock - throttle response was instantaneous and the top speed was awesome. At first I had to let go the throttle about halfway down the straight I was so worried about a trip

into my pile of old tyres at the end. After about five laps I got braver and realised what good cornering the car has - not as good as the Arrows which needs a crowbar to get it off the track, but way better than the Jordan which has a magnet. Even my 90° bend could be taken at fair speed once the adrenaline was flowing.

Practice official

First we did the standing start comparison down the straight. The Ferrari was at least five track pieces ahead of the Jordan at the end of the straight. The difference would probably have been more but I had to lift off the throttle earlier with the Ferrari as the motor does seem to 'run on', something I confirmed by lifting the rear wheels of each car off the track, running the engines to full revs then releasing the throttle. This over run was even more pronounced when compared with the Arrows which allows you to lift off the throttle right at the death when going into corners.

In lap times there was no comparison with the Jordan, in fact I gave up (sorry Eddie) trying to get a decent one out of the Jordan, as the magnet just did not hold enough in the corners to make it competitive. With the Arrows I managed 13.5 seconds, and this was due to the fact I could drive at full throttle almost all the way round. After several spills getting used to driving the Ferrari at the max, I managed 12.5 seconds due entirely to its straight line speed. It probably corners just about as well as the Arrows but because you are approaching much faster you have to ease off at most bends.

In summary

Impressed. I admit this is the first car fitted with the new motor that I've driven but it seems to have speed and handling in perfect proportions - it corners well, but hurtles into them so fast there is still some driver skill retained. I'll just have to pray that Lotus are re-born - a car that goes that fast in Gold and Black would be something. What about a Power and Glory JPS – where's that Hornby feedback form that Brian sent me? ■

Scalextric 2669A Batman Begins

Batmobile & Gotham City Police Car

Reviewed By Kevin Myler

The Summer of 2005 has seen a plethora of comebacks – Doctor Who, Kenneth Clarke, England as a world cricketing force, the Northern Ireland football team, Tony Christie and...Batman.

Following the last instalment of the Batman film franchise, few would have predicted a return to Gotham City so soon after a not well received fourth movie but, with amazing common sense, Warner Bros. have taken the story right back to where it all began, got rid of the pantomime villains, found a half decent script, and turned the lights down. The result, one of the best movies of 2005 so far, Batman Returns.

So, it was pleasing to see Hornby throw their hats into the ring in December 2004 and commit to the set, car and the subject of this review, a Sport Twin Pack.

However, few would have predicted such a radical take on the car, following the endless "pointy fin" versions we have seen over the last 30-40 years- and do you know what? I think it was inspired to give the Caped Crusader such a militaristic vehicle to drive.

The Origins

In model terms generally, the Hornby cars arrive at a time where both Corgi and Mattel/Hotwheels have re-energised the die-cast Bat collecting potential with a series of excellent models in 1/43rd and 1/18th scale, from comics and movies, so the Margate men had a big job on their hands.

And... they've got it right for the market, the pop culture buff, and for the collector.

There's been some wonderful models and interpretations of the car over the years, but not that much for the slot racer to buy off the shelf, indeed many of us have sought plastic kits in

order to have the Batmobile on track and in the collection. Indeed, Hornby's previous Batmobile for the 1989 movie was the last 1/32 scale offering for 15 years-and that was also done in 1/43...

I for one have really been pleased to see the emerging range of TV related models from slot manufacturers, and Hornby have seen that slot racers and collectors might want something off the beaten race track and, in the genre of Pop Culture, Batman tops the bill.

