Daytona Dreamin'

Andy Carter builds and reviews the Tamiya Nissan R91CP Daytona 24HR Winner – the latest in a line of scale racers...

'This type of kit really does benefit from a little bit of time and effort being spent on finishing the bodyshell'

In The Beginning...

It's been a long time since I last built a Tamiya kit but it's nice to know that some things never change, like the quality of their instruction booklets. To an outsider (me), the Tamiya philosophy seems simple but extremely effective;

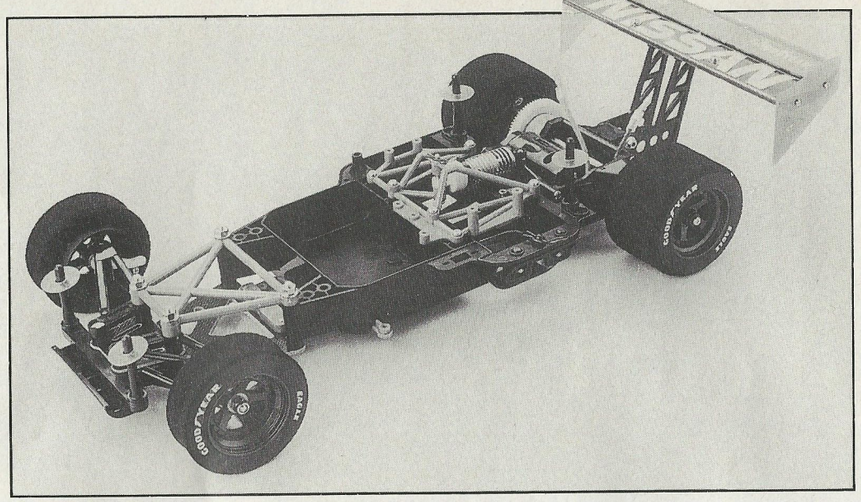
1. Design a car.
2. Make that car relatively cheap to manufacture.
3. Make it simple to build.
4. Make sure the instructions don't leave anything to the imagination.
5. Package it neatly.

Over the years, many kits have rolled off the production lines at Tamiya in Japan and every one has had the same hallmarks of quality about it that just shouts 'TAMIYA' at you. You may laugh but Tamiya have played a huge roll in the development of Radio Control Model Cars throughout the world and are still continuing to pump out new and revised kits with relentless enthusiasm. One of these kits being the subject of this review – The Tamiya Nissan R91CP – winner of the Daytona 24HR race in 1992.

This kit has just been released to complement the expanding range of Scale racing model cars from Tamiya such as the Mercedes C11 and Jaguar XJR12 as well as many others. It is based on the same chassis as the other sports cars in the range and is topped by an all-new scale bodyshell. By retaining the same chassis and components, Tamiya are able to produce a 'new' car at relatively little tooling cost and short time scales and benefits to the end customer (the model buying public) include;

1) Existing spares base which can be totally utilised.

2) Arrange of bodyshells specifically designed to fit this chassis.



Construction

Construction time for this kit was probably no more than about one hour although it must be said that no radio equipment was installed and the bodyshell took a lot longer to finish (probably about 4 to 5 hours alone!). Even with installing the radio gear, construction should take no more than one and three quarter hours in total.

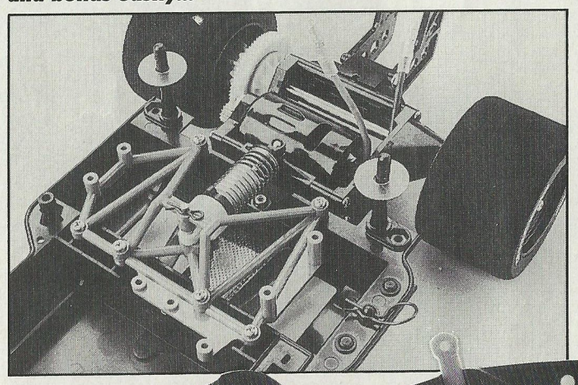
As can be seen from the photos, the car is basically a 2 wheel drive, 1/10th scale circuit racer which utilises a plastic tub chassis to house the radio equipment rather than just a flat piece of G.R.P. Suspension movement is obviously limited and is controlled by small coil springs at the front and an oil-damped flexible rear motor pod at the back.

