

By all accounts journalists on the soaraway SUN newspaper work under a sign which calls upon them to "Make it fast, make it good and make it accurate."

Whilst you might not exactly agree with the statement as a testament to journalist integrity on the SUN, something like it would not be out of place as a motto for the most successful R/C model racing car manufacturer of the world.

The company in question is of course Associated Electrics of California America, and in the business of winning world championships they have no peers. At the recent Australian world championships they did it again in the two-wheel drive category with the venerable RC10, whilst such is the relationship between Associated Yokomo that they can easily claim a share of the four-wheel crown.

But what is the secret of their success?

It is impossible to link it to any one factor, rather it is a combination of things: sound design; solid engineering, commitment to excellence, and all backed up with a desire to get it right.

Indeed if you were to add anything to the aforementioned motto it would have to be, "and it

doesn't matter how long it takes." Research and development must rate very highly on the Associated scale of importance, how else can you explain the delay in the introduction of an Associated kit.

In the case of the RC10 it seemed like an age. I remember asking Mike Reedy of Associated why it was taking so long to appear in view of the daily rumours circulating as to its release date. His answer was simple "We'll release

designed to be strong, reliable and first past the post - it didn't have to be pretty, in fact looking at the car it is remarkable just how plain-looking the RC10 is: certainly not pretty in the

Championships at Romsey. Also the basic design of the Associated has changed little in the five years since it was first released.

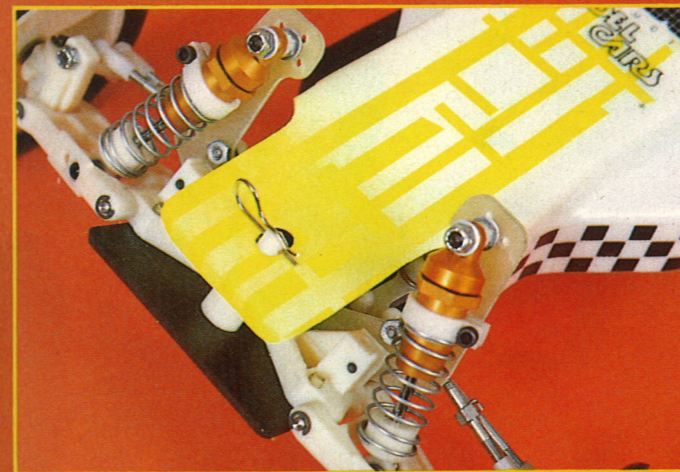
way a Kyosho or Tamiya car is.

Proof of the RC10's virtues and Pedigree is illustrated by its long and illustrious racing career which shows no sign of slowing up. In two-wheel drive the RC10 is virtually unbeatable, having only been bested by the Kyosho Ultima in the 1987 World

when we think it is good and ready and no sooner." Nuff said.

When it did arrive it was quite simply a revelation. All the above virtues of sound design and solid engineering were there - innovation if any was limited to the fact that the car was a plain, no frills, out and out racing machine. Looking at it you automatically thought, "where's the fancy bits - what makes it so good?"

Associated's "innovation" then was to produce a car



That long gestation period produced a car ready to race from the word go. You got it, you built it, you raced it and that was that. The only modifications required were mere fine tuning.

But such is the nature of racing that evolution is inevitable and changes inspired by competition develop automatically. So it is that at the beginning of

the 1990s we have a further refined version of the RC10.

