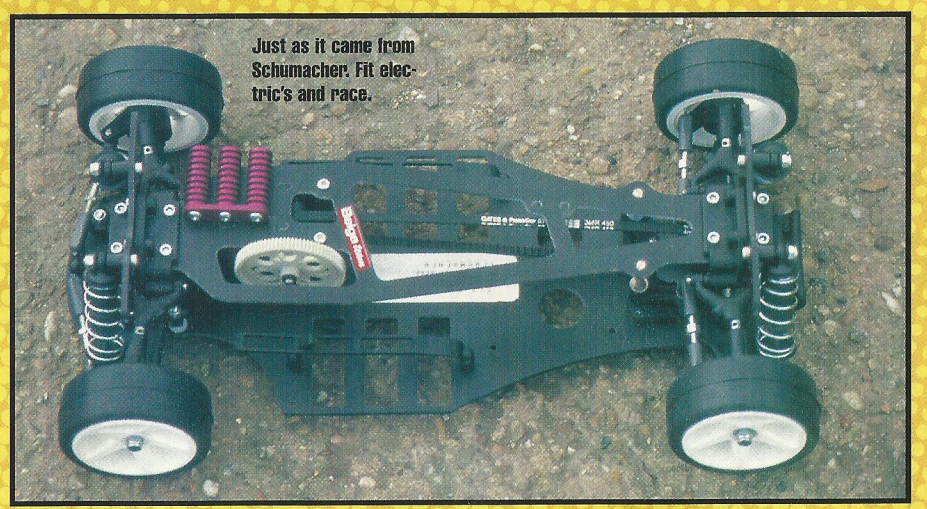


By Steve Rouse

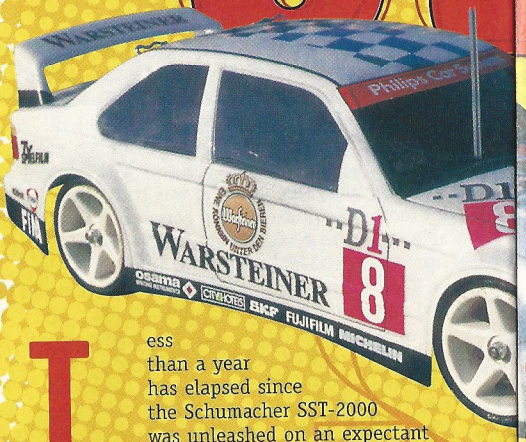
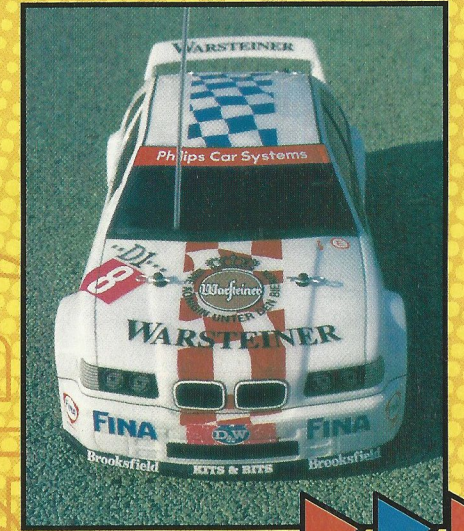
saddle stick 5



Just as it came from Schumacher. Fit electric's and race.

Schumacher SST 2000 Saddle Pack

It was the proverbial Curates Egg - good in parts.



Less than a year has elapsed since the Schumacher SST-2000 was unleashed on an expectant public. And it would appear that an updated model has already been released in the shape of this new car. So what's happening? Has a substantial rethink taken place? Will the value of existing cars plummet? No. Not at all.

Contrary to some mutterings, there has never been anything genuinely wrong with the SST-2000 as a racing car. As I surmised in the original review, (July, August 1996), the car is light, highly adjustable and very responsive to set-up changes. After fiddling with damper oil, springs and wheel angles, my own example has done everything asked of it: it just needed a little thought. Any problems with the car seem to have surrounded the packaging of the product - the bits that the buyer did and didn't get - and its position within the marketplace.

