

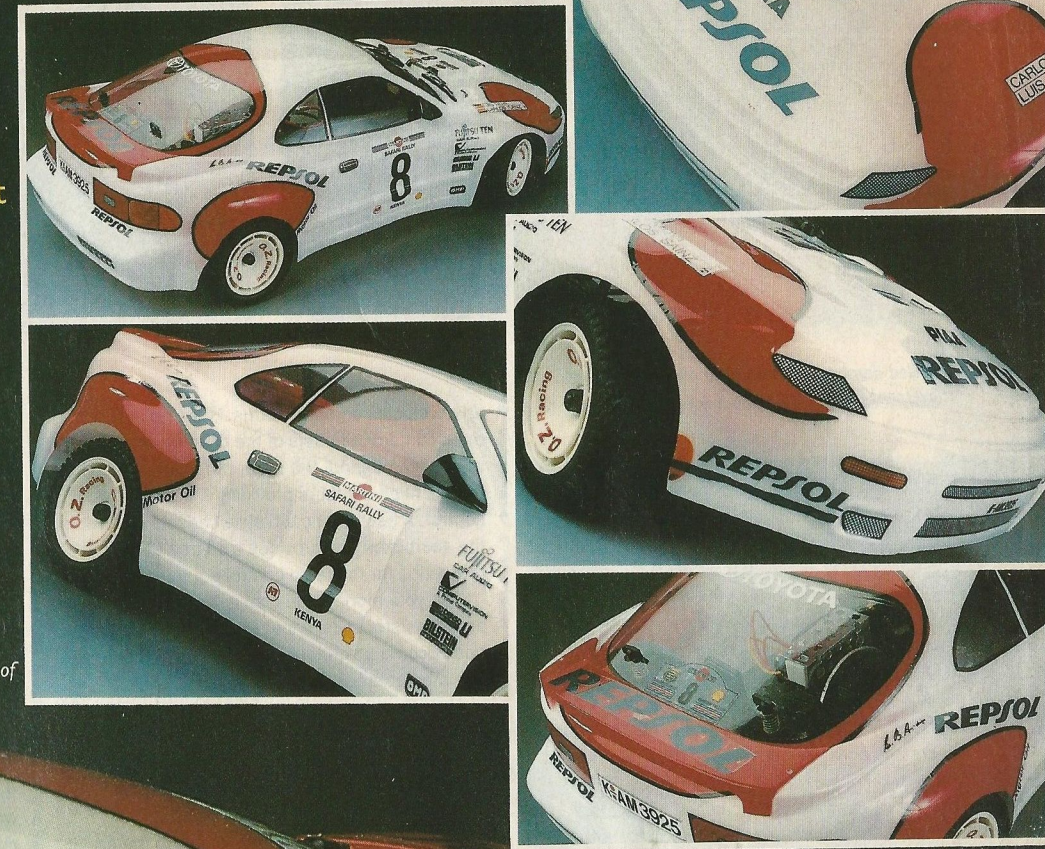
KYOSHO'S RALLY ART

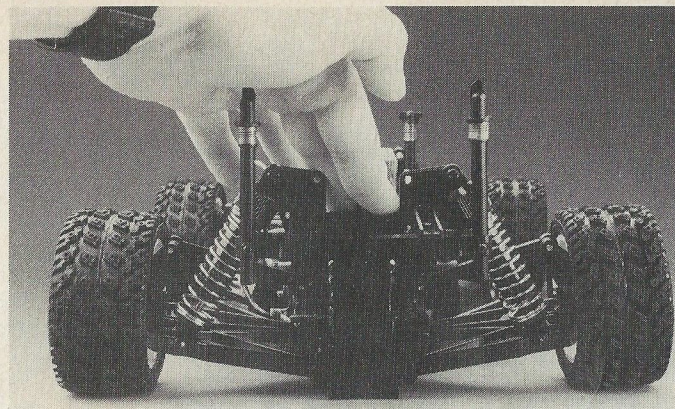
With the run up to Christmas now upon us, many manufacturers are busily engaged in producing new and revised products in order to fill the shelves of model shops across the land with various goodies with which to tempt the buggy buying public to part with their hard earned

cash. Some of these products are good and can be bought with confidence whereas others are not so good and should be avoided at all costs.

