

It's been a long time since Tamiya introduced a new off roader and with the Dirt Thrasher not all is new, but off road is back in style...



## KIT REVIEW

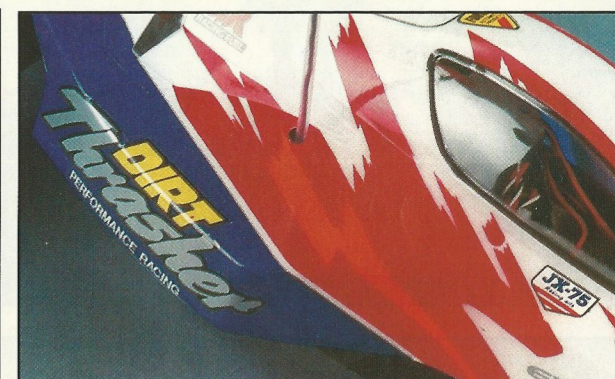
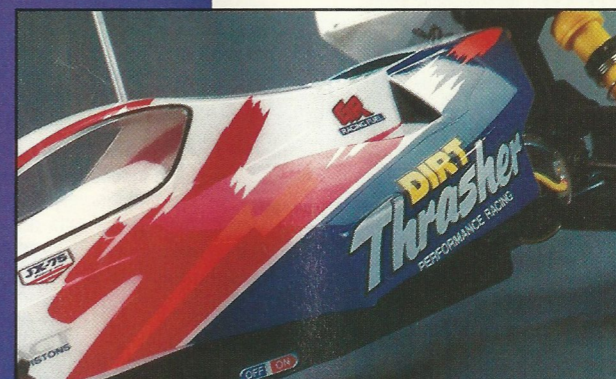
Report by Mike Caine



