

O.K., let's face it, there is something about engines which creates a deep stirring within many of us. Some satisfy these urges by messing with full size cars, some with motorbikes and some with glow engined model cars. Whatever it is that attracts us to an engine, whether it has 2bhp or 200bhp, there is still nothing quite like the smell of the fuel mingling sweetly with the aromas of the oil and the grease to satisfy these stirrings. I know it's hard to believe but, even I, a self professed electric-powered addict still enjoy tinkering with IC power (not that I know what I'm really doing!) every now and again and thankfully, my mate Alan (the Ed.) has let me review a new, 1/10th IC powered off road car – The Victra.

V for VICTRA!

RADIO CONTROL MODEL CARS

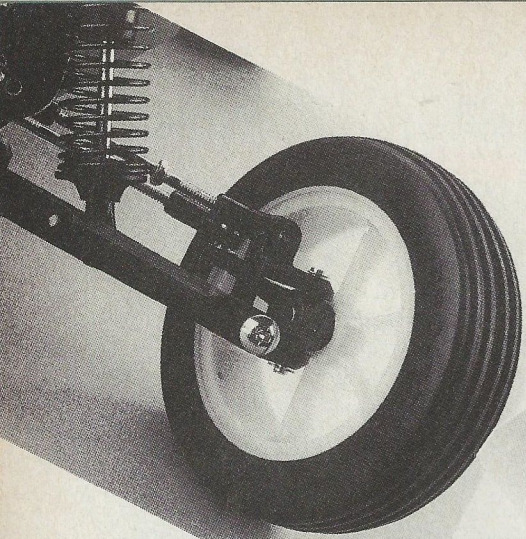
The Victra is made by a Taiwanese company called Image Models (not to be confused with a rather more local model shop in Letchworth!). Essentially, it is a two wheel drive car, aimed at the first-time buyer market rather than the established enthusiast but it has a whole host of features which puts it

slightly above the entry base level. The car comes 100 percent fully assembled but without radio control equipment. All that is required is for you to install your choice of two channel R/C gear, and to cut-out and paint the bodyshell and wing. It is powered by a .12 cubic inch engine, also

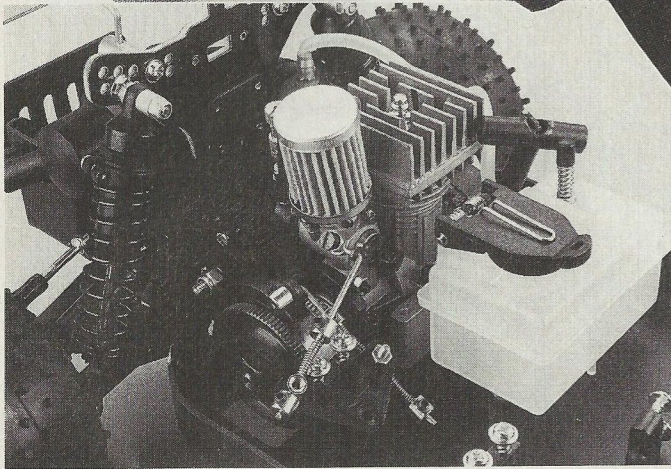
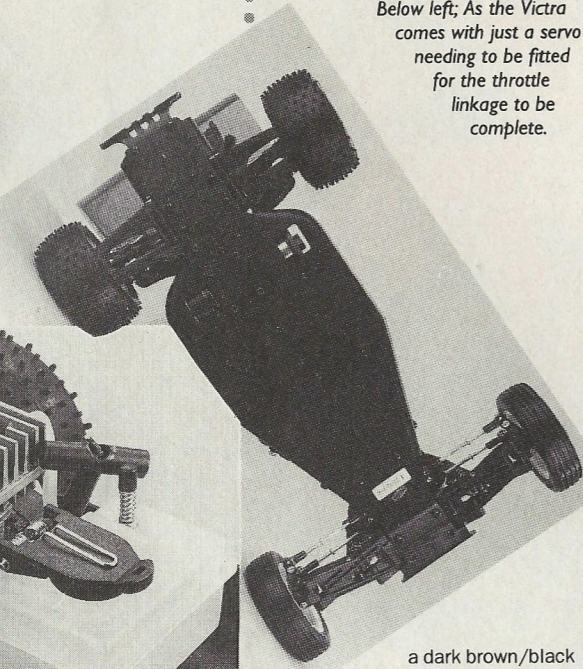
manufactured by Image Models although it does look suspiciously like an ASP 12.