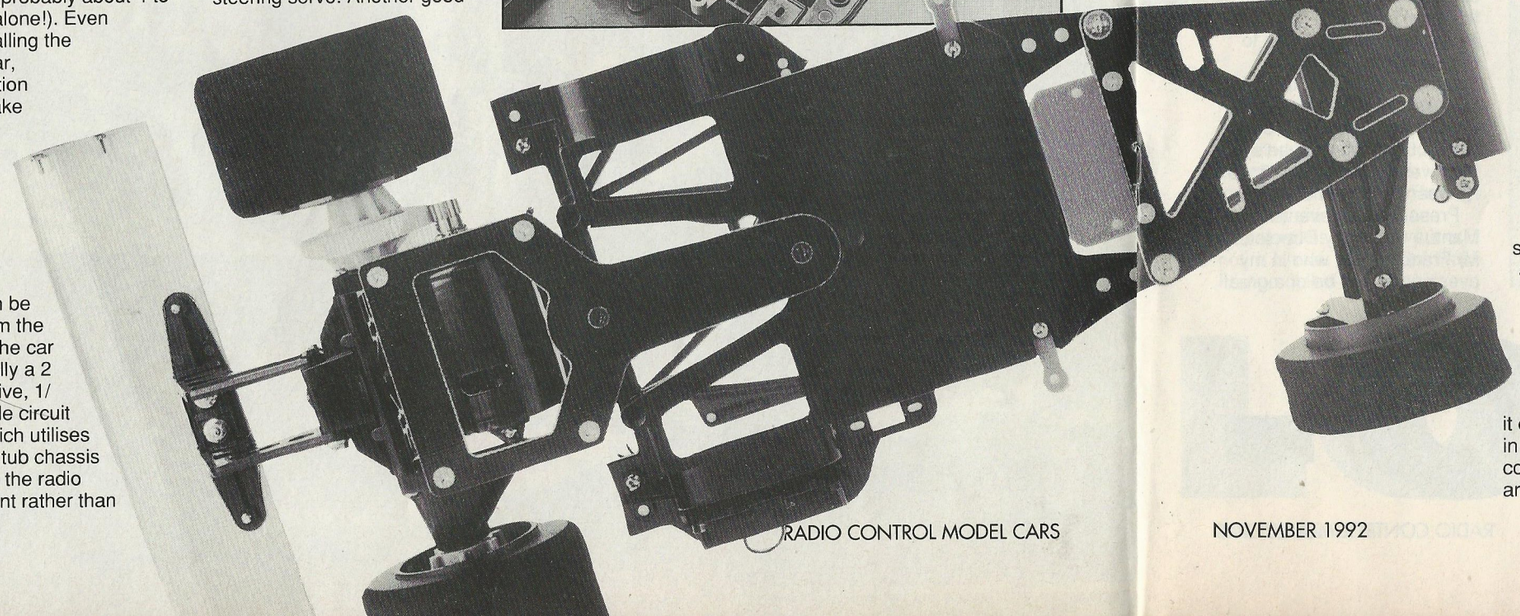
Construction begins with the assembly of the wheels and tyres. In many kits, this would be achieved by gluing the tyres on using Evostik or superglue but, Tamiya have included some self adhesive tape in the kit with which to stick the tyres to the wheels. This does reduce the amount of mess usually associated with this type of assembly but it is still quite difficult to do successfully and it would be nice to see pre-trued and glued wheels and tyres in the kit for lazy people like me!.

Next up on the agenda is the assembly of the front wishbone mouldings and the steering servo. Another good idea carried over from the other Tamiya cars in this range is that the ground clearance can be adjusted by moving spacers both at the front end of the car and the rear underneath the motor mount. This enables tyre wear to be maximised and also allows the car to be run on less than perfect surfaces. It is quite surprising just how bumpy the average car park can be!!

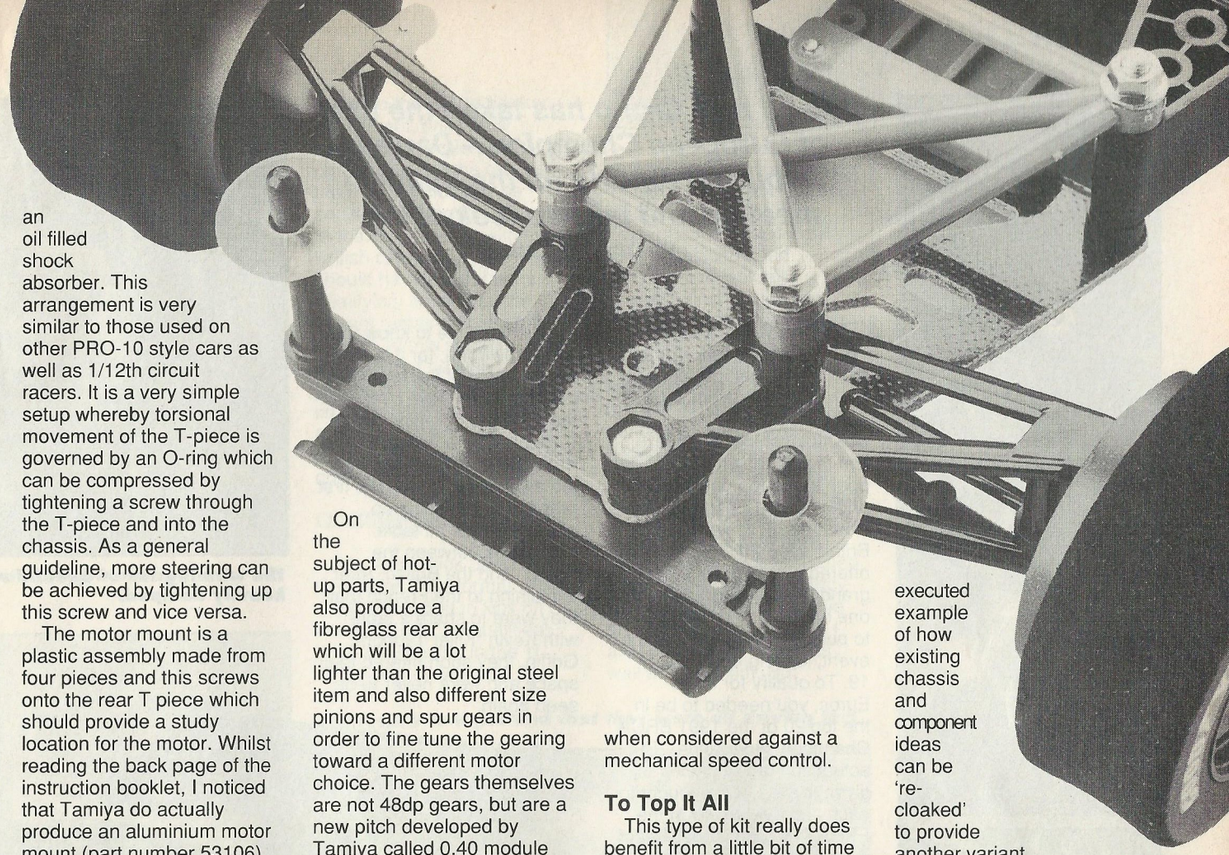
As was mentioned earlier, the rear suspension is controlled by means of a flexible T-piece, damped by an oil filled shock absorber. This arrangement is very similar to those used on other PRO-10 style cars as well as 1/12th circuit racers. It is a very simple setup whereby torsional movement of the T-piece is governed by an O-ring which can be compressed by tightening a screw through the T-piece and into the chassis. As a general guideline, more steering can be achieved by tightening up this screw and vice versa.