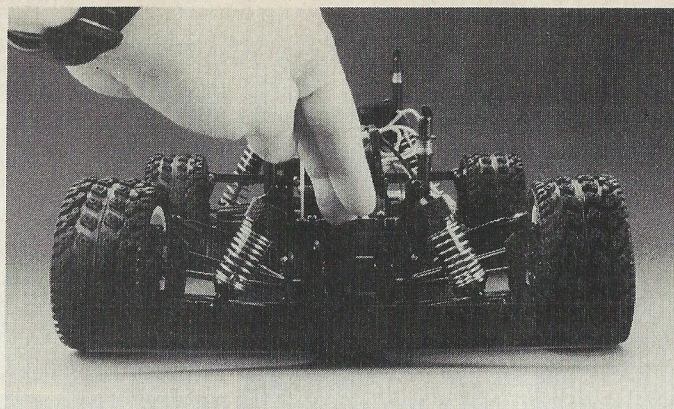
Andy Carter takes a look at the Celica bodied Lazer Alpha – Kyosho's bid for top sales over Christmas

The real Celica is either liked or hated – the shape of the model seems to attract the same feelings...





Oil filled dampers on the Celica allow just enough movement for off-road use.



This can make matters somewhat confusing to say the least but, for many years now, two Japanese companies have shown the way with regards to total quality in their products and both have done it in different styles but with great success. Their names? Kyosho and Tamiya, names that will re-ignite many fond memories with most of the existing buggy buying public.

Kyosho and Tamiya have existing alongside each other within the same marketplace for many years and both have developed their own market niches. Up until recently, the respective companies have tended to concentrate their efforts within their own niches but now, both are expanding into the other's niche.

The differences occur predominantly in packaging and the after sales of spare parts. The Kyosho cars have always tended to package their spares in bags containing only the essential items whereas Tamiya have always marketed their spares as parts sprues containing many parts. These styles have their advantages and disadvantages but with this particular car (and the Lazer Alpha), Kyosho have decided to opt for the Tamiya style of manufacture and packaging.

The Celica kit is basically a Lazer Alpha kit with a Toyota Celica bodyshell on top. This body, once painted, gives a faithful representation of the Carlos Sainz rally car which has proved very successful across the World's rally courses.

The Kyosho car is, like the original, permanently four wheel drive and is aimed at the first time buyer marketplace. Therefore the price and specification of the car has been kept low in order to compete with the Tamiya four wheel

drive vehicles on equal terms. However, the car does contain the basis of the drive system utilised throughout the Lazer range and it also has four oil filled dampers providing the suspension control. A new plastic tub style chassis separates the gearboxes and provides a degree of dust protection for the radio control equipment.

For, your money, you also get a standard motor and a resistor style, wiper speed controller which has become ubiquitous with models competing in this market area.

Upon opening the box, you are faced with an immense clear bodyshell which covers a smaller cardboard box which contains all the parts. At the front of the instruction booklet, after all the information regarding the radio control equipment, is a parts diagram showing the six major parts sprues which are labelled A to F (a la Tamiya!).

The Book Of Words

The instruction booklet begins with putting the four treaded tyres onto the wheels. It is suggested that the tyres are then glued to the wheels using superglue but, I found that the tyres did not slip and this could therefore be omitted.

The next stage is the assembly of the steering mechanism and trackrods. One aspect of the kit which I felt was very good considering the market that the car is intended to fill was that all the trackrods and

upper suspension links are moulded and therefore, do not need adjusting to length. It is not unusual to see the upper suspension links being of this type, but this is the first kit that I have seen where even the steering track rods are moulded in order to avoid any confusion at all.

