

When I was asked if I would like to assemble and review Kyosho's 1/10 'Gas Power' Ford Mondeo, as a complete newcomer to model cars of any sort I really didn't know just what to expect. Having always wanted a radio controlled car from an early age, I jumped at the chance with open arms, but nevertheless I had some reservations about my ability to make the bodyshell look good enough for the magazine.

Help!

Having gazed at the picture on the box for ages, I eventually plucked up the courage to open the box and immediately found a mass of plastic bags, each containing loads of plastic parts, and an instruction booklet that on first glance looked to me like it had been written in Swahili, although thankfully, after reading it through a couple of times before actually getting on with it, it wasn't too hard to understand. One half of me was saying "Put the lid back on and bow out gracefully," but of course I decided not to, so after removing the instructions and all of the plastic bags from the box, I was greeted with a

The rear end again uses moulded top links to ensure the correct angles are set to the suspension. Note the realistic tyre pattern, and the use of plastic spacers fitted above the springs - Tim initially didn't install them, and found the car's bottom dragged on the ground. Ouch!



very welcome sight — the chassis. This was already semi-assembled, with the nitro (glow plug ignition! Ed) engine, transmission, driveshafts and steering mechanism all there in the right places, fully complete and attached. I must admit

Moulded, fixed length top links mean that the correct camber angles are built-in during the car's construction.

that the thought of having to build a 'nitro engine' had really worried me (this illustrates just how much of a 'first timer' Tim was! Ed).

As far as I could make out, the wheels, suspension and radio equipment were all that was left to assemble and install, plus of course painting the bodyshell.

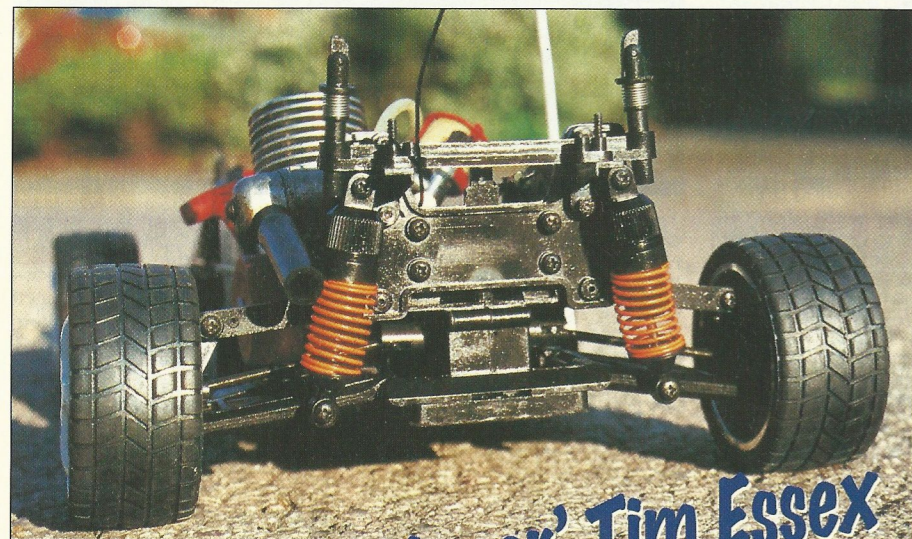
Hey, It's Not So Bad...

With my newly found confidence I began with the wheels and tyres. Before I realised it, one wheel assembly was completed — no worries — and at that stage I remembered my brother telling me not to forget to cement the tyres to the wheels otherwise they wouldn't stay on. My local model shop, Blackwell's of Hawkwell, Westcliff on Sea, Essex., advised me to place tiny blobs of glue on the inner and outer rim to tyre joint rather than completely cementing the tyres, thus making it easier to remove the tyres when they need replacing.