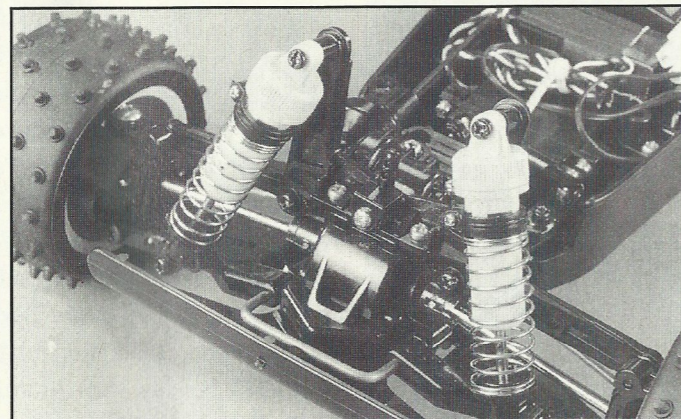
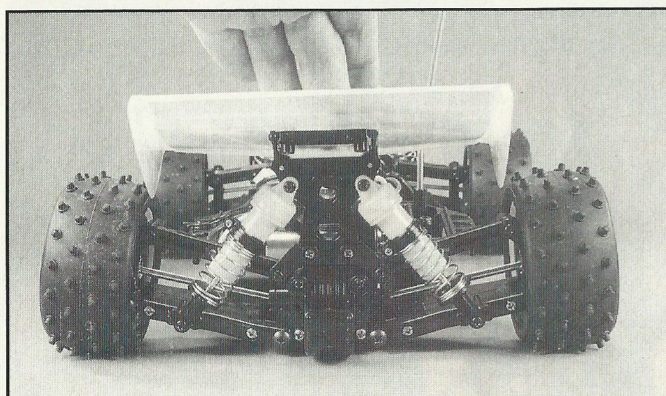
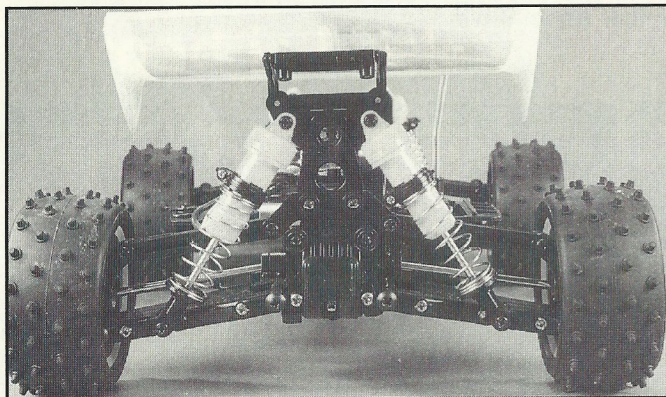
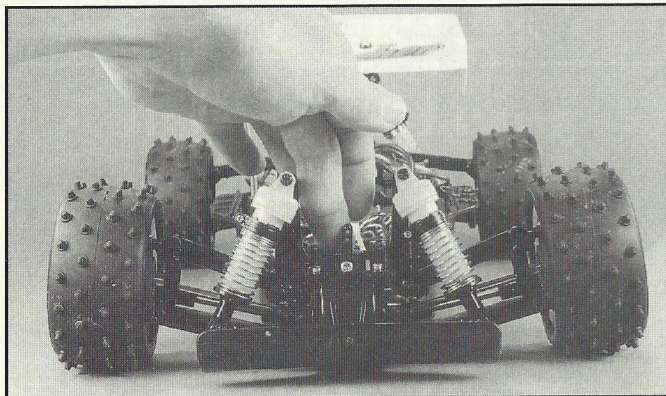
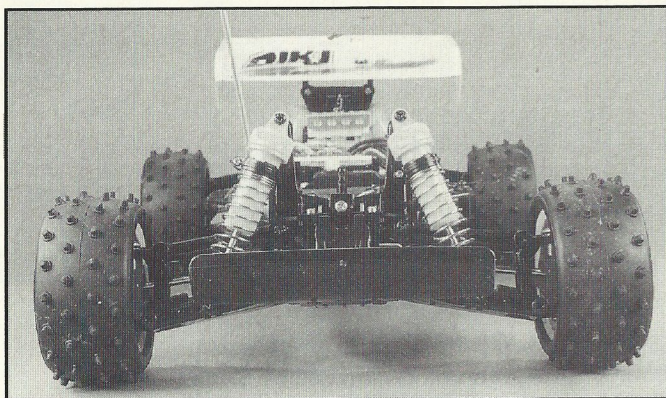
**A**fter what seems an eternity reviewing Tamiya's never ending releases in the popular on road category, I was delighted when the editor rang to say that there was a new Tamiya Four wheel drive buggy on its way to me.

Remembering that new Tamiya cars can be something of a sensation, I waited patiently for a week until the said parcel duly arrived. On opening the package I recalled how the last new buggy from Tamiya nearly won the European Off Road Championship straight out of the pre-production box in the hands of one Jamie Booth, much to the amazement of the other leading players who could not imagine why this new model was so good for a 'plastic' car yes - the Manta Ray.

Further unpacking revealed Tamiya's new Dirt Thrasher. Would you believe it bears a distinct similarity to it's predecessor the Manta Ray! Still, why should you change a format that's obviously so successful. I was once told just how successful the Hornet had been in it's lifetime in the two wheel drive beginners class and I can well imagine the same numbers of cars sold applied with the Manta Ray in four wheel drive.