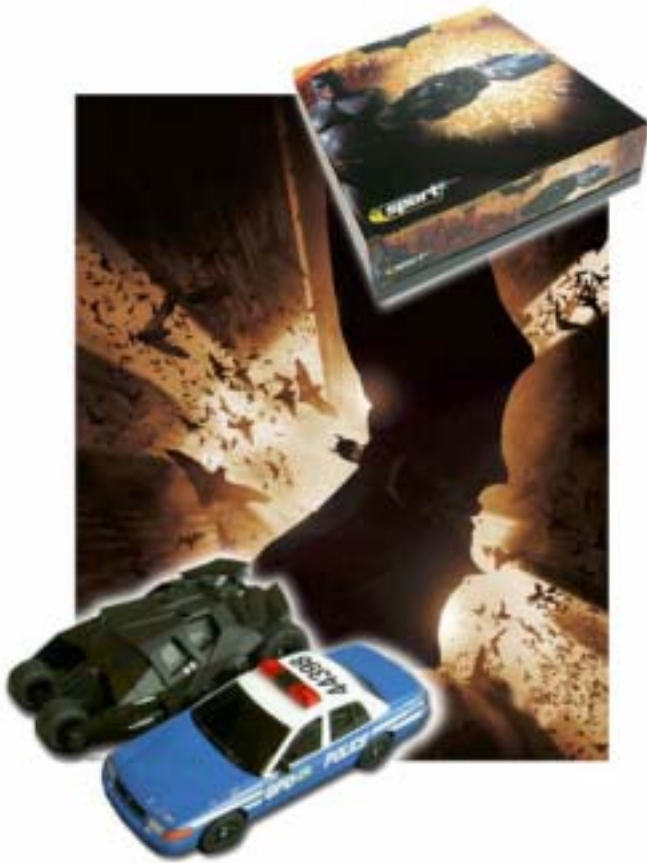
The set I'm looking at is the last – for the time being – of the Batman tie-in launches, although if both film and slot products take off, expect more in this line.

I was highly sceptical about the change to 1/43, as I felt it might be stretching the scale limits a bit, but, really, when you think about it, will you honestly race your Batmobile against a Focus police car? Really?? You want locking up...

The scale thing I'm sure will be an issue with some of you, but really, it's a BIIIIIG machine in real life, and even Bandai's plastic construction kit is about 1:35 (currently on the Myler Global Industries workshop bench undergoing a slot conversion) and no-one really expected it to be a full bells and whistles intricate detail model – it's going to be put through a lot of rough and tumble, and the thought of winglets and panels flying off does not make the wallet a happy chap.

Windows moulded in the Bat car are tinted blue, to differentiate with the smooth satin black of the main body - lovely finish. It is chunky and beautifully sculptured

The box is the same size as in previous twinpack editions, and has superb graphics to reinforce the Bat models. All over. Dunno how they do it, but the designer lad in me loves it. =>



Each boxed set comes with a crisp, full colour credit card style numbered certificate that fits in excellently with the rest of the packaging.

One small gripe- why the magic tape on the car divider on the base plate? Methinks it was a sudden add-on to ease the lifting of the base plate stand to get the cars out. Ah, well.

Sooo, the cars.....

The Batmobile, the Police Car-and Bob the cat

The mouldings are spot on, even in the case of the police car. Tampo printing on the Police Chase car is clear, bright bold and crisp graphics over all.

The Batmobile has minimal tampo on it, but where applied, is pin sharp, particularly within the rear rims. I can only assume that the Sport upgrades have been fitted to these cars, because if you put both editions next to each other, it's only the underbody SPORT etched plate that separates them.

It's a single bodyshell affair for both, with minimal separate parts for the Batmobile, and no extras for the police car, save the lights within

- just as well, as the cars – especially the police car – go like the wind. You can't afford to have bits flying off in the heat of battle.

The tyres on the Batmobile are a real work of art. The tread pattern being totally true to the real life model as can be reasonable. Yes, the real life car has independent rotating front wheels, but the model simply wouldn't last with this arrangement, so the adoption of a front axle linking the two wheels is used. Practical matters have to be taken into consideration and you will be reassured that it doesn't hamper the looks of this model and helps its handling a lot.

