

alternative american

'a perfect low budget car to put your touring car 'L' plates onto'

Hobby-Tech Touring Car

Why 'Alternative American?', because if the price can be kept competitive this all-American invader could become a very popular model

indeed. It makes a great alternative starter model and a welcome change from the ubiquitous Japanese manufacturers.

Hobby-Tech also supply some excellent wheel and tyre combinations that look very smart, particularly the 'Goodyear Eagle' tyres. Fresh from the Chicago Fair this Chevy Monte Carlo bodied touring car was whisked back to the UK by Race Car's undercover reporters. The Hobby-Tech Touring Car sports a number of 'must have' attributes.

- ✓ It can be built as a wide or a narrow touring car.
- ✓ Choice of a Touring Car or a Nascar body shell.
- ✓ It is belt drive, 4 wheel drive with independent suspension.
- ✓ Uses the standard Stick Pack NiCad battery.
- ✓ Fitted with a Standard sealed endbell, 540 type motor.

To complete the car you are going to need a 2 channel radio set with one servo, an Electronic Speed Controller - ESC, NiCad battery Pack, charger, paint and decals.

Kit or RTR?

Now my sample came pre-built but the chassis design is so straightforward it would be a very simple kit to build. The construction is almost all plastic of some kind but that is



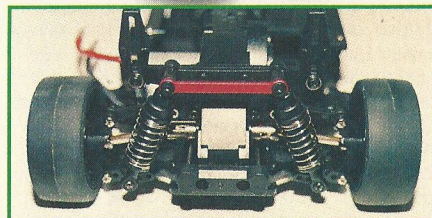
A wee bit dumpy for a Nascar Chevy Monte Carlo but it is OK and the wheels save it. 'Tie and dry' paint job was only semi successful.

not necessarily a problem. A well known Japanese manufacturer also uses plastic chassis and suspension components without any problems. The chassis base is nicely recessed to stop the screw heads being ground away on the tarmac, nice touch on a budget model. The NiCad cell pack has a nicely formed, large container with a quick release system. The space available for the radio receiver and the ESC is vast. I used the minute Keyence A-01 because I wanted to give it a test, not because I needed its minute size. The belt drive is nicely protected from damage. When I had a peer into the gearbox I found a 78 tooth spur and a 23 tooth pinion. The amount of adjustment on the motor mount was limited so alternate gear sets would have to be confined to minor changes.

The shocks were a bit of a shock, they have no damping whatsoever. Now this should be a serious loss of points for the Hobby Tech but.....

Changing the shockers would be a straightforward job and probably well worth it for competition. The shock towers front and rear have very nice anodised alloy braces, a neat touch. The kit wheels and tyres are very smart, accurate looking NASCAR type wheels with 'Goodyear Eagle' slicks, nice.

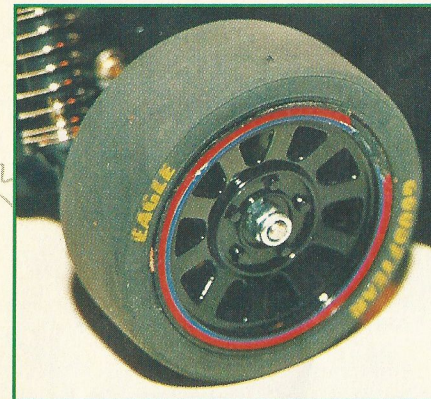
Alternative suspension arms and 'dogbones' are provided to convert the car to a BRCA legal width if required. Although the suspension links are all fixed this is not a problem



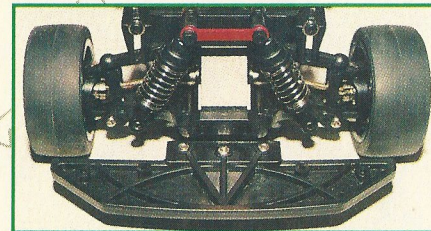
The rear end features alternative shock positions and a nice anodised alloy shock tower brace. Very neat adjustable body mounts.



Luckily CML had thoughtfully provided a spare pair of these really good looking wheels and tyres. The Keyence A01 Speedo was very smooth.



One fairly soft 'off' into a high curb caused this damage to both wheels on this side.



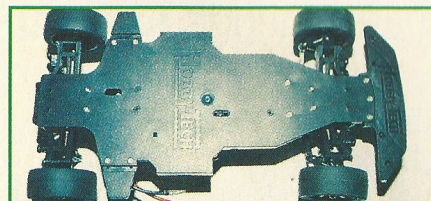
The front end warrants the same comments as the back. Neat bumper, body mounts and anodised shock brace. Crude, spring only shockers but they er. work.

on an entry level kit like this. The lack of adjustment means that the novice cannot get into a mess with a poor setup.

