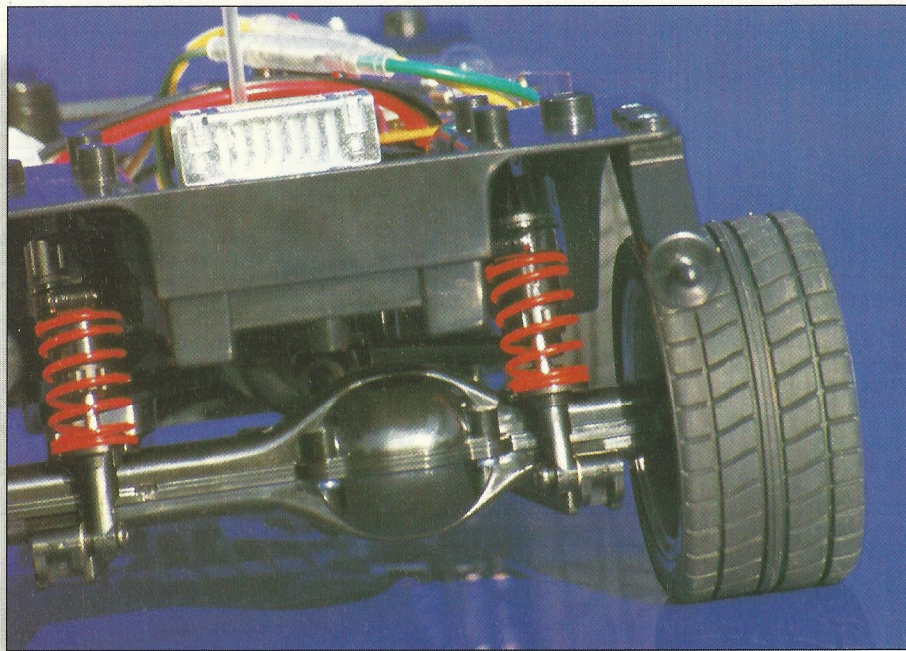


Tamiya's Isuzu MU

Nigel McStay Builds The MU, Better Known In Europe As The Vauxhall Frontera



The live 'banjo' rear axle, the realistic tyre tread pattern and upright shocks lend real atmosphere to the model.



The rolling chassis looks almost like a beach buggy - install the shell though and you've got a real looker!

After being initiated into the delights of R/C cars via my two recent reviews, both of trucks, I was given the opportunity to build Tamiya's new Isuzu Mu, better known to many people in this country as the Vauxhall Frontera.

The Frontera is definitely the 4wd vehicle I would very much like to drive as my personal transport (Gimme, gimme!), although I'll never be able to afford one, so it looks as if I'll have to settle for the radio controlled version (cries of "Shame" echo through Traplet's offices!).

Building The Mu/Frontera

Exactly as I found with the Tamiya Truck I built as my first car, the instruction booklet was very well detailed and simple to follow, but the Mu was different to my previous Tamiya review kit

in that the tub chassis moulding incorporated the transmission housing at the front, rather than having separate gearboxes screwed on at either end, so a very solid assembly is the result.

The chassis on the Mu was very much like a

The realistic underbody, complete with the propshaft that transmits the drive to the live rear axle.

The first models I built were really meant for having fun with, but the Mu is actually quite detailed, especially on its underside. The scale-like propshaft and live rear axle complete with its realistic differential housing, really look the part, and the chrome plated wheels, grille and bumpers add the finishing touches nicely. I'm definitely not going to chuck this beauty around, it looks too smart to scratch it!



jigsaw puzzle, every part had a place, and as it was usually fairly easy to see where each part fitted, I would say that even a first timer would find it hard to go wrong, and then a quick scan of the instructions is all that's needed to get it right.

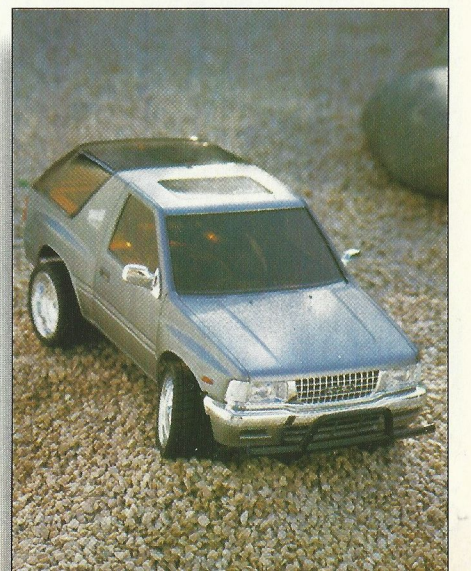
One Sunday afternoon there wasn't any football on the television so I decided to get stuck in. Tamiya must have known I was reviewing this kit, because there were bags of screws etc. for each stage of the construction, meaning I didn't have to have every bag open after the first five minutes of building, with screws everywhere, so this kit is even Nigel proof!