The Nissan chassis is the same as that used in the Mazda and Nissan 300ZX, the chassis handles well and builds easily...





The motor mount is a plastic assembly made from four pieces and this screws onto the rear T piece which should provide a study location for the motor. Whilst reading the back page of the instruction booklet, I noticed that Tamiya do actually produce an aluminium motor mount (part number 53106) which would be better if more powerful modified motors are to be considered.



On the subject of hot-up parts, Tamiya also produce a fibreglass rear axle which will be a lot lighter than the original steel item and also different size pinions and spur gears in order to fine tune the gearing toward a different motor choice. The gears themselves are not 48dp gears, but are a new pitch developed by Tamiya called 0.40 module gears (finer than the old 0.60 modules).

The differential in the kit is the normal Tamiya 6 ball item with an eight ball thrust race. Just a word of warning here, don't loose any of the curved thrust race washers (there is only 2 of them) as no spares are given in the kit and I managed to loose one in the carpet when it rolled out of the bag and off of the work surface!

Prototype

We received this kit as a prototype and as such, it didn't include a mechanical speed controller. However, in typical Tamiya fashion, a 3 step mechanical speed controller will, I am assured, be included in the U.K. specification kits when they arrive as not every country has this item. This may not seem a big point but, for those who might consider this type of car as an entry into the world of R/C car racing, it can make quite a difference in price as electronic speed controls (favoured by racers) are initially expensive to buy when considered against a mechanical speed control.

To Top It All

This type of kit really does benefit from a little bit of time and effort being spent on finishing the bodyshell. The Nissan body comes pre-drilled with most of the holes required and even the wheel arches are already cut out thereby reducing the amount of effort needed to cut the body out. The rear wing is separate but is designed, like the real car, to extend the body lines at the rear of the car.

There are several nice touches that really set this bodyshell off, including very faint lines on the shell which can be used to show where the colour changes should be so that masking can be very accurate. A detailed cockpit and separate light clusters that fit inside the bodyshell just add to the realism of the car.

As can be seen from the photos, our car was built and sprayed up in the standard Nissan colours suggested by the box. Obviously, any colour scheme can be used, but the kit supplied decals are designed for this colour scheme.

Summing Up

In summing up therefore, the Tamiya Nissan R91CP is yet another superbly executed example of how existing chassis and component ideas can be 're-cloaked' to provide another variant along the same lines. There now exists, enough model variations within the Tamiya range alone for club racing to become more of a spectator interest whereby, those watching the races can relate more to the style of cars being raced, than is possibly the case with normal buggy racing today. Obviously limitations to where the cars can be run will be a major consideration to anybody thinking of buying one of these cars but, even as you read this, more and more clubs are beginning to race these types of cars, even alongside buggies but at flat-track venues such as car-parks and school play-grounds and even the odd velodrome or two.

Tamiya cars have sometimes been at the butt of many racing jokes regarding their competitiveness but they did start the ball rolling many years ago with cars such as their Rough Rider and Sand Scorcher and maybe, they can see that this is the way that model car racing will develop. Many hardened buggy racers will disagree but me, well, I'm going to give it a whirl because it looks like it's going to be a lot of fun!!