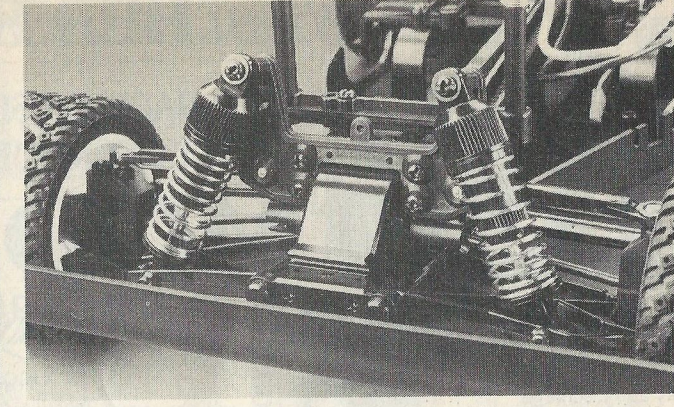
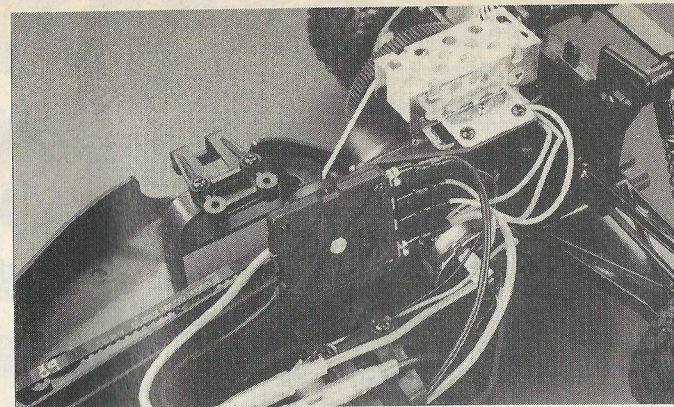
The differentials are the same units used on the slightly more expensive Lazer ZX-Sport kit and are the same internals which date back to the original chain driven Optima. This style of differential is much more preferable for the beginner than the ball type diffs found on the more expensive, competition orientated kits which need a lot more maintenance in order to remain effective. These geared style diffs should work for many months without any need for maintenance at all. Next up on the menu is the assembly of the rear gearbox. Bronze metal bushes are supplied with the kit for the diffs and pulleys to be supported on but these can be replaced with optional ball races which are much more efficient and can prolong the life of the rotating components.

The motor plate and motor are then bolted to the gearbox assembly and, I must admit that I was surprised to see that the motor plate has no provision to allow the use of different size pinion gears as there is no form of adjustment for the mesh of the gearing. This can be beneficial as the pinion gear and spur gear are always meshed correctly thereby eliminating any chance of damaging the spur gear by incorrect meshing of the gears. It is possible that, at a later date, a different motor plate could be fitted (possibly sourced from the Lazer Sport) which would enable this adjustment to be made.

The next stage is to fit the two front gearbox halves together and then screw the complete transmission onto the chassis and, once this painless stage is completed, the steering

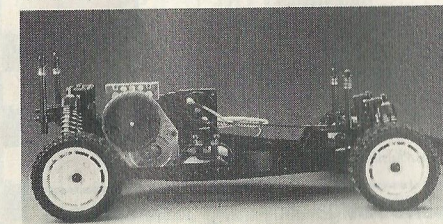
assembly (which was the first assembly step) is then put into place and made secure by means of a front plate/chassis brace.

The front knuckle joints and uprights all go together with no problems at all which is no surprise as they look to be pure copies of the



existing Kyosho system. Subtle money saving components are used throughout construction instead of utilising existing components which are more expensive to manufacture. A good example of this is the screws which hold the knuckle arm to the upright. On most of the other Kyosho four wheel drive cars, this is done by the use of king pins which are stepped and have a hexagonal head on them to enable them to be screwed in using a box wrench. On this car, some stepped screws provide this location.

The wishbones are new but are copies of the Lazer items but made from, what I suspect to be a cheaper plastic (as is the rest of the car) in order to reduce costs. Unfortunately, only one hole is provided on the wishbones for the shock absorber mounting but, I suspect that standard Lazer wishbones would probably fit with little or no modification at all.



Are you ready for a Celica?

Shocking!!!

The shock absorbers are plastic bodied items which are different from the existing Kyosho dampers. These still retain a twin O-ring seal and, for the type of shock they are, work very well. The springs however, seem very heavy compared to the level of damping that can be achieved by using the standard shock oil. In fact, once in position, the shock absorbers do appear to have minimal damping control and seem to rely more of the springing efficiency of the units.

By this stage, the car is looking virtually complete and next up on the agenda is the installation of the mechanical speed controller and the radio equipment. This car has been designed to take two servos and a receiver without too much difficulty but, as always, care should be taken when routing the radio wires in order to avoid the wires chaffing or becoming damaged by any moving component, especially the main belt.

Once the wheels and the front bumper have been put on, all that remains is the assembly of the body mounts and the finishing of the body shell.