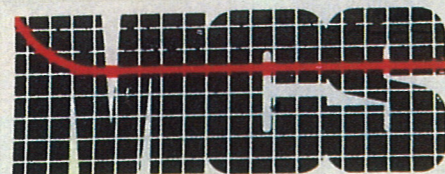
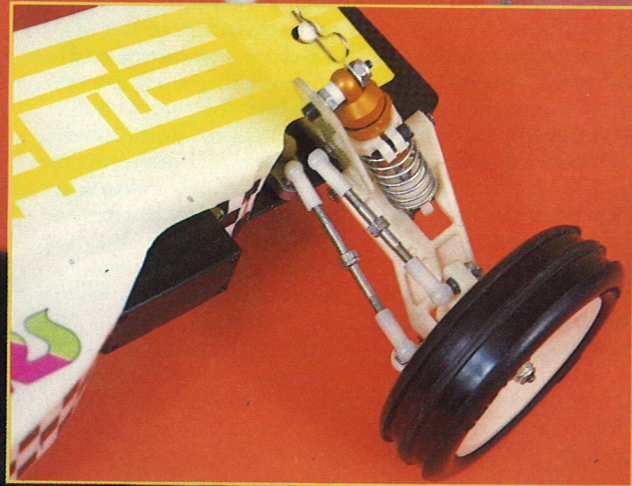
Before you get all excited however this is not the car that won the two-wheel drive World Championship in Australia. The Team cars we are told will never see the light of day as a kit for reasons unknown. This is a shame but there is no reason to think they will



The

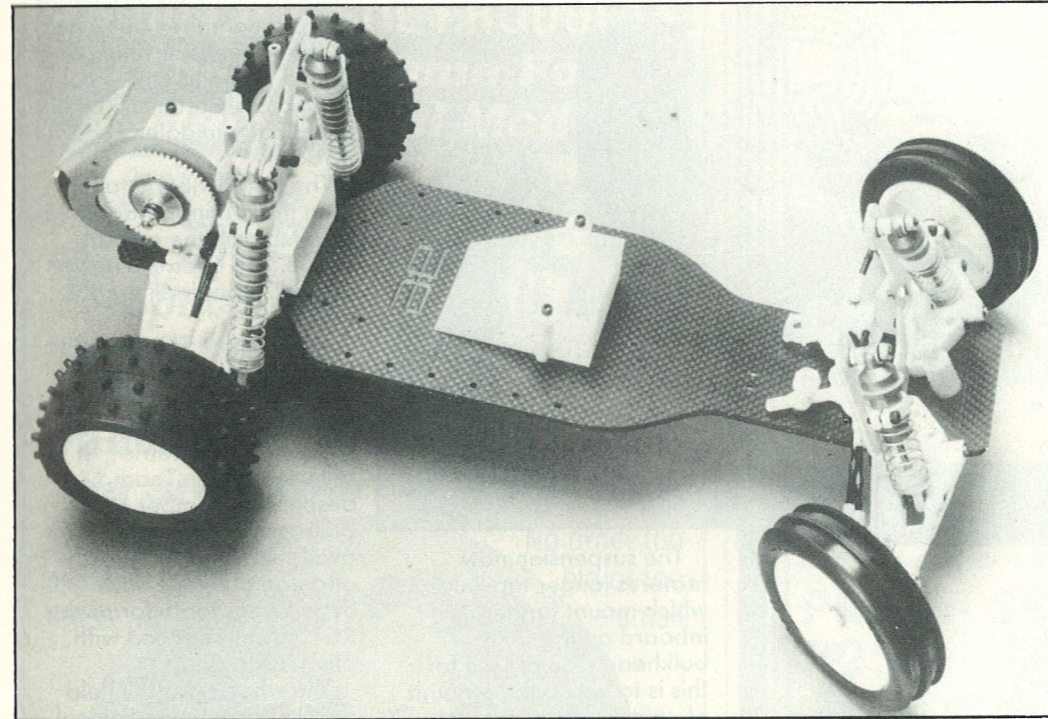
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whole point of the gold stamped alloy channel was to be strong and rigid it wasn't long before the graphite chassis made an appearance.

You don't have to be Einstein to figure out that Graphite in the title of this new version of the RC10 stands for graphite chassis. At 4mm thick the kit version is plenty rigid enough and lightweight. And yes it is still as long as the day Associated designed it and it is going to stay that way.

All the holes for the screw fittings are neatly countersunk and the front-end features the original angle of kick-up.