The suspension dampers were next on the agenda, and these proved slightly more difficult. Having thought that I had followed the instructions very carefully, I was presented with what I believe to be the classic model builder's nightmare; two parts left over. All of my confidence evaporated, and I was left looking at these two plastic 'C' shaped parts. I just couldn't for the life of me work out whether these parts were part of the damper that I'd just built, or part of something else I had yet to come to in the instructions. Frustration started to set in as I sat there for twenty minutes and still couldn't work it out. After re-reading the instructions for what seemed like the eighty fourth time, I suddenly realised that these parts were the ride height adjustment spacers for the suspension springs — Bingo! Having sorted that problem out, I then



The Mondeo even features realistic (dummy) vented rear disc brakes.



'Absolute Beginner' Tim Essex Relates His Experiences With His First Ever Model Car...

Ford Mondeo

KYOSHO'S 1/10 'GAS'

built the remaining three. Once they were all assembled I connected them to the chassis, but to my horror the rear of the car hit the ground. What had I done wrong? My only option was to strip down and reassemble both rear dampers, as I'd previously noticed that some of the oil that I had filled them with had seeped out and maybe there was also some air in the cylinders. Rebuilding them did the trick, and realising that the 'C' shaped plastic spring spacers were required to increase the ground clearance, they were clipped to the dampers, after which the coil spring/damper units held the rear end clear of the ground as they should.

After a brief conversation with my local model shop, I bought an Acoms 2 channel Techniplus radio set, which came with the servos, receiver and a battery box. I anticipated a few problems in fitting the radio equipment, but by following the instructions to the letter, to my total amazement it all went in very smoothly. Although brief, the instructions were precise and clear.



The Dreaded Bodyshell!

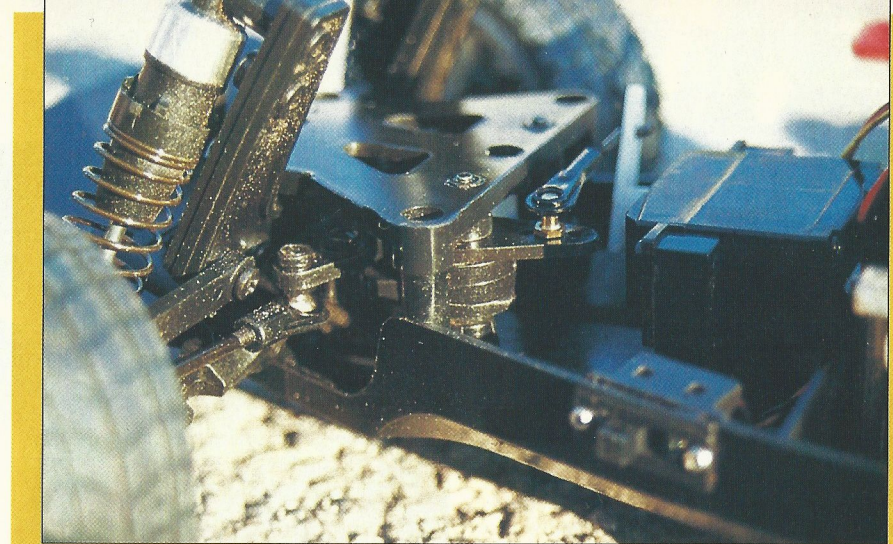
Now for the part that I hadn't been looking forward to, the bodyshell. Armed with a scalpel that was as sharp as Jo Brand's tongue, I began to lightly score along the guide lines provided on the shell, repeating this process time and time again until I was through the plastic. Having trimmed the shell in this manner, I've since been told that it's not necessary to actually 'cut' the lexan, as merely scoring the material then bending it back and forth gives a nice neat 'snap' line. The shell was then ready to be painted.

I decided to copy the Mondeo's box-top colour scheme using Pactra aerosol lexan paint. Painting is something I've never been good at, but I followed the instructions and was pleasantly surprised with the outcome. The black trim around the front and rear windows requires the steadiest of hands, and became a bit confusing when the guidelines at one stage seemed to disappear, but apart from that I had no major problems. It is important to remember to properly mask all of the areas that don't require painting. This paint dries extremely quickly, and it is essential that you read the instructions on the side of the paint can. Once all of the hundred or so individual stickers were in place (well, it seemed that many!) the bodyshell was finished, and the moment had eventually come to 'road test'.

