

OPTION HOUSE 'OPTIMA'

At last the 'Option House' add-on goodies for the 'Optima' have arrived and are available in this country. The parts available can be split into three categories: (a) aesthetic, (b) protective, (c) performance. I will deal with each in turn.

Aesthetic

As the 'Optima' has been such a success Kyosho have decided to celebrate. (They have sold over 100,000 worldwide). To do this they have produced, as part of the 'Option House' package, a set of gold anodised metal chassis parts. Front and gearbox side plates, shock mounts, chassis rails and other small metal brackets. None of these items actually improve the performance but they do enhance the appearance (see photos).

Protective

These parts protect the rear wheels and swinging arms and the motor. The standard kit (and 'Turbo' version) does not offer any protection to the rear of the car, particularly the motor. The motor guard consists of a curved gold anodised plate and a square section mount. The plate is drilled to keep the weight down. The square section mount replaces the rod which is attached between the rear two gearbox mounting plates. This has two holes in it where the motor protection plate attaches. The bottom of the plate is held in position by the rear swinging arm mounting pins.

Protection for the rear wheels consists of a pair of nerf wings. These are made up mainly of gold anodised round section with an extra bolt on mount. The front of the nerf wing is held on by one of the front gearbox side plate 2.6 screws (longer screws are supplied) and the lower rear mounts in the same way.

If the old radio shaker plate is fitted to your car then you will

need to drill two 3mm holes into it to take the top nerf bar mounts. Full dimensions for these are supplied with the parts. On the later models these holes are pre-drilled.

Because these nerf bars have three mounting points they are very strong but still lightweight as they are still made of gold anodised alloy.

Both of these protection additions work extremely well in practice. The motor guard covers almost all of the motor and the nerf wings will deflect any object from striking and/or braking the rear swinging arms.

Performance

The main change from standard parts is the new shocks. The new units are of anodised gold alloy construction and are supplied with a range of three types of piston and three different strength springs. Combining these with the varying grades of damper oil really does give an amazing range of settings to suit both track and driver. Ride height is set in the usual way with a clamping collar round the main body of the unit.

The seal end takes on the same format as the *Associated* dampers with spacers and two O-rings. During testing no leaks were detected at all. In the top of the damper is a rubber dome which seals in an air pocket into the top, similar to the *Tamiya* types. As all these best features of other makes of damper are combined into one, the performance is excellent and well worth paying the extra for, especially as no extra large

mounts need to be made.

If you look at your alloy kit pinions after a few runs you will see that the teeth rapidly wear out and begin to curve over and chip. Kyosho have been quite quick to realise this problem and have produced a large range of steel replacements. These are available from nine teeth upwards which is particularly useful with today's high revving motors which need to be geared down.

Kyosho have now also brought out some replacement tyres and hubs. Unfortunately the new silver hubs must be used with the new tyres. As the tyres are low profile, larger (50mm) hubs are needed to keep the units the same

diameter as the standard tyres which are on 44mm hubs.

Two tread patterns were supplied with the review parts. These were 340/30/20H and 340/30/20S. The tyres 20H have four built up square knobbles across them in offset pairs. The 20S have three slightly different square knobbles at a slight angle then two straight with a triangle on one edge followed by the same but at an opposite angle.

From the information on the packet it can be seen that the 20H are designed for dry hard surfaces as they have less distance between knobbles. The 20S being spaced out will give more traction on wet slippery surfaces.

On the Track

All of these parts were excellent. The damper action kept the wheels well and truly in contact with the track and the new tyres use this to its best advantage giving excellent grip. The protective parts kept the car running despite my fellow drivers' attempts to hit the motor and rear wheels. (I say attempts because they had to catch me first!).

