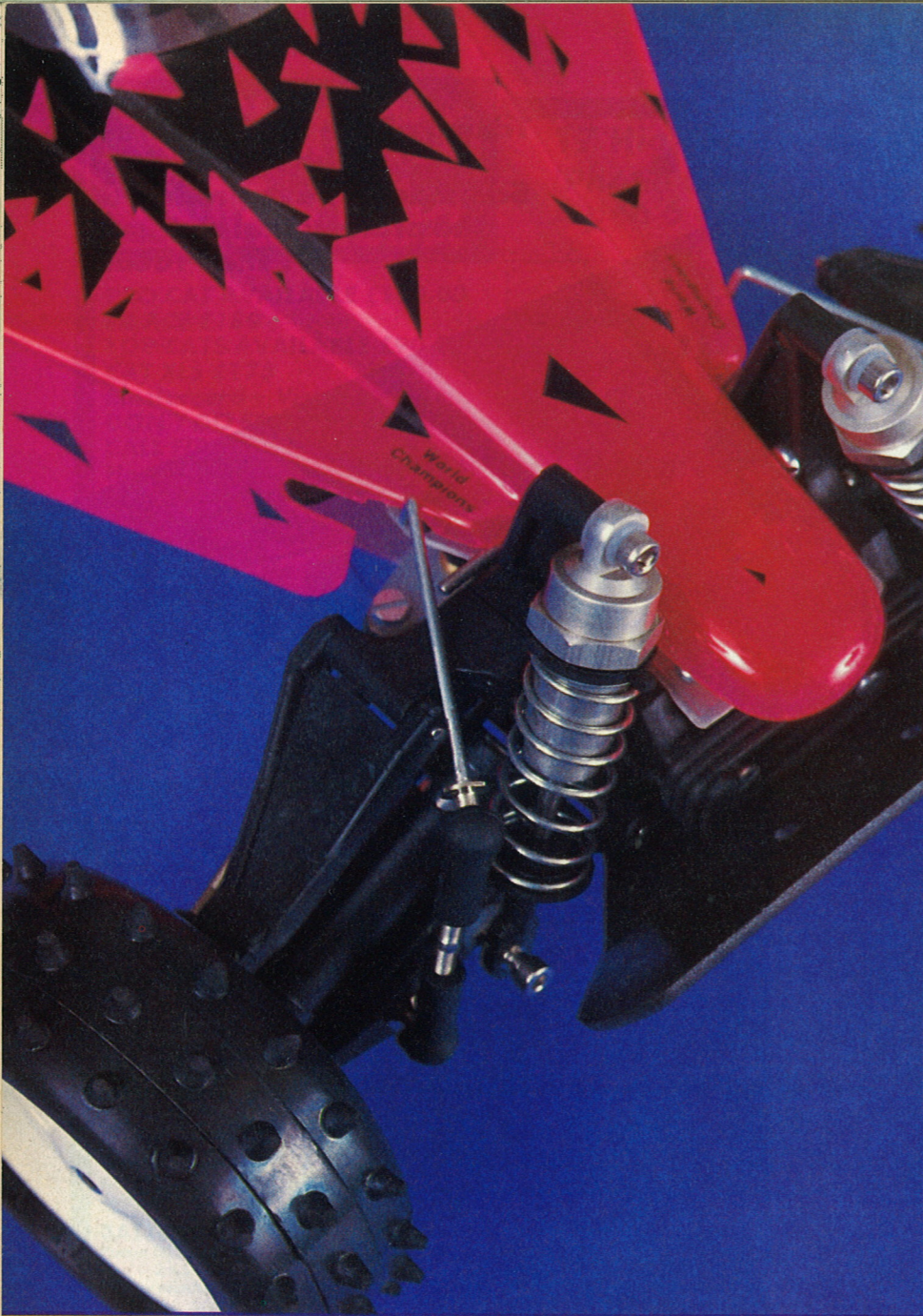


Taking all the best features
of the famous Cat,
Schumacher have produced
the professional race car
... The ProCat



ProCat



Cat's waist is a most welcome sight. It is now easily possible to fit a reversing speed controller and an uncased receiver in the car, a feat of almost sardine-can proportions on the old CAT XLS.

With the new chassis comes a new undertray and body. Although the BRCA rules clearly state that cars raced in the National series

The ProCat is generally a cleaned up Cat, the drive system is improved as well as the looks!



shape when the car lands on its wing - it merely deflects and then springs back into place. The wing itself complements the body well. Inside the rear gearbox which sits under the wing is a new drive system.