The body mounts are nothing new to this kit. They are the same items as used on every other

Kyosho rally style 1/10th car from the Citroen Rally Raid through to the Glow engined Peugeot 405 and Ford RS200. They are sprung loaded mount with integral plastic clips used to retain the bodyshell in place without the use of separate body clips which always end up being lost!!

The Bodyshell

A good looking bodyshell is essential to the success of a kit of this type and, to start with, unfortunately this bodyshell isn't very attractive. However, first impressions are often misleading and, once the shell has been painted and finished, it does look the part, proudly displaying sponsors names and logos. The paint scheme itself is reasonably simple and is helped no end by the inclusion of masking lines moulded lightly into the profile of the bodyshell. The decals provided are quite difficult to use, but, if time is spent carefully at this stage, they go on quite easily once a knack has been developed.

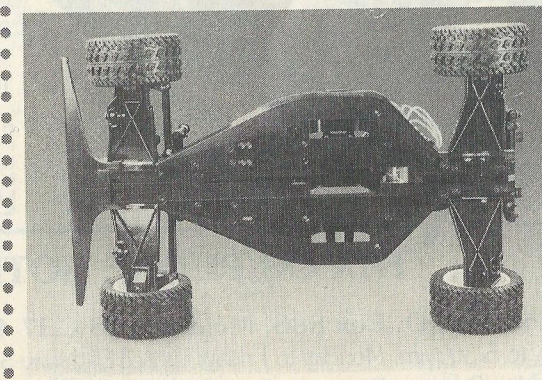
Conclusions

It is quite difficult not to make unfair comparisons with this kit and other, more expensive Kyosho kits which have more features, but there are many plus points in the cars favor which could swing the balance over the competition. Firstly, the car is simple to assemble and goes together well. Secondly, the car looks more realistic than a pure buggy does.

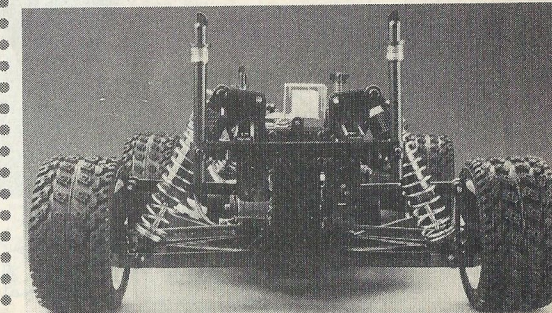
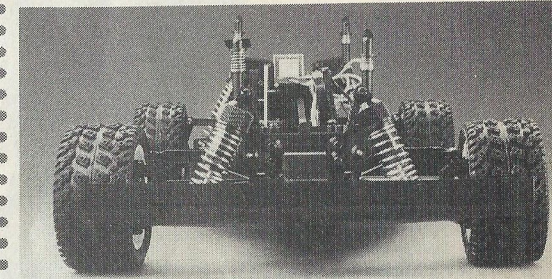
Another point I liked a lot was that the instructions actually tell you what parts sprue and screw bag you need for each and every stage of the construction, thereby further reducing the risk of assembling the car wrongly.

The instructions are easy to follow although, the diagrams are not quite as clear as the Tamiya ones (but, then again, I haven't found any instruction booklet that matches the Tamiya booklets!)

Underside shows off more of the tub moulding detail.



Large front bumper is hidden under the bodyshell.



All said and done though, you must judge this car on its own merits, and not make too many comparisons with the more expensive Lazer cars. The adverts suggest that the Lazer Alpha and therefore the Celica are totally upgradable to Lazer ZX-R specification. This, I fear, may not be as feasible as it initially seems as virtually every component on the car is different in manufacture than those used on the ZX-R and ZX-Sport.

Whether the car is a complete success or not depends entirely on the buggy buying public but, it is fair to say that this car does have potential to fight it out with the best of them in one of the most fiercely competed areas of the market.

Once A Kyosho...Always a Kyosho

Although the kit has been devised along the lines of a Tamiya one, there are still some subtle variations between the styles of the two manufacturers which, I suspect will always exist.

The Verdict

Watch out Tamiya as Kyosho are now attacking you right on your doorstep with a range of budget priced kits, of which the Celica is one and are proving to be extremely quick at learning the new ropes involved.