Drive from the engine to the gearbox is via a main spur gear which is mounted to a slipper clutch. This is a device which is found on many, more expensive, electric powered off road vehicles

which does two things; firstly, it can be adjusted to suit the track conditions in order to provide a limited amount of slip under acceleration thereby making it easier to drive. Secondly, it can be used to lessen the shocks transmitted through the gearbox when the car lands after jumping

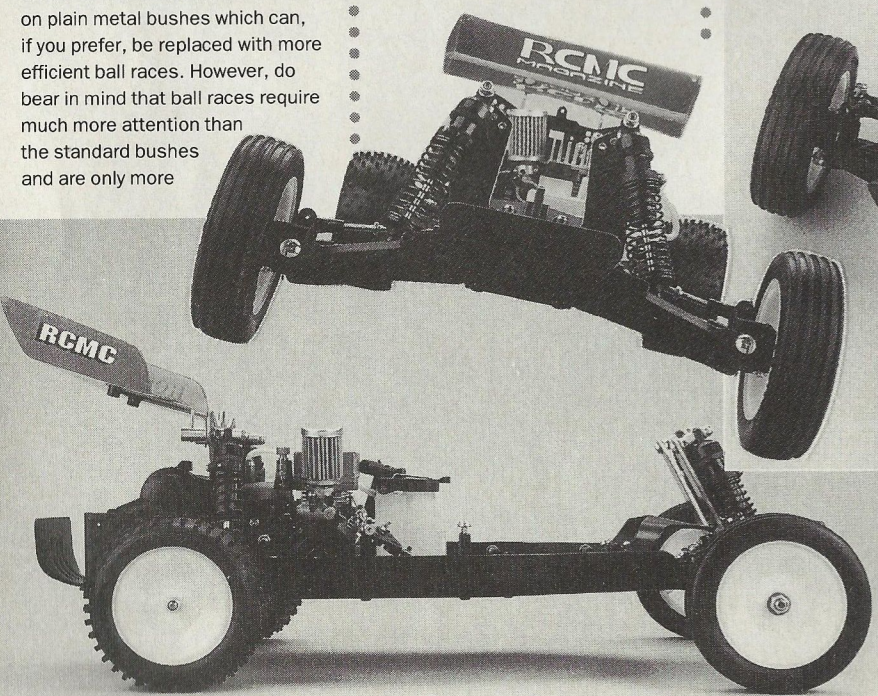


Underside of the chassis exposes the engine flywheel so if required a separate starter can be used. Below left; As the Victra comes with just a servo needing to be fitted for the throttle linkage to be complete.



which increases the life of the gears and other components. Drive from the gearbox to the rear wheels is via telescopic driveshafts. These are very efficient but must be kept fairly free of dust else they will begin to bind and become very inefficient. The gearbox itself is a geared drive and consists of three gears, the bottom one also being the housing for the geared differential. All the shafts and wheel axles run on plain metal bushes which can, if you prefer, be replaced with more efficient ball races. However, do bear in mind that ball races require much more attention than the standard bushes and are only more

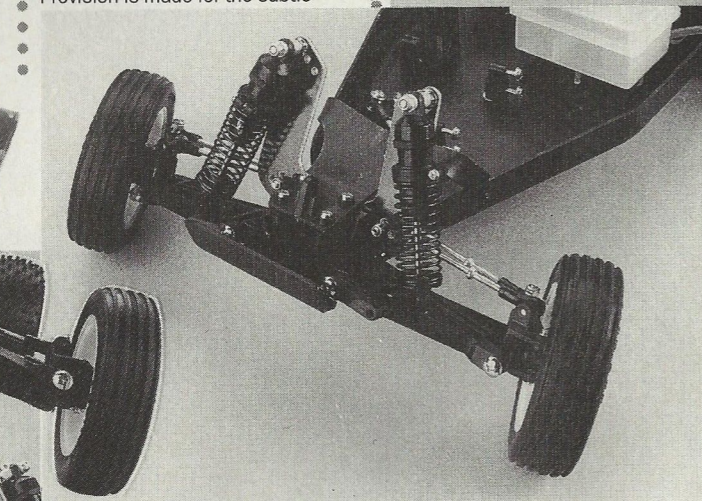
efficient when they are clean and operating properly. The engine is mounted amidships onto the extremely durable chassis. This is an aluminium tub (a la RC10) and is made from aircraft quality aluminium. It is then finished in a rather natty dark brown/black colour to make it even more durable. In fact, all of the components, be they aluminium, plastic or GRP, are all finished with



