CHEAP FRILLS

With the recent increase in touring style R/C cars, it's nice to see Parma joining in and producing a cheap, easy to build and maintain circuit or car park racer

The basis of the chassis is a glass fibre plate, to which is bolted the front suspension and rear axle pod/motor mount. The front suspension cross-member carries the steering arms which are mounted on sprung kingpins allowing about 5mm of movement. The springs are retained by small circlips - fit them carefully or they'll ping all over the room!

The front body mounting posts fit to the cross-member and are adjustable for height by a collet retained by a grub screw. At the rear, an aluminium motor pod is secured to the chassis and carries the steel rear axle running in bronze bushes. Metal screws are used throughout the construction into plastic nuts, which should prevent any bits dropping off mid-race!

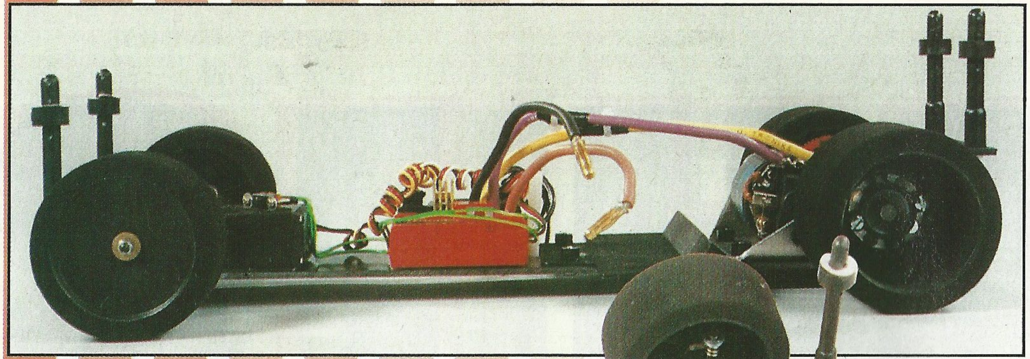
A ball differential is included in the kit which assembles easily and slides neatly onto the axle, followed by very nice turned aluminium hub carriers. These are retained by grub screws which locate onto flats on the axle. It is important to allow a tiny amount of play in the axle to allow for free running. Of course, the bushes could be replaced with flanged bearing to further reduce friction.

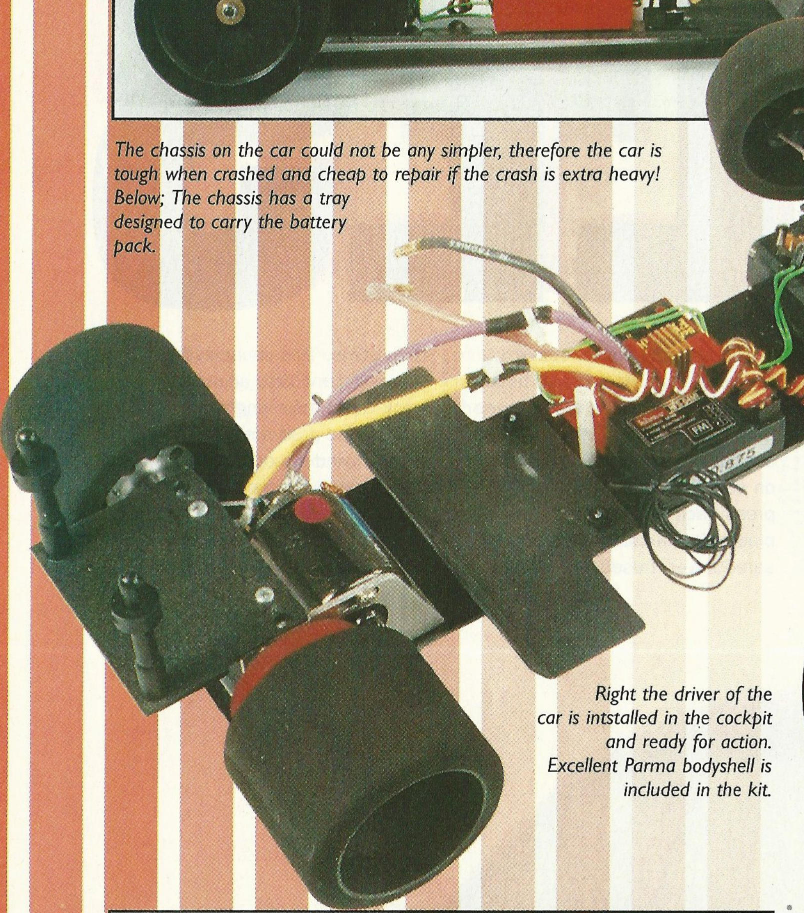
The pod allows for fitment of a variety of motors and is slotted for adjustment of gear mesh. You must provide a pinion which should be 48 pitch.