The underpan is a neat moulding which echoes the style of the upper body and blends in well. It utilises the round guide recently adopted in the 1/32 range. Given the complexity of the real car, it is a tribute to the designers that all the running gear fits in the model, with not too much distortion of this bizarre and wonderful shape. The guide is a neat little trick in design, and easy to change.

My cat Bobby has witnessed a plethora of projectiles in the last three years hurtling across the carpet, including his owner, but his reaction to the Batmobile in both 1/43 and 1/64 scale was a joy- he simply didn't know WHAT to make of it. Clearly a law abiding puss, he didn't regard the police car much, but then again he stood no chance of catching it!

What the Crown Victoria may lack in detail it has made up for in decals and performance. It's a deceptively rough beast and survived the rolls it took on the legendary Battenburg Ring test track in the deepest forests of Walsall without a scratch. The thing about this model is the cute but small wheels and tyres, and their positive effect they have on the speed and handling.

It's a conventional in line layout underneath, with all the light fittings firmly attached into the roof.

Performance

You have a highly chuckable pair of cars here, so don't just put the barriers on the track, put padded cushions around it too!



The small motor is deceptively quick in 1/32 cars, but here they make it a real pair of pocket rockets. They compare well to their 1/32 stablemates.

You will really like them. Of course they are not going to have the same performance features of the F1 and Sportscar range. But I think their inclusion in the range gives the Scalextric brand an added dimension and character, like the Starsky and Hutch stuff last year.

I can't help thinking the Gerry Anderson connection is something Hornby should look at in future times, even the Bond route if Carrera decide to stop.

I think the TV tie in cars and sets WILL continue - there's room for all this stuff in the slot-car range, and comes as a relief after the repetition of models by manufacturers in recent years. If you're the only ones making it, what have you got to worry about?

I don't think the collector is going to break this set up and race it. The full racing set will give you top VFM as the scale of the cars give an extra size dimension to the whole layout.

Collectors should try to get this set, as it's a cracking little ensemble and, if you are brave enough, will give you a racing experience you'll like. Just one final suggestion to the decision makers at Hornby- in the film, you see the Batmobile in camouflage livery when Bruce Wayne first tries it-how about a version of this, as a limited edition? ■

Ferrari 156 "Sharknose"

By Ray Harper

This article was prepared in response to the recent release of a model of this lovely car by Scalextric and the review written by Brian in last month's Journal.

Basically, it is a compilation of material found mainly in two books:

"Ferrari156; Sharknose", by Ed McDonough, Sutton Publishing, 2001 and "The Complete Book of Formula One", by Simon Arron and Mark Hughes, Motorbooks International, 2003.

The Ferrari 156 was developed in response to drastic rule changes, something that some other (mainly British) teams failed to do. The result was that it dominated the 1961 season. However, due to internal politics at Ferrari, which resulted in key development staff leaving, and new blood arriving, and other teams catching up (and overtaking – Ha! Ha!) the car was not as competitive in 1962. However, Ferrari did achieve a 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th place at Spa in 1961.

During the 1961-1962 period the cars were driven by nine different drivers. Phil Hill (American), Wolfgang Von Trips (German), Richie Ginther (American), Giancarlo Baghetti (Italian), Lorenzo Bandini (Italian), Olivier Gendebien (Belgian), Willy Mairesse (Belgian), Ricardo Rodriguez (Mexican), and Innes Ireland (British).

Grand Prix racing was a lot different in those days, and the numbering of cars was not the logical sequence that it is today. The driver did not keep the same number throughout the year. Some numbers were applied directly onto the body. Ferrari often had white numbers put straight on to the red body. But, some numbers were black and painted on to white discs on the body. Ferrari also had this type.

The Scalextric model, catalogue number C2640A, is the car, numbered 4 (white numbers applied to red body), as driven by Phil Hill in the German Grand Prix at the Nurburgring in 1961, where he finished 3rd. This does not mean that Phil Hill drove a car numbered 4 all season.