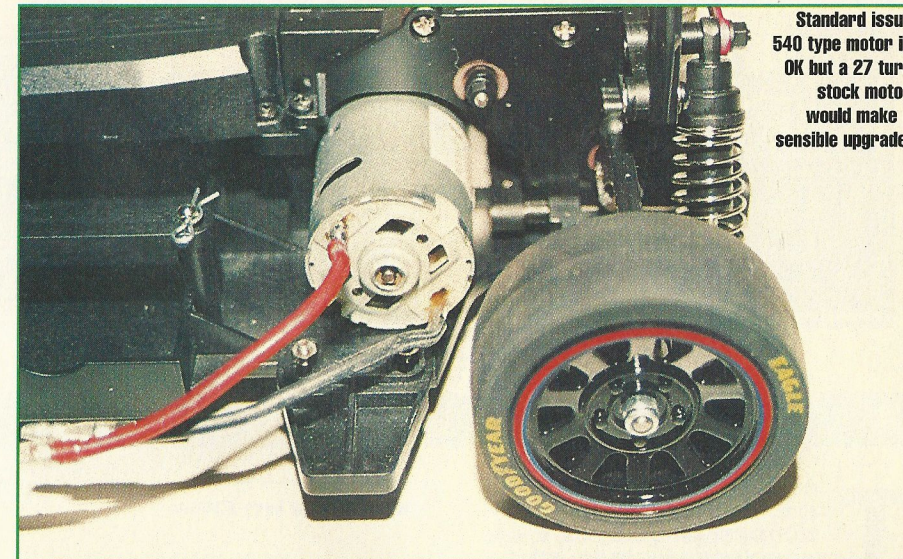
The bodyshell is a little bit disappointing, certainly not up to that of the best Japanese kits but once painted it does have the 'look' of a NASCAR racer. A strange, clingfilm like, covering on the inside serves as a mask for painting. Unfortunately it was less than 100% effective so my 'tie and dye' paint job ended up a bit weird, come back Terry Atkinson, all is forgiven!

Drive it

Now this was where I received my biggest surprise. I had looked at the car as it emerged from the box and I had made some instant judgments. It looks nice and simple. It looks nice and tough. I like the recessed chassis etc. etc. I had also pressed the chassis down and watched it bounced alarmingly back with no damping whatsoever and thought Uh-Oh, this is so crude. And it is. But that is not the whole story. I charged up a 1400 NiCad, fitted the bodyshell and trundled off to set the trim. Runs nice and straight I thought. I then turned and trundled back before giving the throttle a somewhat bigger push. Oh, good traction I thought, little wheelspin and a dead straight take off. Suitable impressed I turned to come back at a fairly decent lick, gave it full throttle and it.... did not spin. The tarmac was 'green' and greasy and it just turned. The car works. OK, the standard motor is no fireball and a 1400 cell pack is hardly going to add 'smokin' performance but it did handle nicely.



Recessed chassis with adjustable 'nerf' bars and a stout front bumper.

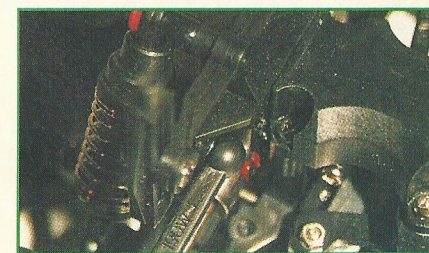
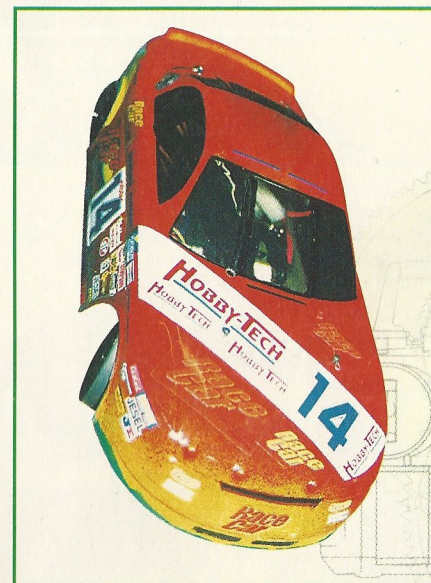


Standard issue 540 type motor is OK but a 27 turn stock motor would make a sensible upgrade.

Having proved that point of course I promptly went into total 'hooligan' mode and tried to spin the darn thing. The car handles in a totally benign manner, it just understeers even when you hurl it into a greasy corner. The kit tyres hang on well and it goes where you point it. I did find that a fairly gentle 'off' against something solid resulted in both the wheels on that side being damaged. I think that the wheels are a bit on the brittle side. If you were terrified of going racing in touring cars and wanted something to start with then stick a 1700 or 2000 cell pack in this car, add a 27 turn stock motor, and go and enjoy yourself. The car is so friendly you could just get on and concentrate on driving in competition with 9 other loonies without having to panic about keeping on the black stuff.

Conclusion

If the price in the shop ends over £100, you probably need to look elsewhere - if it is under £100 then this an excellent buy. I reckon the chassis is well engineered and a perfect low budget car to put your touring car 'L' plates on. As I am determined to 'fiddle' with things I am going to fit a 27 turn stock motor and a set of proper shocks and spring sets that I have around, and see how 'tunable' the car is. Form an orderly queue at CML's door to spend that Christmas money from dear Aunt Florence. **RRCI**



Steering arms and top links detail shows the width and side markings. Alternative narrow suspension and 'dogbones' are in the box.

Quick Spec

1:10th scale electric Touring car. Belt drive 4WD. Can be built wide or narrow spec. Kit includes Motor. 2 channel Radio, ESC, NiCad, Charger, Paint & Decals to complete. Bodyshell included.

Testers Kit

Keyence A-01 ESC
Various 1400 NiCad Cell packs
K O Propo Charger
Parma Nascar Decal sheet
Acoms Alpha Radio and receiver.
Futaba 3003 servo
Kit Tyres & Motor

Likes:

Honest quality of kit
Totally fail safe handling
Super wheel/tyre detail

Dislikes:

Lack of go from standard motor
All that understeer can be too much of a good thing - needs a hotter motor
Wheels were easily damaged

23:59:58
31.12.98
New Year New Gear

23:59:58
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