A plastic plate fits onto the rear of the aluminium pod which carries the rear body mounting posts. I found it necessary to trim the plastic slightly to clear the spur gear. Immediately ahead of the motor, sitting across the chassis, an angled plastic plate is used to hold the battery. The two black rubber bands supplied should stop the cells flying out when racing.

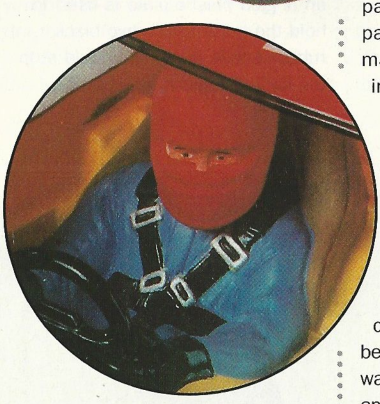
The steering servo, speed controller and receiver are fixed to the chassis using servo tape. Clean the mating surfaces carefully (a drop of motor spray on some tissue is good), then press each item carefully into place. You will have to supply a servo saver, I used a Tamiya direct type. This connects to the steering arms with adjustable track rods, their length set by collets and grub screws. The receiver and speed controller fit side by side on the chassis.

Foam tyres are supplied, which are nicely mounted and trued on plastic hubs. The front wheels

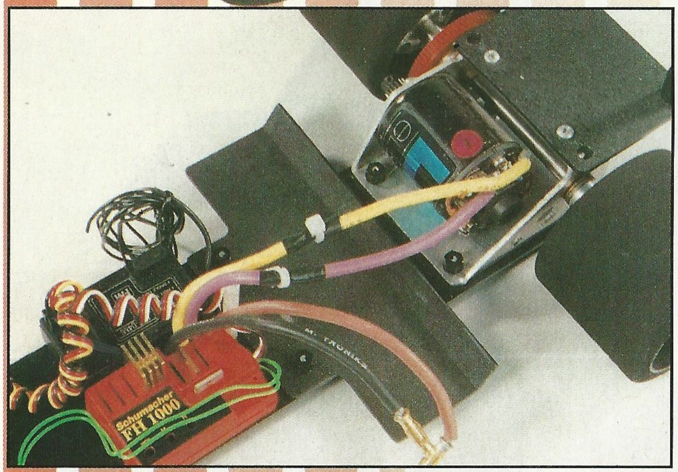




The chassis on the car could not be any simpler, therefore the car is tough when crashed and cheap to repair if the crash is extra heavy! Below; The chassis has a tray designed to carry the battery pack.



Right the driver of the car is intstalled in the cockpit and ready for action. Excellent Parma bodyshell is included in the kit.



run on bronze bushes, the rears fit to the carriers with two small screws. With the rolling chassis complete, it's time to move on to the body shell.

Parma have made an excellent job of the Escort body shell, the shape looks just right. To trim it, I slipped the body over the chassis and marked and drilled the mounting holes. By fitting the shell onto the posts, I could then mark and cut the wheel arch cut-outs. By constantly fitting, checking and trimming, I managed to get the body to sit how I wanted.

I masked the windows using brown plastic parcel tape and sprayed the red, adding lights, bumpers and window framing afterwards. A few stickers completed the 'racing' look, but the real finishing touch is the interior kit. This is a vac formed item which needs trimming (left or right hand drive), painting and the addition of the drivers head, steering wheel and gear knob. Small squares of Velcro hold the interior in place.

So, with a charged battery pack, it's off to the nearest car park for a test drive! For maximum performance and fun I installed a modified motor with 17 tooth pinion, hoping for good all round performance. I wasn't disappointed!

By loosening the differential slightly, I was able to accelerate reasonably hard without too much wheel-spin, and the top speed was ballistic! The green compound tyres gave good grip, but because of the excess of power it was easy to break the rear end away and drift around corners. Obviously any little bumps or stones really threw the rear end around because of the lack of suspension, but this did nothing to spoil the main element of r/c car racing - fun.

Parma's Escort is cheap, easy to put together and because of its simplicity, a breeze to set up! The body and interior give a great scale appearance and I'm sure it will provide hours of racing enjoyment. Get a few of your friends together, find a vacant car park and enjoy!