He raced the Ferrari 156 in seven championship races in 1961 - with seven different numbers. Even if a driver did have the same number more than once it was not always in the same position on the bodywork. This can make modelling an actual car more complicated and photographs of a proposed model are vital for the sake of accuracy. Mind you, Von Trips drove a car numbered 4 in the British Grand Prix at Aintree where he finished in first place and the numbers seem to be in the same place as on the Scalextric model. But, did he have the same colour driving suit and helmet? At the Italian GP., at Monza, he once again had a car numbered 4, but on this occasion the front '4' was over the sharknose's other nostril. Sadly, Von Trips died on that day, as did 11 spectators – 3 more died later of their injuries.

To complicate matters even more, not all the Ferrari 156s were the same. There were different engine configurations. The 1961 Ferrari 156 was powered by a V6 65° engine. Concurrently, a new 120° V6 was developed. The type of engine fitted dictated the type of bodywork. A car fitted with a 120° engine had 2 transparent gauze coverings (bulges) side-by-side behind the anti-roll bars through which the carburettors could be seen. This is the version modelled by Scalextric. A car fitted with a 65° engine had just one 'bulge'. Although I have not taken the model apart, it appears that the rear upper body is a separate moulding, so perhaps Scalextric will release a version of the 65° configuration in the future (PLEASE). Olivier Gendebien raced a 156, numbered 8, at Spa, in 1961. It was painted yellow. Do not spray your new Scalextric car yellow, as the one Olivier drove was a 65° car.

There were other minor differences. Some had small intakes on top of the front bodywork at Monza in 1961. Some also had larger side intakes and some had shorter exhausts. A non-sharknose 156 was used in a couple of races. As I said earlier, decent photographs are useful. =>

1961 Results

Date	Venue/Event	Chassis	Eng Type	Driver	Car No.	Result
25/4/61	Syracuse GP (nc)	0008	65 °	Baghetti	32	1st
14/5/61	Monaco GP	0001	120 °	Ginther	36	2nd
		0003	65 °	Hill	38	3rd
		0002	65 °	Von Trips	40	4th
		0008	65 °	Baghetti		1st
14/5/61	Naples GP(nc)	0008	65 °	Baghetti		1st
22/5/61	Zandvoort GP	0004	120 °	Von Trips	3	1st
		0003	120 °	Hill	1	2nd
		0001	120 °	Ginther	2	5th
18/6/61	Spa Belgian GP	0003	120 °	Hill	4	1st
		0004	120 °	Von Trips	2	2nd
		0001	120 °	Ginther	6	3rd
		0002	65 °	Gendebien	8	4th
2/7/61	Rheims French GP	0008	65 °	Baghetti	50	1st
		0003	120 °	Hill	16	9th
		0001	120 °	Ginther	18	15th ret.
		0004	120 °	Von Trips	20	ret.
15/7/61	Aintree British GP	0004	120 °	Von Trips	4	1st
		0003	120 °	Hill	2	2nd
		0001	120 °	Ginther	6	3rd
		0002	65 °	Baghetti	58	ret.
8/8/61	Nurburgring GP	0004	120 °	VonTrips	3	2nd
		0003	120 °	Hill	4	3rd
		0001	120 °	Ginther	5	8th
		0002	65 °	Mairesse	6	ret.
10/9/61	Monza Italian GP	0002	120 °	Hill	2	1st
		0001	120 °	Ginther	6	ret.
		0003	120 °	Baghetti	32	ret.
		0006	65 °	Rodrigues	8	ret.
		0004	120 °	Von Trips	4	crash ■



Auction sites are great but are shops and mail order companies having the same quiet time or is this only an Internet problem?