Schumacher have finally given up on their Integrator in face of a huge after-market in the sale of one piece rear differentials which sprung up two years ago. These diffs are easier to use, easier to set, and improve the handling on slippery surfaces. Assembly is also easier thanks to a new top pulley set, and the simpler building of the bottom differential.

The rear suspension has been redesigned on the principals of TOPCAT. Lower wishbones with a fixed amount of toe-in support rigid uprights. The uprights are connected to the chassis by means of a new plastic

bulkhead and adjustable ball-ended links. Like the TOPCAT these links (and the front steering arms) permit adjustments without removing anything from the car. A centre hexagon is provided which when turned acts on one right and one left hand thread, automatically lengthening or shortening the rod.

Subjectively (for it is two years since I last built a CAT XLS) the new ProCat was easier to build than the XLS. Somehow the years of refinement to their moulds and designs have made the 2WD and 4WD Cats more effective competitors in the assembly task.

They still do not approach the Japanese for simplicity and quality, but then the Japanese do not come close on track performance and durability. My preference will always be for a car which performs well and lasts well, even if it takes slightly longer to build. Although we worked on draft instructions, the finished book is much better with many more illustrations and better text. Like all kits in this class, those under 14 years will benefit from the help of an adult during assembly.

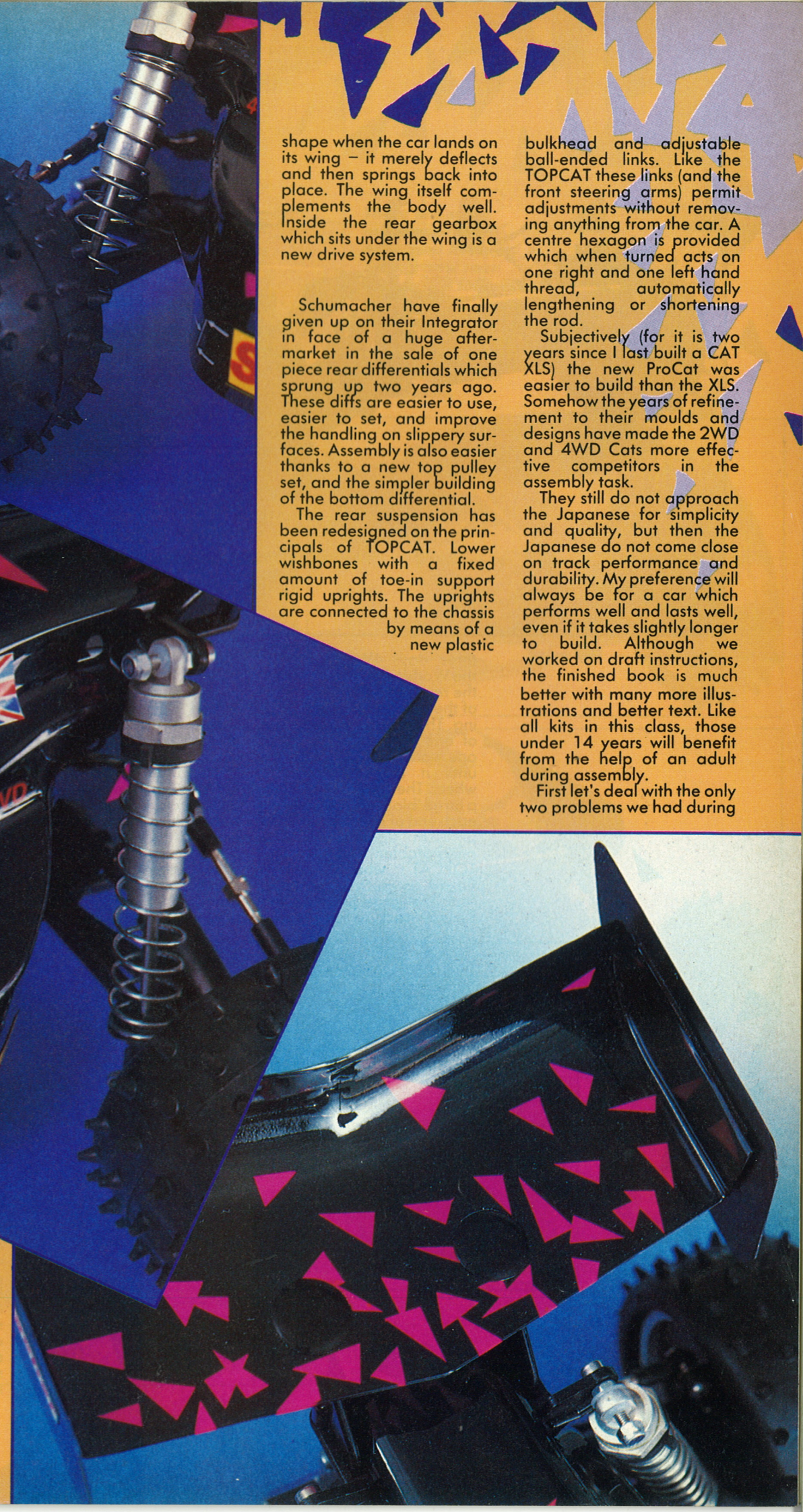
First let's deal with the only two problems we had during