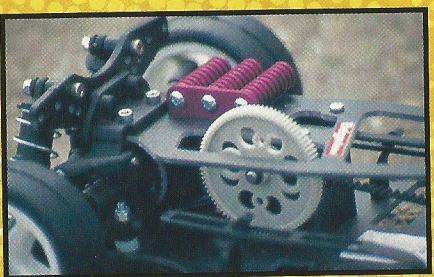
A valiant attempt was made by Schumacher to coax potential Tamiya and Kyosho punters into buying a real competition car instead of a leisure vehicle. The main feature of the SST is

that no building is required; simply install your electrical equipment, paint the bodyshell and go racing. Undeniably a good plan. However, for the newcomer the main stumbling was the price. At its launch a ballraced SST would have set you back a little under £240, while a Tamiya car in the same bearing equipped condition would cost around 160 quid.

Hmmm. But not to worry, because surely the serious guys wouldn't worry about such trifling fiscal matters, would they? They did.

Many were concerned that while a Yokomo was supplied with alloy dampers, an alloy transmission housing and a carbon chassis, the SST featured none of these for the same money. Okay, the SST had a BMW M3 body thrown in, but most racers like to choose their own shells. Even the ready-built aspect failed to fire the imagination: because the the car needed to be stripped to fit the ballraces and the owners desired damper oil.

The BMW M3 has to be my favourite shell, it has to be Warsteiner doesn't it???



The bolt on heat sink really does it's job.



Tamiya markets the TA-03 competition kit. The same meal, but with Heinz Ketchup in place of Sainsburys Economy, if you will.

But what has Schumacher thrown onto the conveyor belt to convince experienced peddlers to forsake all others?

Obviously the most notable new part is the chassis; a saddle pack car is perceived to be more attractive to the racer than the stick equivalent. Also thrown in is a spring tuning kit which includes pairs of five different colour coded rates. These are undoubtedly very helpful when it comes to finding a good balance, as are the previously omitted front and rear anti-roll bar kits. While the slot-in three bar motor heat sink will be familiar to most, and is a huge improvement on the original nylon mounting. The ballraces, as on all recent SST-2000 kits, are supplied fitted to the car.

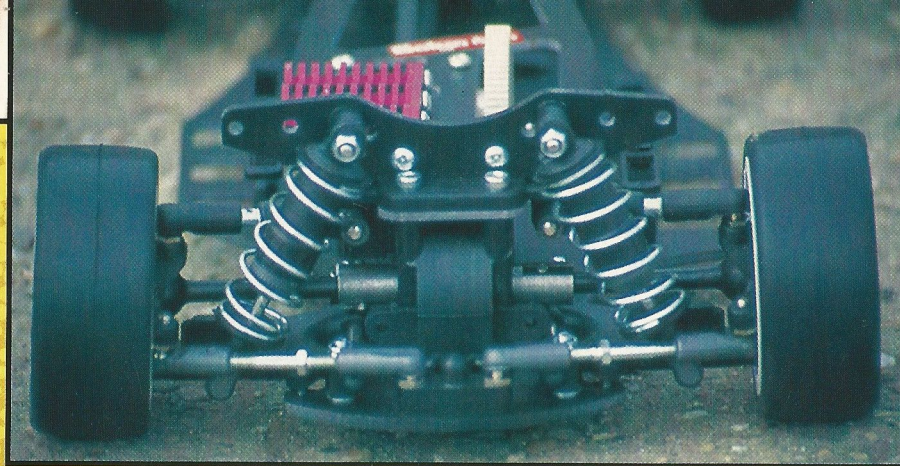
The only part omitted from the new kit is the bodyshell - a wise move. A quick glance at a price list showed that this exchange of parts is favourable to the tune of around £10: not bad. So how much is the new car? A mere 199 quid, according to Schumacher - but we all know that certain shops will bend the rules and sell you one much cheaper than that. As much as 30 cheaper. Suddenly, the SST-2000 looks like very good value.

Perhaps, in a traditional review, now would be the time to explain how easily the car fell together. Well, I fitted my electrical equipment and the adjustable body mounts. Finished. Extra tasks were limited to the usual 'new car' stuff: setting up the dampers, and pointing the wheels in the right directions. It really is that quick.