With Hornby releasing a large quantity of new cars and formats is the collector's money now spread too thinly trying to keep pace? Going the scenic route this month with some prices of buildings and track sections as well as the normal mix of cars:

Dunlop tower crosswalk	VG	£52.90
47 Assorted plastic buildings		£149
Spanish Ferrari ref 4075	MB	£41
NSCC Jaguar XJ220	MB	£19.50
C2069 Gold Diablo		
Range Presentation 1998	MB	£60.10
Ferrari F40 Tottenham	MB	£27
Pink Kar CV032 Citroën 2CV	MB	£26
AC Cobra kit part built		£150
AC Cobra kit	MB	£395
Mexican GT40 dk blue		£83 ■



“Slot Car Racing: Tips, Tricks and Track Plans” by Robert Schleicher

**Published by MBI.
Price £18.99**

This was a very difficult review to write for a number of reasons. Firstly, the reviews that I have previously submitted were of books that I had bought and really liked so I was naturally inclined to pass on my positive reaction to the work. After all you do not (usually) tend to buy books that you think are terrible.

This particular book was sent to me by our highly esteemed editor who had already asked me if I would write a review (Cheers Brian). Secondly, there are so few books concerning slot-cars, and the few that have been produced fall largely in to two distinct categories. The first group deals with the history of the product and models produced, and includes the works of Roger Gillham. The second group falls in to the category of ‘everything you ever wanted to know about slot-cars, but were afraid to ask’, and this book belongs here. As it happens they have tended to be written by the author of the book that I am about to review. As I have said, there are very few books about slot-cars, and this fact alone makes it rather difficult to be critical. After all, we have nothing really to compare the book with, apart from Robert Schleicher’s previous offerings, and on this basis alone any criticism seems rather churlish.....but!

When I first received the book, I was immediately struck with a sense of déjà vu coupled with severe feelings of disappointment! This was not a good beginning. I read through parts of the book and initially skipped through the rest. I really felt that I had drawn the short straw. (This feeling was reinforced when I saw that Brian had reviewed the gorgeous new Scalextric Ferrari 156 himself, but this is just sheer jealousy on my part).

You must by now be thinking that this book is awful, but it is not all bad. Perhaps it would be of help if I gave a quick outline of the contents at this point.

There are 232 pages in this book, organised in 13 chapters, of varying degrees of usefulness, which I do not think flow in a logical order.

The first chapter is mainly an introduction, and gives an outline of the hobby. The next chapter is a series of track tests involving 39 cars, the results of which are listed. Chapter 5 has a series of shoot-outs based on various different categories of racing car and the period in which they raced (for example, 1970’s era sports/GT/Le Mans cars). It deals with sports/GT cars, and open-wheelers such as F1, CART and IRL. Chapter 10 is a very short, almost insignificant chapter, that lumps together the ‘tin-tops’, such as NASCAR, Trans-Am, DTM, and WRC. It does not really tell you much, and just seems to be the left-overs that would not fit in to the above chapters but with much less detail.

The third chapter actually deals with racing and discusses the merits of the Scalextric Challenger, and reviews and compares the new digital systems. Chapter 4 is all about the preparation of a racing car and improving its performance, and chapter 6 tells you how to construct and paint your own racing car.

The remaining chapters deal with track and circuits. Chapter 7 tells you how to set up a race track, including an element of detailing, such as providing the circuit with buildings in order to make it look more realistic. Some examples of what can be achieved are shown in chapter 11. A vast 53 pages worth of content deals with circuits on table tops and real racing circuits for your home.

⇒→

As I have already stated, this book is not all bad, and there are some good and useful sections. The chapter dealing with the setting-up of cars and improving their performance is very handy, as is the one dealing with the building and painting of your own cars. There are also numerous lists of how cars performed in a series of shoot-outs, etc. Some of this is useful, some really is not. There are vast tracts dealing with the creation of mini replicas of actual motor racing circuits on table tops. I like modelling articles, and if Robert Schleicher gets a few young kids, or even a few older kids, building things, then that alone is a wonderful achievement. I also like the idea of producing mini replicas of actual racing circuits, but I find that most of the examples featured look nothing like the real thing, and how can they? As for trying to fit them on to a ping-pong table, I give up. Did we really need the quarter of the book that is dedicated to 1/32 devoted to this. In any case, how many more layouts on a ping-pong table do we need? Incidentally, I do like to see

circuits that are detailed with scenic accessories, so I am pleased that the author of this book encourages this. Oh, by-the-way, HO scale is given two chapters at the end, almost as an afterthought.