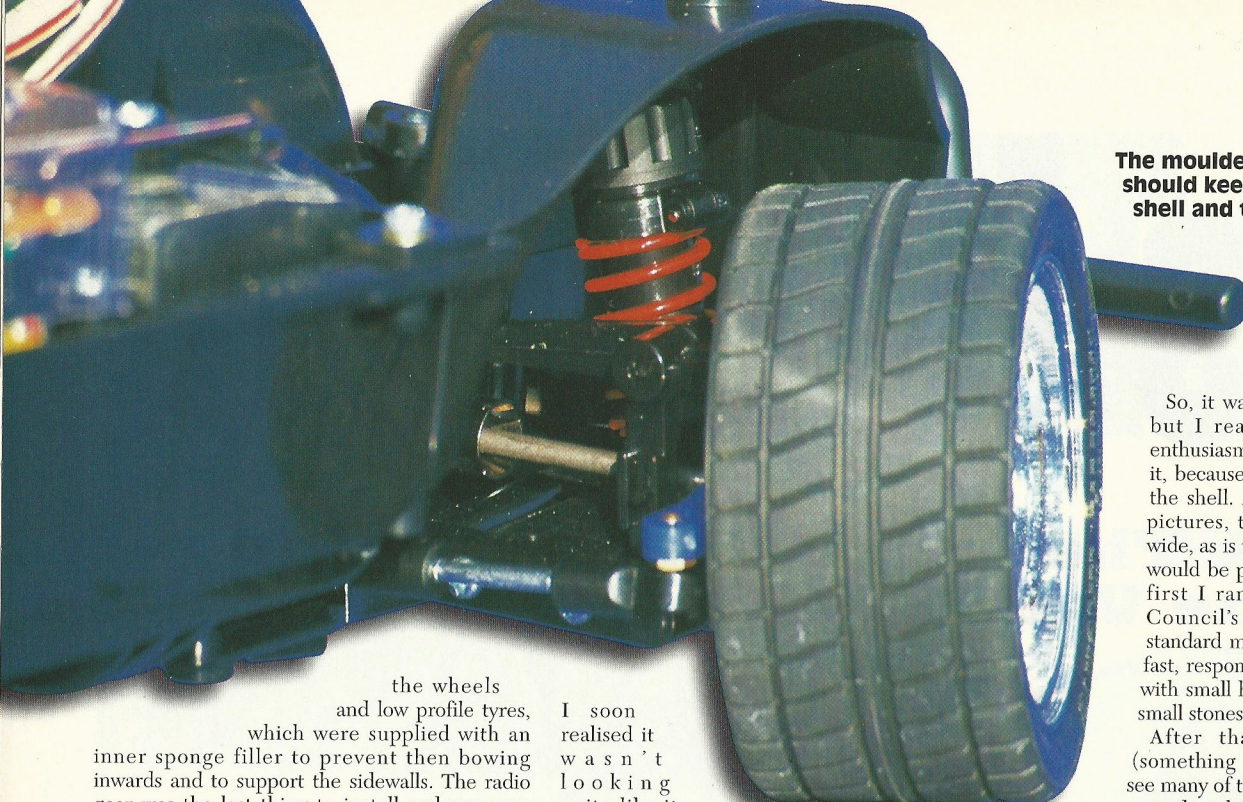
Assembling the geared front and rear differentials was the first job on the agenda, and

as per my first effort some months back; the Toyota Prerunner, I found I could complete these initially intimidating parts without too much hassle. As for the rest of the assembly, that's literally what it was - by simply following the detailed instruction book, the Mu just goes together, it's as simple as that!

I may not be an expert model car racer or driver, but I can say that I couldn't find any bad points about the Mu's construction or design. I preferred the idea of the one piece chassis rather than bolting on gearboxes at either end, and all of the main parts were attached to the tub with washer head screws or ball connectors for the moving parts, and also every item used a 'plug to socket' style location for extra support.

After attaching the rear axle and dampers to the main body, the suspension had a really sturdy feel to it, with the dampers being oil filled with two 'O' rings in the bottom giving leak-free action. The final part of the jigsaw left to do was to add





The moulded dirt shields should keep the inside of the shell and the radio equipment clean.

I'm On The Road Again...

So, it was time to run the Isuzu, but I really had to temper my enthusiasm and be very careful with it, because I didn't want to scratch the shell. As you can see from the pictures, the wheels are nice and wide, as is their track, so I thought it would be pretty good on tarmac. At first I ran the MU on the local Council's car park. With the standard motor it was actually quite fast, responded well, and coped well with small hazards in its way such as small stones.

After that I went Off Road (something that I reckon you won't see many of the real cars doing!) to see some dust kicking up Safari style. I admit I hate cleaning dirty cars, but I

still had it spinning around and doing the odd jump without turning it over, although I would say that short, flat grass or tarmac is where it really belongs.

The overall impression the Isuzu MU left on me was that it was a lot of fun to build and play around with, and with its realistic looks and sturdy shell will be able to stand up to the odd bang or roll just as long as the touch up brush is kept handy!

The Tamiya Isuzu MU is imported and distributed to the trade by Richard Kohnstam Ltd, 13-15a High Street, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP1 3AD. Tel (01442) 61721.

the wheels and low profile tyres, which were supplied with an inner sponge filler to prevent them bowing inwards and to support the sidewalls. The radio gear was the last thing to install and was very straightforward, there being plenty of room.

Just A Lick Of Paint...

As with my two previous cars, I decided that the spraying would be done by yours truly again, even though this shell was a moulded plastic shell and not a clear polycarbonate type like the other two, so it was to be sprayed on the outside. If anything, I thought this would be easier with no masking required, and with only the one colour, cheaper for me as well because Jonty the nice Ed, gave me a can of spray paint (even though I later found it out was the wrong type!).

I proceeded to spray the Mu, and I must admit

I soon realised it wasn't looking quite like it should, but

nevertheless I carried on, and the finish on the shell grew on me more and more.

The next day when I returned to put all the trimmings on and the odd sticker, the shell had a nice metallic look to it, and when the excellent tinted windows and sunroof were fitted, the result was smart with a capital 'S'!

Tamiya have certainly made this car look like the real thing. With the spare tyre mounted on the back door and the chrome front grille and wing mirrors fitted, it really looked the part. The ultra impressive headlights can have a light bulb set fitted as an optional extra, which would add yet more realism to what is already a very nice model.