# DIRT! FLIRT!

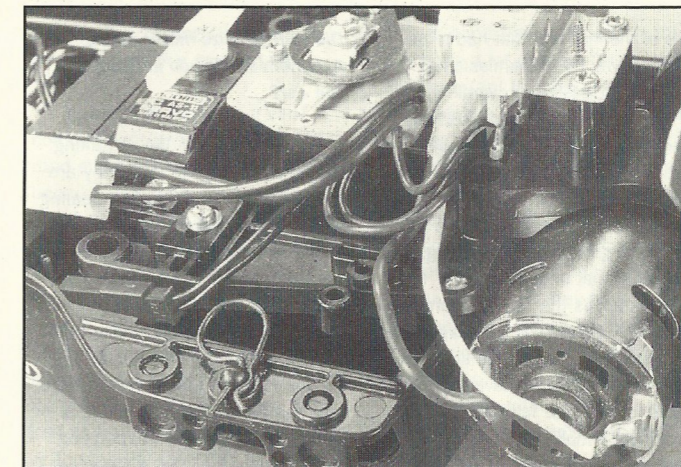
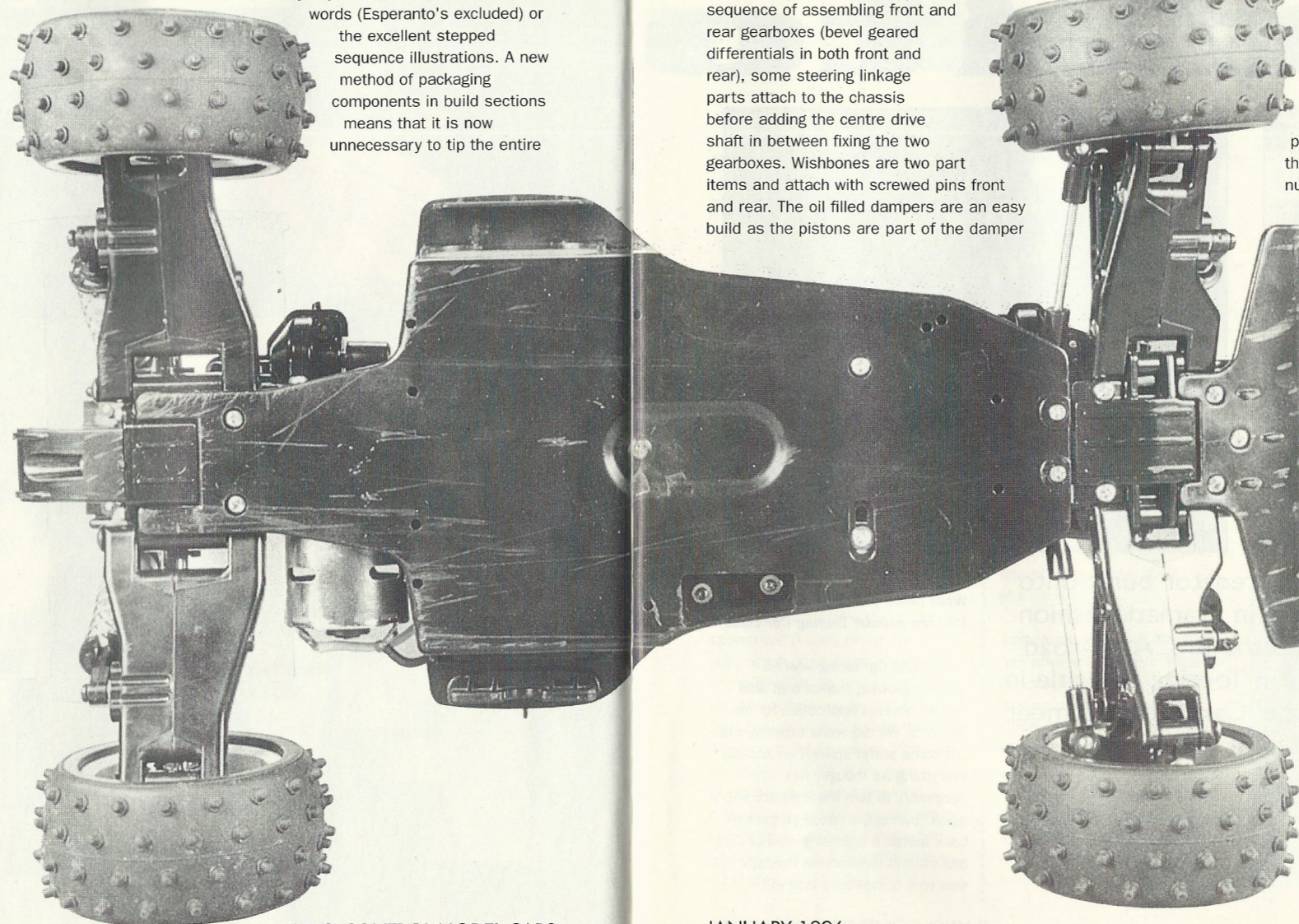


### So what do you get with the Dirt Thrasher?

The well proven 4WD shaft driven mechanics coupled with long suspension arms for more serious off road use, a re-worked Terra Scorcher styled body shell but with much better graphics, a new rear wing and yes, Tamiya quality.