Working out way backwards to the rear suspension and gearbox the changes in this RC10 become more subtle.

change their minds. When competitive four-wheel drive cars first made their impact on the scene everyone thought Associated would be first in there. Not a bit of it, "We can't make enough RC10s, so what do we need a 4WD for?" they said. Sure enough they never made a four-wheel drive kit.

Despite keeping their Team secrets in the family, the TQ Graphite RC10 is the very next best thing. Indeed it is this version of the RC10 which put Britain's Craig Drescher into the world championship final.

So it can't be all that bad then can it?

Changes

Most modifications made to the RC10 have been to widen the suspension, particularly at the front. In the early days the after sales tune-up parts manufacturers solved the problem with elongated stub axles to push the front wheels out further.

Then along came the Californian outfit, Andy Products with their wider front suspension arms. Their success has prompted Associated to incorporate wide wishbones as standards in this kit.

In this mode the RC10 automatically becomes more stable during cornering and tracks better

on the straights.

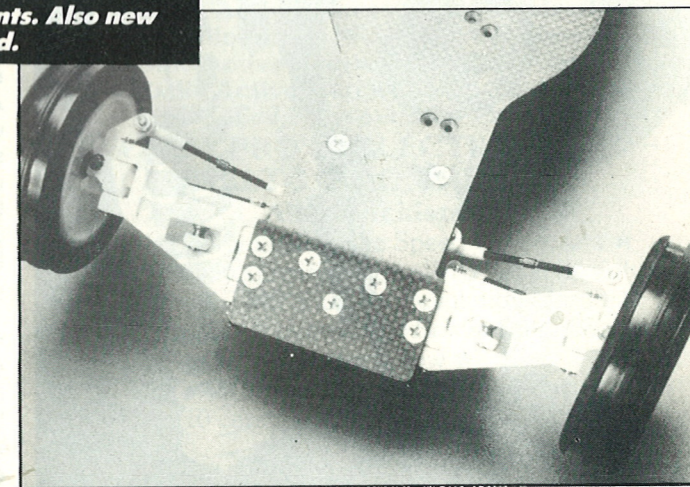
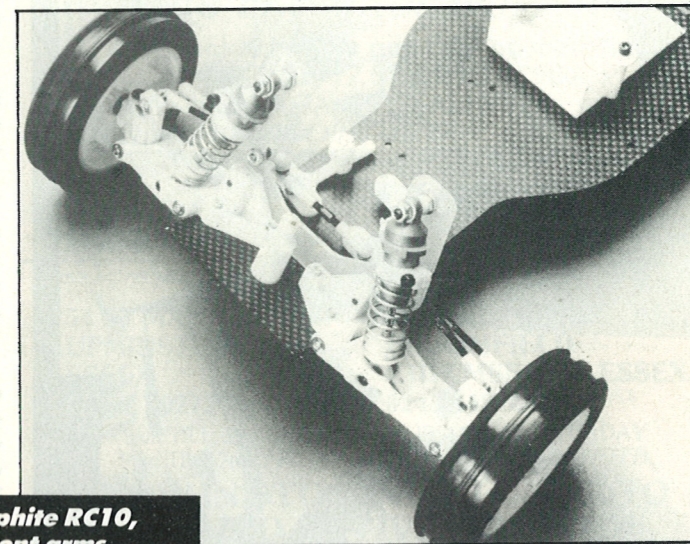
Also at the front the anti-roll bar is retained.

Another of the first changes we Brits made to the RC10 when it first arrived was to chop half an inch off the front of the chassis.

According to the experts, shortening the wheelbase made the car much more responsive on our high grip, twisty circuits.

Associated however never agreed with such drastic measures and proceeded to

The clean lines of the graphite RC10, including the new wide front arms and revised damper mounts. Also new wheels and tyres all round.