But, my biggest gripe is this: it would not be as bad if the contents of this book were new, but sadly this is not the case, as we have seen most of it before. It has already appeared in the magazine, 'Model Car Racing', of which Mr. Schleicher is the editor. He even admits to this on page 10 where he states, "virtually all the material in this book was published in.....issues of the magazine". This confession does not make me feel better.

Final verdict. If you do not subscribe to 'Model Car Racing', have a look at the book, and if you like it, and consider it to be of use to you, then buy it. If however, you do read 'MCR', go and buy yourself a nice little slot-car instead. One of the new Scalextric Ferrari 156s perhaps (You know, the one Brian reviewed last month!) ■

Alpine A442B V6 Turbo

Le Mans 24 Hours Winner – Car No.2 (1978) (Le Mans Miniatures Gold Line)

By Scott Brownlee

I have loved the shape of this car for nearly thirty years, although sadly I never saw it race. I did not even know of its existence until at least two years after it had won the 1978 Le Mans 24hrs. My love started and extended only to a Tamiya 1/24 scale kit which is why I was utterly delighted to be given this Le Mans Miniatures Gold Line 1/32 slot-car by the NSCC committee at the 25th Anniversary weekend.

In the late 70's Le Mans was still all about making cars do two things; going very fast down the still straight Mulsanne Straight and teasing the Gods of Reliability by going less than flat out, but fast enough to stretch your rivals, over the duration of the race.

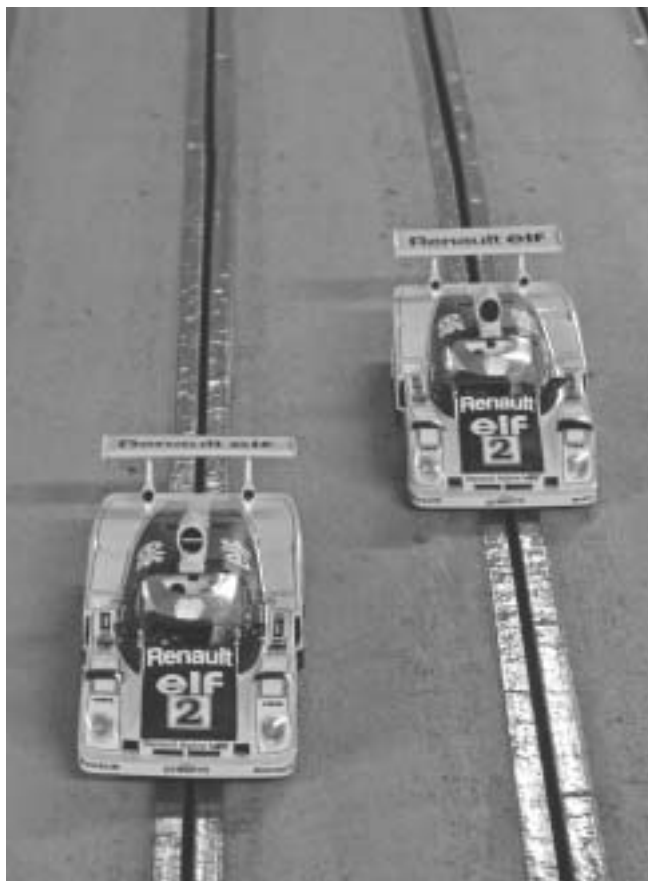
Using state funding in a way that was simply incomprehensible to UK politicians pouring money into BL, the also nationalised Renault had a master plan to win Le Mans, the Monte Carlo Rally and the French Grand Prix. Being French, and therefore a bit perverse, they wanted to do it with turbo charged engines. It is very hard to imagine now but, back then, turbochargers were not cool performance aids, but chunky bits of kit used mainly to make industrial diesel engines more powerful. In the space of two years – 1978 and 1979 – Renault was to achieve its goals across all three motor sport disciplines.