The small box follows current trends from Tamiya but the contents are inviting once the lid comes off. The four language instructions mean that virtually anyone can follow either the

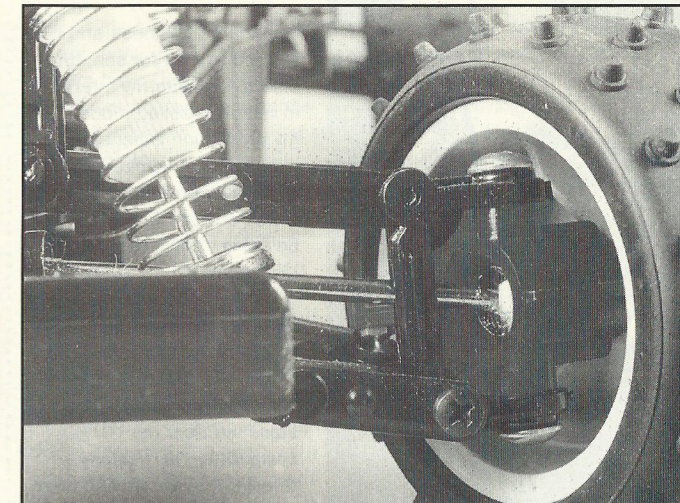
words (Esperanto's excluded) or the excellent stepped sequence illustrations. A new method of packaging components in build sections means that it is now unnecessary to tip the entire



kit contents onto the dining room table before commencing building. Each section is bagged together with the correct amount of screws, washers etc. to assemble the plastic parts.

If you've never built a car before then allow two or three evenings for a leisurely build plus another evening for painting and decorating the body shell. Again Tamiya make it a simple two colour scheme and use the decal sheet to create a superb 'pro look' finish.

Construction follows a simple sequence of assembling front and rear gearboxes (bevel geared differentials in both front and rear), some steering linkage parts attach to the chassis before adding the centre drive shaft in between fixing the two gearboxes. Wishbones are two part items and attach with screwed pins front and rear. The oil filled dampers are an easy build as the pistons are part of the damper



rod, eliminating those fiddly E rings that invariably end up in the Hoover or the dog! All the necessary oil is supplied and Loctite is a thing of the past as the self tapping screws used throughout are easy to drive home. Tyres are of the pin spike pattern but the choice of alternatives is endless. A mechanical speed controller is included so all you need is a budget two channel radio, battery and charger to complete the model.

Whereas Tamiya has built a reputation for over complicating some construction methods this Dirt Thrasher has no such problems.

Remember we said this car nearly won the Euro's? Why? Basically because it was relatively light, had good off the line acceleration and Jamie Booth could make a shed look impressive!

Many drivers spend an absolute fortune at club level on cars that perhaps need more skill to drive than they possess. Armed with a kit car that's cheap and simple to maintain but which with the addition of the numerous Hop-Up Options available could be converted into a replica of the highly successful 'Top Force' cars that the Tamiya Team used effectively in the early nineties. This may be the start of many newcomers joining what arguably can be a very enjoyable part of the model car hobby.

Even if the novelty of buggy racing wears off, it's a simple matter to change the tyres and fit one of those wide bodied saloons and join the on road competitors around the country. It may seem dated when compared to the state of the art racing buggies which are currently the vogue but look at the scale Tamiya Saloon lap times at these on road events. You may be pleasantly surprised at the performance of this proven chassis provided of course, you can drive.

Available from all good Model Shops priced competitively at around £100:00.