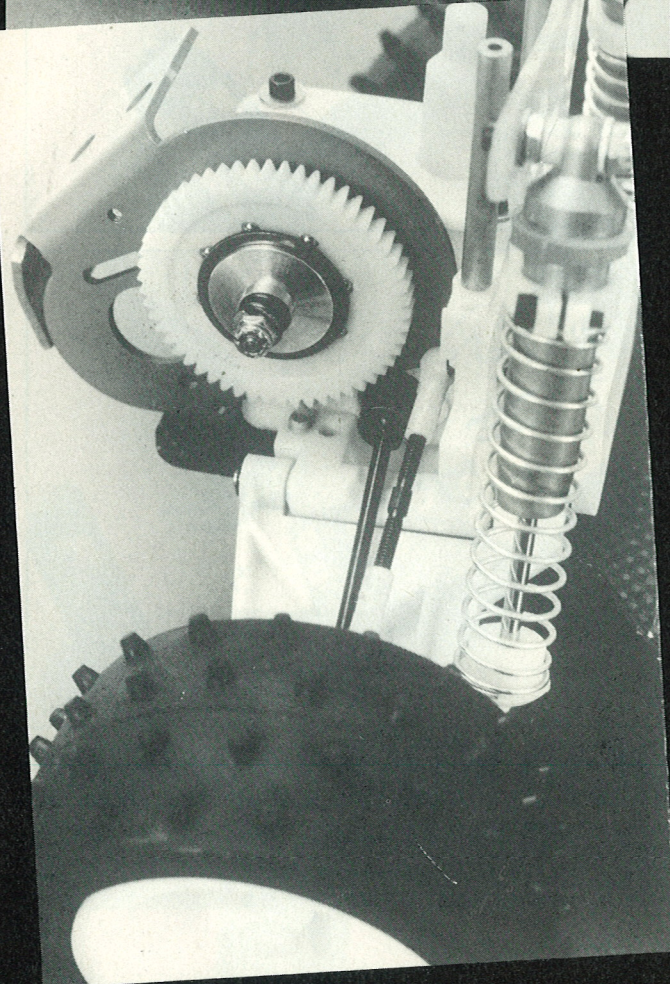
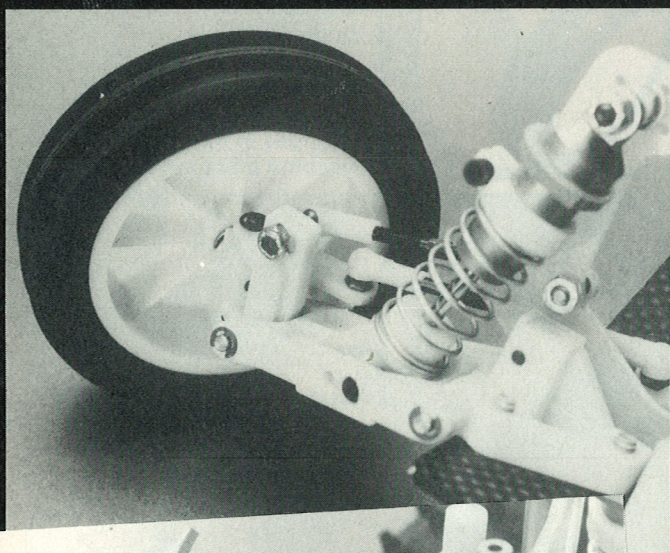
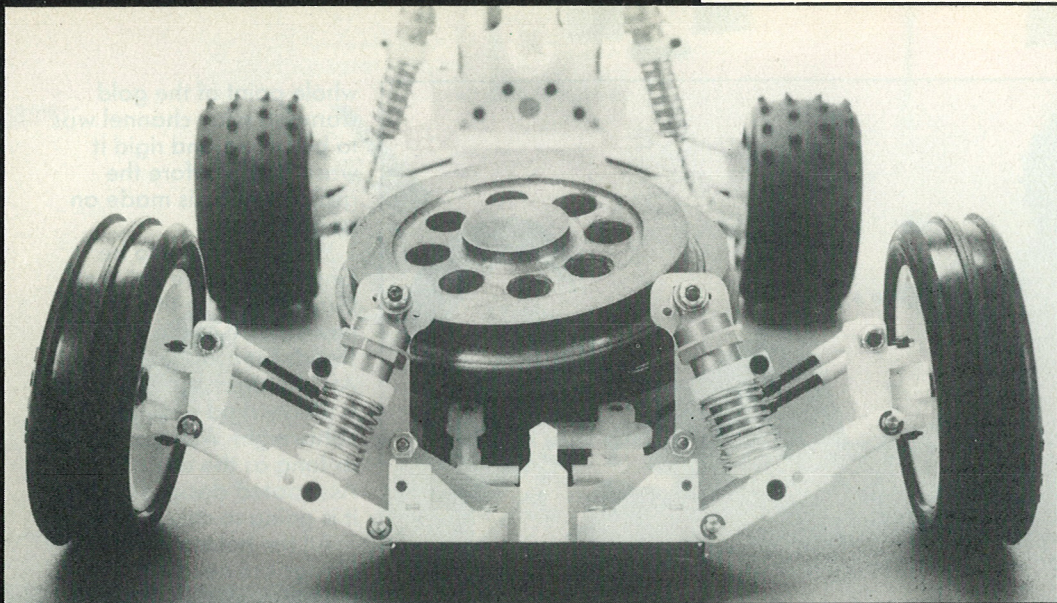