adjustment of damper angles which affect the handling of the car. This all adds up to a car which has competition in its breeding and certainly in mind, possibly in the future. The dampers themselves are, if anything, the weakest part of the whole concept. They do perform well but, due to cost implications, are standard grade shocks with plastic bodies. They seal well, and they provide a smooth action, but they are not as good as a set of top quality teflon coated shocks which, incidentally, are listed in the options parts list.

Having said all that, it is good to see long throw, oil filled dampers being included in a kit which makes no pretenses about being an entry level model as stated earlier. One of the best things about this kit, if you are a first time buyer is that everything is ready assembled, even down to the throttle and brake linkages which, for the novice, can

a dark brown/black colour which makes the car look very attractive. The suspension setup is pure 1/10th electric competition style with a single wishbone and an adjustable top link which makes fine tuning very easy. Turnbuckles are used throughout the car and they come with a large size 'nut' on them which makes adjustments very quick and easy to carry out. A spanner is also included in the kit, along with the obligatory box wrench, and a variety of Allen keys. The damper mounts are made from Glass reinforced Plastic (GRP.) and should prove to be very durable. Provision is made for the subtle



Victra's long travel smooth suspension will guarantee that the car can be run safely on bumpy circuits. Black anodised chassis is ideally suited for the job being very tough, keeping the dirt out and an excellent cooler for the engine.

be quite difficult to set up at first. Even the fuel pipes and the engine silencer/muffler is all installed. The last thing in most kits is the bodyshell and wing which is ironic because its the first thing that most people see and makes their first impressions with. The Victra bodyshell is modelled on the classic dune buggy style; single seat, narrow bodied with side pods extending between the wheels. There is no mid way with this bodyshell, you'll either love it or hate it - no compromise. Unfortunately, after I'd sprayed it, and displayed it in my local model shop, most people were less than

enthusiastic about the car's looks. Take the shell off, and it was an entirely different matter and a lot of hardened electric enthusiasts, like myself, were very interested. It's a pity that such a minor point as a bodyshell can make such an impression over any of the car's other, technical specifications. I can understand why real car manufacturers spend millions on the aesthetics (the looks) of any new models.

Conclusions

The Victra is a classic compromise, and it works extremely well! It has many features which makes it an ideal car for the novice who is only interested in thrashing it about for leisure, but equally, it has many features which are found on

competition orientated cars which have, in themselves, not been compromised in quality. Even the dampers which I griped about earlier, are more than adequate for the job they were intended for. In all, it's a good package but, in the course of this review, two or three things have stuck out as oversights; Firstly, and most importantly, the instructions do NOT provide any information as to the setting of the engine or what should be expected once it is running. In my mind, this is essential in order to provide the maximum enjoyment for the novice. Secondly, the pull start seemed very temperamental. Even though the car wasn't run, the pull start was tried out and, after two pulls, it refused to recoil. Taking the glow plug out and applying a small amount of oil to the engine seemed to do the trick but, even now, it

would appear that the pull-start will be fragile and, in the long term, it may be worthwhile investing in a more conventional starter and using the flywheel on the engine instead of the pull-start. Thirdly, and this really is a minor point, it would be nice to see the chassis holes all countersunk because it provides a much smoother chassis bottom and it looks much neater. The Victra is imported and distributed by Ripmax Models whose extensive network will ensure that availability, and more importantly, spares availability, will be no problem and, as I write this, the bits are already in stock. Prices will invariably vary at the moment with sterling but it should retail at approximately £170 - £180 which makes one of the best value car of this type on the market at this time. If it takes your fancy, then check it out at your local Ripmax Stockist.

Victra's body work surrounds the internals and has a rather slab sided appearance. Nice touch is the alloy wing mountings and rear battery box.