The Schumacher CAT XLS has metamorphosed into the Schumacher ProCat. Blandly that describes the new car, but it also leaves out some important news about improvements which have long been awaited such as the so-called drum differential and revised chassis/body with more room for electrics. We were fortunate to receive a pre-production kit for use at the World Championships in Sydney, Australia; and the car acquitted itself in an exemplary fashion if this driver was not quite up to the task!

Fundamentally the changes centre on the rear suspension and transmission. The front end of the car is identical to the CAT XLS except for a proper tensioner to ease adjustment of the drive belt. The tensioner serves a dual function in preventing the front gearbox moving backwards in a heavy accident as well as enabling small movements to be easily accomplished during belt adjustment. Moving rearwards, the next new item is the chassis and body. Schumacher have gone for a saddle pack cell layout on a wider glass reinforced chassis plate. Cell retention is by a new plastic strap arrangement which once again has the Schumacher hallmarks - simplicity and effectiveness. The wheelbase remains unchanged, but the extra width around the Pro-

are to be "reasonable representations of... cars... suitable for rallycross, rallying, trial or desert racing" this has not stopped some fiendish creations coming onto our tracks, the Alien and Coyote are two of the ugliest. Fortunately Schumacher have not fallen into this trap, and although the ProCat body breaks no new ground, it is not ugly - it is not one of the above either in common with all the current crop of off-roaders! The old CAT XLS shell is more petite and graceful, but then you couldn't get your electrics under it too easily either! Painted with sympathy for its natural lines, the ProCat looks very smart.

The rear wing mounting has been changed to the same principle as the TOP-CAT. A delta shaped wing with upswept side plates is attached to the wing mount/damper mount by two O rings which clamp the wing and hold fast on hooks. This is better than the old wing wire since it does not bend out of





three days 4WD racing at the Worlds. The pivot pins for the rear suspension work out of their mounting during racing. The inner one works out of one hole, and the outer one works along the upright until it rubs against the wheel. The cure was to apply a large 'blob' of super glue to each end of each pin and the problem went away. The other problem was the use of TOPCAT wheels, which flexed so much on landing from the large jump on the Sydney track, (a jump taken