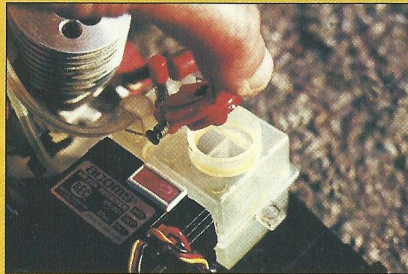
I was advised by my local model shop to run in the Kyosho GS11X engine on Duraglo 5% nitromethane fuel. I was told that once the 1/2 gallon container had been used up my engine would be fully run in, and that I should then run the engine on Duraglo 10%. Apparently this prolongs the engine's life, so possibly advice like this could be included in the instructions as new engines are quite expensive.

Easy Peasy, Lemon Squeazy...

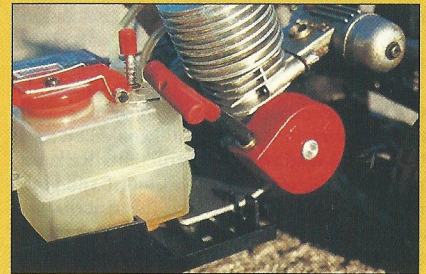
With fuel in the tank, the glow plug lighter fully charged and in place, and the rear of the car well off the ground in case the clutch bit and the wheels spun, I pulled the starter handle. Not expecting the engine to fire straight away, I pulled it again and again. Nothing. I decided to pump a drop more fuel into the carburettor and open the throttle a little more. That did the trick, the engine fired then carried on running. I was so chuffed! The sound and smell of the engine's exhaust was fantastic. I then turned the throttle down, removed the glow plug lighter and switched the radio equipment on. Leaving the bodyshell to one side, I very gingerly took the Mondeo for its first trip.



The steering mechanism features a built-in 'servo saver' which protects the servo gears in the event of a crash.



The flip-top fuel tank means that by making 'pit-stops,' literally hours of driving fun can be enjoyed. Rechargeable nicad cells are the best power source for the radio equipment if long sessions are planned, and suitable ready made packs are also available from Ripmax stockists.



Kyosho's reliable little GS11X glow-plug engine is started via a pull-start mechanism encased in the red moulding seen here, mounted to the engine's backplate. Simple!

The Kyosho 1/10 'Gas Power' Ford Mondeo is imported and distributed to the trade by Ripmax Plc, Ripmax Corner, Green Street, Enfield, Middlesex. EN3 7SJ. Tel (0181) 804 8272.

Remembering the advice about running in, I made a conscious effort to keep the speed down. It wasn't long before I got to grips with the controls and, remembering the reversed steering effect when the car was coming towards me, I put the shell on and immediately drove straight into a wall! My heart missed a beat — had I broken it already? To my relief I hadn't — the Mondeo's shell is actually extremely tough, and apart from a small scratch there was no damage done. Full of newly found confidence, I then took the car to a nearby industrial estate and put it through its paces on a deserted car park. As for the handling, well as I've already said I am an 'absolute beginner' so who am I to comment, but the Mondeo seems to do exactly what I want it to

do. My initial thoughts were that the power to the back wheels seemed either on or off, but after a few hours I learnt to regulate the speed thus keeping the Mondeo on my chosen path. This became easier as the engine became fully run-in.

Give Me More!

All in all, Kyosho's 1/10 'Gas Power' Ford Mondeo performed extremely well for me, and I had great pleasure in building, painting and driving it once I overcame my initial nerves. Best of all, I love just playing with it, and it's really funny that my mates who told me I was a big kid for building it, couldn't keep away once they'd had a go with it! From a novice's point of view (that's me), the Mondeo was quite simple to assemble following the comprehensive instructions and using a degree of common sense.

One month after finishing the car, I'm pleased to say that the bodyshell is still in one piece after numerous inevitable crashes. Kyosho's Ford Mondeo certainly looks the part and performs well, the fuel tank giving between 10-15 minutes of running time. It's a good car to start on, and I'm informed by some of my pals that thanks to the fact it's got a real engine in it, it's more exciting than electric cars, although I can't comment as the Mondeo is my first car. What I can tell you is that it won't be the last!