The car modelled by Le Mans Miniatures is the Alpine Renault A442B that was driven to the historic win by the all-French crew of Jean-Pierre Jaussaud and Didier Pironi. The former was already a French racing hero, the latter still a relatively unknown rising star who would go on to infamy as disloyal team mate to Gilles Villeneuve at Ferrari and tragedy, first in his own horrific F1 crash that left him with smashed legs and later killed in a powerboat accident.

In terms of straight-line speed this is the fastest ever racing car built by Renault. Like its nemesis, the Porsche 936-78, the long swooping tail was there to leave the air as undisturbed by the car's passage through it as possible. During the race it tore down the dauntingly narrow three-mile Mulsanne straight at 352kmh (220mph).

Victory was achieved when Jaussaud and Pironi inherited the lead with six hours to go when team-mates Jean-Pierre Jabouille and Patrick Depailler retired their A442B. In total, the winning car completed 379 laps – five more than the second-placed Martini Porsche - and a distance of 5045km. That's just shy of 100 miles in 1/32 scale should you want to replicate it. Their victory in front of the adoring French public made them and Renault national heroes. However, with the 24 Hours now conquered, Renault never returned to Le Mans, turning its attentions squarely to Formula One. Fortunately for people like me who missed it in action the car has been a Goodwood Festival of Speed regular since 1996.

Le Mans Miniatures, a French company who make resin models in most of the major scales (1/87, 1/43, 1/24 and of course 1/32), produce this model either as a kit or ready-built. Such low volume resin models are usually a matter of give and take. One the up side you get a model of a rare and otherwise unavailable car, on the downside the quality, shape and finish are not as high as the standard we now expect from even the most modestly priced RTR cars. I'll not waste your time nit picking for it is true this car is not as well finished as it might be if made by Slot.It, Fly or Hornby, but it is very close and certainly better than Ninco seem to be able to manage. Instead, let me run you through some of the many joys on this car. ⇨⇨



For start, the overall shape is right. The front to rear swoop of the upper bodywork is well captured, as are the many scoops and vents. I particularly like the bulbous front wheel arches which interestingly are very similar to many of the newest sports prototypes such as the Dallara and Courage. Maybe French air moves in a certain way.

The finish, a mixture of paint and decals, has just the right low gloss finish to lend a scale feel to the car and the decals are all crisp and clear, even the tough to get right ones such as white on yellow and white on black.

Two special joys are the wheels, especially the rears for their wealth of intricate detail (they carry hand made tyres incidentally) and the highly detailed cockpit, glimpses of which can be snatched through the Plexiglas 'roof' this car uniquely seems to have raced with. I assume such aero aids were banned by the patriotic ACO after Renault's win.

All in all this car looks great, especially when driving around the Liphook track with the low sun shining through the windows and across the track. Oh yes, I ran the car on the track.

Now some might say they will not pay over £100 for a highly detailed, limited edition, hand-built slot-car to run it on the track. Well phooey to that! Slot-cars are for running – that's the unique joy of them. Racing; well that's another matter.

This car runs as you might expect, It's heavy, very low and the tyres are hand made so not round as round, but as I said, I have no intention of racing it so absolute performance is not important. It runs, it looks great and that is enough for me. I will take it out for an occasional spin every now and again and be very happy with that.

In what is probably a rare on-track meeting, I ran mine beside another example, Gareth Jex's, and there was a real pleasure to be had in the slot-schizophrenia of being both spectator and driver at the same time.

Not for everyone and unarguably expensive, models such as this are nonetheless a significant part of the hobby and might be the only way to complete a collection theme for many. I cherish mine. ■