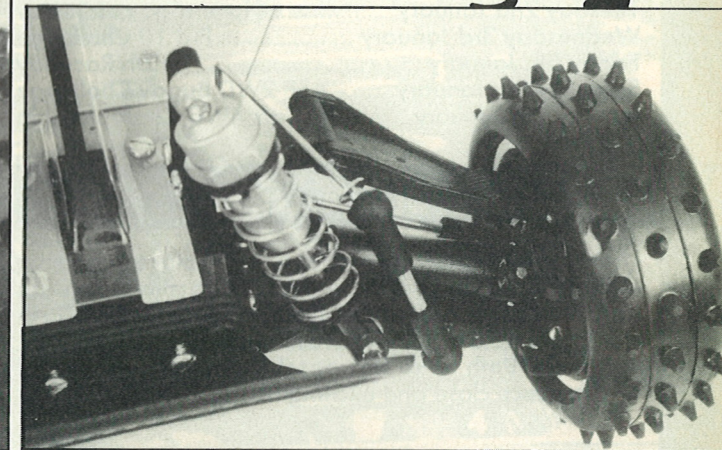
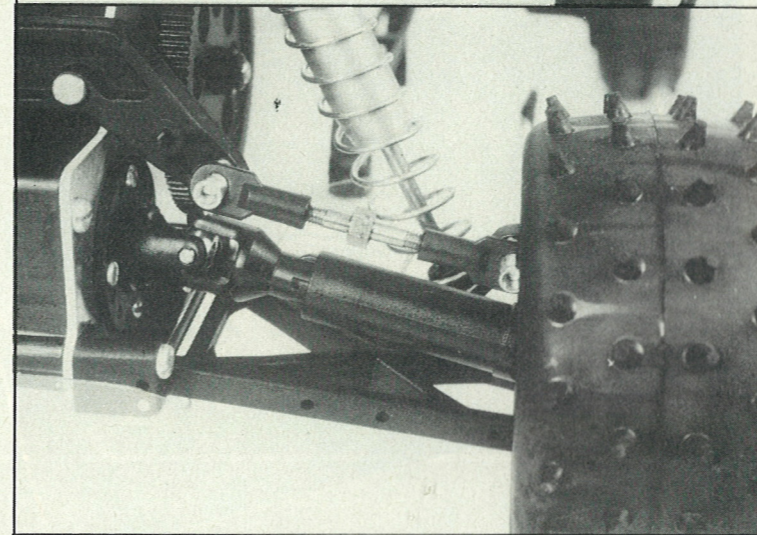
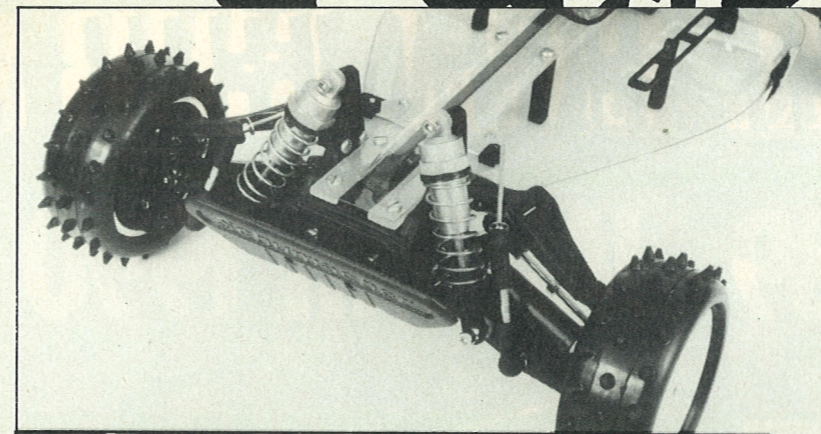
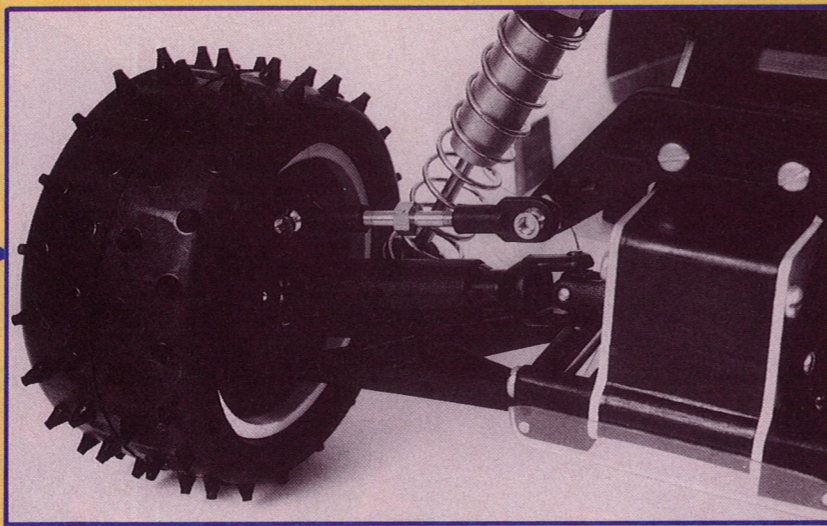
at full speed it must be said) that they momentarily jammed against the wheel shields. This caused the car to slew one way or the other, making the straight a time consuming series of lurid slides rather than a blast of horsepower! Our cure was to use the old CAT XLS wheels, but equally one can remove some of the plastic from the bottom quadrant of the wheel shield to give more clearance when the wheel does flex. This latter problem is in hand with Schumacher

and will only affect a tiny proportion of buyers.

Compared to what might have happened when 12,000 miles from home with a new car, these were mere fleabites. Once these two items were resolved in practice, the car performed totally faultlessly.

The car was used just as supplied to race on the two day, and although I finished on the part of the list where a five footer need not raise his eyes, Phil Davies, Rory Cull and Jurgen Lautenbach all made the A Final; Phil and Rory with new, out of the box, cars. My car is now off to do service on another RCMC project which will be seen next year. In a way I wanted to put it away complete with its red Sydney dust, as a monument to my trip, and to its outstanding reliability. Somehow that seems waste of an excellent piece of machinery, so it will live on in a new guise.

The Schumacher ProCat is now more sturdy and easier to own than its forebears, and it even looks a bit better too. The old quibbles have been removed, without apparent compromise to performance or reliability. Recommended for drivers of all abilities as a car for all seasons, and, on the evidence of its results on a very slippery track on the other side of the world, a car for mixed surfaces.



There are some major mods. The new front bumper. Totally new rear suspension follows the TopCat geometry. Servo position is also changed to horizontal across the chassis.

