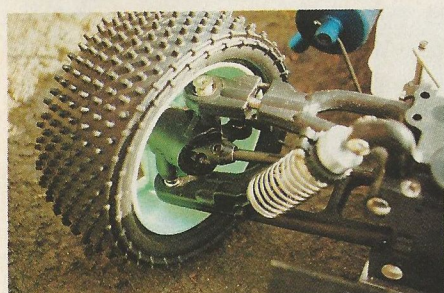


A Powerful Robust Off-roader that's Ballistically Efficient! Well, that says it all! This new car has hit the headlines of the model car magazines due to its performance in the last three events of the 1992 season. It is of traditional design in that its drive train consists of three differentials. The engine sits in line, not transversely, it has a twin braking system as standard and is fully ballraced; those are the basic fundamentals of the car, let us now look at them in a little more detail.



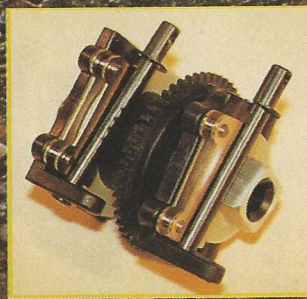
The robust front wishbones and u/j's.

Open the box and what do we find? Staring you in the face is an extremely well laid out bubble-packed drive train, seated against a blue background. This is split into three sections, the front differential, the centre and the rear, all very clearly numbered, these can be cut from their bubbles as required. The instruction booklet comes in two parts. Firstly, there's a seven page diagrammatic section, accompanied by a four page written section, both of which are very easy to follow, in fact, for an experienced builder all that are necessary are the diagrams.

The first part of the construction of the car deals with the front and rear differentials; these two units are identical in design and are of the planetary gear type. Once the four planet gears are slotted into the diff casing, on goes the bevel gear. This, in its standard form is plastic, so too is its counterpart. Both of these gears are well formed and more than capable of standing up to the strain that is likely to be put upon them whilst



Chunky arms for the twin discs.



The centre diff and brake linkages.

The Probe

THE REAL COMPETITION CAR!

they are on the track. It is, however, important to adjust the meshing of the small and large bevel gears so that there is no backlash. This is achieved by inserting shims between the inner bearing and the bevel gear. Once the front and rear gearboxes are complete, it's time to start on the suspension arms. The bottom arms are of one piece design, whereas the top arms of the front suspension are of two-piece design with a threaded bar between them allowing the racer to adjust the camber angle. Once this is set, the two halves are locked together by a grub screw that can be reached through the wheel of the car if needs be, at the trackside. The hub carriers swivel on large balls similar in design to that of the Mugen. Universal joint driveshafts are standard equipment for the front of the car. Next, my pet hate — shock absorbers, and a big plus here, they come ready assembled, even filled with oil! But I'm afraid that this oil is a little thin and I imagine that this is intended purely as a lubricant whilst the kits are in transit.

Along with the instruction manual comes a fly sheet, put in by the British importers, Models in Motion of Stevenage. This is to help the builder understand one or two points more easily than are explained by the Taiwanese version of the English language! Also, there are some useful extra tips. One that is most useful concerns the shock absorbers. The pistons inside the shocks have very small holes in them, too small for the average British racer to change to varying grades of shock oil, so what is suggested is that the holes are drilled out to 1.5mm. This allows for a multitude of grades to be used, but to start with I recommend 200 wt in the front and 150 in the rear. So now we have two complete gearbox and suspension systems ready to bolt to the chassis. The gearboxes are designed for extremely easy maintenance, as they split horizontally. Also, to lessen the load on carrying spares, the front and rear casings are identical. Mounted on the rear casing is the wing mount. This incorporates an ingenious transponder mount, so no more worries about where to mount it within the body shell!

On to the centre diff, again of the same design as the other two. On the outer casing we have a fibreglass brake disc, plus a secondary fibreglass disc on the rear output shaft. A little tip here — when assembling your brake linkages, the pins that lock into the brake housings are a good tight fit, but I suggest that a dab of super glue is a good idea, to make certain that they cannot move. Once this section is complete, the complete drive train can be screwed into position on the main chassis. It's all starting to take shape — time for a coffee break.

The next step is the steering linkage. The servo saver design is very similar to that found on the Inferno, therefore it goes without saying that it is well proven. The only problem is that as the spring becomes weak with use, it is necessary to shim it up with a washer between the base of the servo saver and the E clip. Once this unit is in place, on goes the top deck and 'Hey Presto', the chassis becomes very rigid.

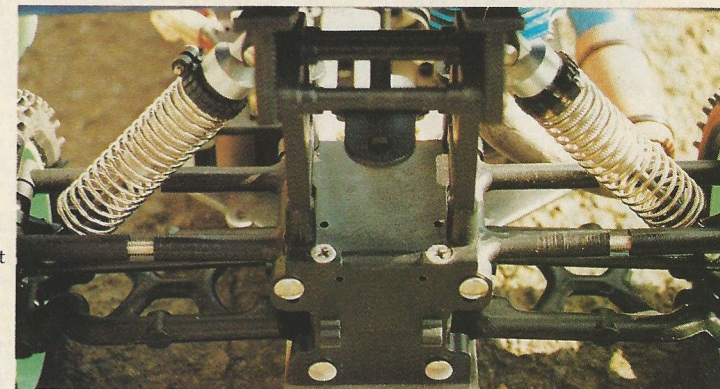
All that's left to do now is to install the tank and radio gear. The tank supplied is of excellent

quality. The radio mounting platform is also very well thought out. The radio equipment to be used is obviously a personal choice, but for steering I would recommend a high torque servo, either the Futaba 9302, the Sanwa EXGXT or the new KO1003, any one of these will cope with the job admirably. Throttle and brake? Well, any servo will suffice, the deciding factor being how much torque you require to operate the brakes to your own personal preference.

With the engine installation, again, any engine will slot in and advice is given on the fly sheet as to any modifications that are required for any type of engine. My choice was the O.S. RXB with a standard crank. Included in the kit is an excellent fly wheel and equally good three shoe clutch that mounted onto the engine as supplied and bolted into the car without any fuss.

Apart from gluing the tyres to the rims and trimming and painting the shell, the car is finished, with the construction time — a mere couple of evenings. Along the way no problems were encountered, all the mouldings fitted excellently, no screws were missing, and the instructions were excellent. I suggest that a good quality threadlock is used on all threads into metal. My review kit was an early example and the current kits are now coming with a trim line on the body for the builder to trim the shell to. This kit is excellent value and I'm sure it will be

The well protected transponder mount and shockers.



extremely popular in 1993.

Road and track test? Well, the car has now competed three BRCA events and has performed brilliantly. Under the control of yours truly, it won the D final the first time out, second time out it won the B final and third time out it was fourth in the B final, so a formidable start for the all-new Probe from Taiwan. For more details contact the importer, Models in Motion. Next year they will be supporting a full works team to challenge for the 1993 BRCA championships. So watch out — if you want to be in with a chance then at £239 the Probe beats all other contenders hands down.

Christmas is approaching at an alarming rate, and if you racers out there are looking for a new model, why not try leaving this review open with a note starting 'Dear Santa'. This may give a clue to whoever it may concern, as to what you'd like for your Christmas present. If you would also like to be seen wearing the 'in' race wear in Probe colours, there is also a full selection of polo shirts, sweatshirts, jackets and hats to match. If that's enough to whet your appetite then ring Models in Motion, or if you live in the north of England, their northern agent is Morley Models. But hurry — as Santa is already loading up his sleigh!

REVIEW BY KEVIN GRIFFIN



Killer taking a very tight line!