make the point at the Chesham British Grand Prix in 1987, where US Team member 'Jammin' Jay Halsey made his 'long' RC10 run rings round the best of the UK's driver's chopped versions.

Not content with lopping bits off the front many of our drivers cut all sorts of holes and slots in the elegant RC10 chassis to make it lighter. Since the

The

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The suspension now features longer top links which mount further inboard on the GRP bulkhead. The reason for this is to lessen the amount of camber change of the rear wheels during suspension movement.

Inside the gearbox little has changed except that the plastic idler gears which were formerly moulded in white plastic are now black. This may signify a change of material since Associated experienced problems not so long back with these gears which began to lose their teeth dramatically.

The problem was compounded by the new generation of super motors with all manner of hot winds which had the net result of increasing the net amount of power actually passing through the gearbox.

The real reason for the problem however was ultimately traced by Associated to an unintended change in the specification of the plastic used in the moulding. If black means better than we can all go back to bombproof and trouble-free gearboxes.

One other tried and tested modification to the gearbox was the fitting of large ballraces to the bottom drive cup outputs to eliminate any play. As expected the kit has this as standard.

The last and most obvious change to this RC10 are the wheels and tyres. The wheels are no longer the three-piece affairs but instead come as a one-

piece, flush-faced moulding. What's more they don't flex all over the place which should be good news immediately after the big jump in the middle of the track.

The front wheel is taller than the original – again in keeping with the current vogue. The tyres are new and still moulded in real rubber.

Much of the TQ Graphite RC10 will be familiar to those who have raced one over the years. The servo saver is still the same – it's still used by the Team despite the number of ballraced alternatives available. Even in this day and age of exotic and hybrid gear tooth forms the RC10 is still supplied with plain 32dp gears.

The wheels are still held on with those plastic wheel nuts whilst the damper design hasn't budged an inch in five years. You can tell this is true because they still leak from the top seal if the plastic washer isn't seated properly. O-rings are the answer, but you don't get them in the kit.

Of course the new RC10 has a new Pro-Tech body but surprisingly no undertray is supplied. Now that the alloy channel chassis has been superseded by a flat plate graphite version an undertray must be essential to protect the radio gear. You might not get too much rain in Southern California but in this country it's an occupational hazard so one should have been included in the kit. Never mind there are plenty of people producing them.

By all accounts the Associated factory is still churning out RC10 kits for the hugely popular two-wheel drive racing class in the States. Even at club level this formula is every bit as well subscribed to as four-wheel drive. Some clubs only race 2WD.

Staying with a winning formula has obviously paid off for the RC10 and only five years clearly shows how fast, good and accurate the original design concept was.

It's still the car to beat at any level of competition.