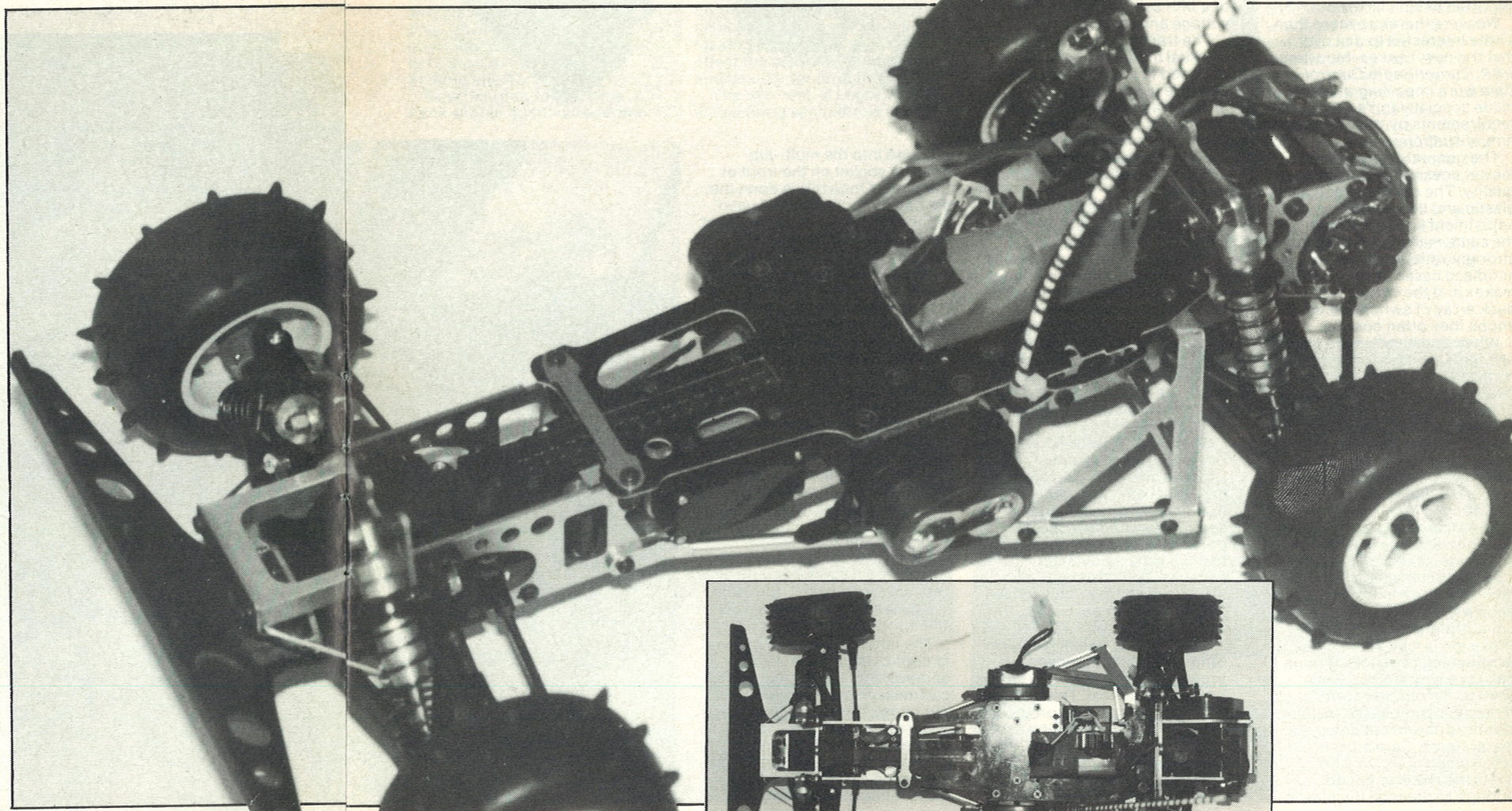
The pinion showed no wear at all, thus saving money as worn pinions will also damage the counter gear.

Of course to round it all off

the gold parts do look nice (some people like to enter concours). To sum up, an excellent range of goodies to further improve an already superb car. Well done Kyosho.

Manufacturer: Kyosho, Japan.
Importer: Ripmax Models, Enfield, Middlesex.
Prices (approx) dampers, front and rear: £22.95.
Motor guard: £5.50.
Nerf wings: £10.25.
Motor pinions: N/A.
Wheel hubs: £4.95.
Tyres: £8.75.
Reviewed by Andy Brasted.

Far left: 'Option House' front dampers provided a useful alternative to the standard kit items. Centre left: gold anodised nerf wings not only look good - they protect as well. Centre right: rear motor guard is essential. Above: the chassis from underneath.



Right: the 'Option House Optima' positively sparkes with its full complement of gold anodised chassis parts on board.

**Model Cars
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Driver take a
closer look at
some recently
introduced items
for R/C car racers.**