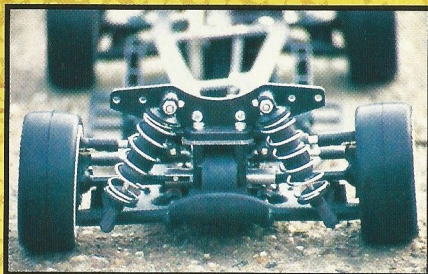
Living with an SST is a totally painless activity. My original stick-pack review car has seen action in around a dozen race meetings and countless test sessions, and has required nothing more than the attention of a soft brush. This is because I am lazy. I refuse to spend more than five minutes tending to any car between meetings, and racing in the rain holds as much appeal as driving a Suzuki Vitara. No ta. In my opinion this reflects very well on the quality of the product as a whole: not once have I even thought of looking at the differentials, and the nylon dampers have held all their oil while performing in a perfectly acceptable manner.

It must be fairly efficient, too. Whether this is indicative of all Scale Saloons I'm not sure, but my car has been used with an LRP 12x3 motor from day one and I have had no endurance problems

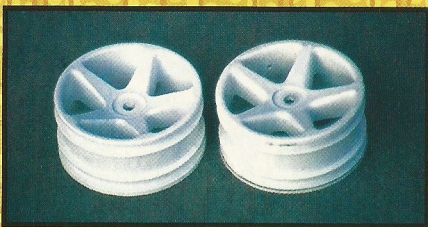
whatsoever and with 1400 SCR cells. Both the rate of acceleration and the terminal velocity are very high, so there is no question of undergearing for duration.



Rear suspension.



Front suspension.



The new off-set wheels will take the SST out to the maximum width.

Don't change the tyres first!!!

When it comes to setting up a car, I am not one whose first response is to change tyres so as to improve lap times. If the car has a chassis imbalance, surely one should consider making adjustments to the chassis to find a cure? As a lack of finance overshadowed my early racing years, I tended to get the absolute maximum out of everything I had before forking out for upgrades. So when I saw a set of Schumacher tyres on the SST that same frugal (or tight) mentality took over. I understand that the yellow compound Schumacher tyre is not particularly fashionable as a racers choice, but on my car their performance has been faultless. With the correct inserts, one set lasted for 12 meetings before showing real signs of wear. For a mere six quid a pair, you can't go wrong. My competitors have been impressed, too. Utter disbelief has often been the reaction after checking out my tyre choice: "but they don't work". Yes, they do.

It's White now !!!

But there is a new SST tyre; white compound. Very soft. Still at 5.99 per pair, they gave an improvement in lap times that was quite noticeable. Used with blue inserts, the car did squirm around on corner exits under hard power, so I suspect that they need to be combined with say a moulded rubber insert to give

maximum benefit. I'm not Chris Grainger, but my times around Bedworth were very fast. Which says rather a lot about the car and tyres, I think.

The new tyres were used in conjunction with the new range of SST wheels. You may have noticed that the SST is a very narrow car, about 20mm under the width limit. Carrying a different offset, the new wheels push the width much nearer to the limit, which improves stability tangibly and helps the car fill the modern generation bodysells much more effectively. Like the new tyres, these wheels are also available in the new narrow width which seems to work quite well, particularly on the front. There is a whole catalogue of reasoning behind this; none of which I will bore you with here. The wheels, incidentally, are probably the cheapest on the market at a mere £2.99 per pair.

Any reservations then? Just one, I'm afraid. Without the GT bodymount kit, it is impossible to fit the current generation of very popular GT bodies. But the bodymount kit must be used with a pair of ultra short dampers: and they cost £18 per pair. Frustrating.

So, let's look at the evidence. After a slightly shaky start the pricing strategy is now close to the mark. The car is light, fast, efficient, virtually maintenance free, reliable and backed up by a great service department. And, perhaps above all, it's British. It's not just me: David Spashett, Chris Grainger and Luke Burley all drive them. Convinced? You should be. **RACI**

The Testers Kit

Servo	KO 704
Receiver	Futaba Attack
Speed Controller	Novak Tempest Pro
Cells	Orion
Motor	LRP Generation X 12 Triple
Bodysells	Parma BMW M3 (Pinched from A.Ramage)
Tyres	Kit (Rubber) Schumacher White Slicks Standard and Narrow Width.

Quick Spec

4WD. Twin Drive Belts. Adjustable Ball Diffs. Fully Ballraced. U/J Driveshafts. WFE Saddle Pack Chassis. WFE Top Plate. Plastic Motor Mount. Bolt-On Heat Sink. Independent Suspension. Double Unequal Length Wishbones Front and Rear. Oil Filled Coil Over Dampers. Front & Rear Anti - Roll Bars. Spring Tuning Kit. Multi-spoke Wheels. Radial Slick Tyres With Foam Inserts.

