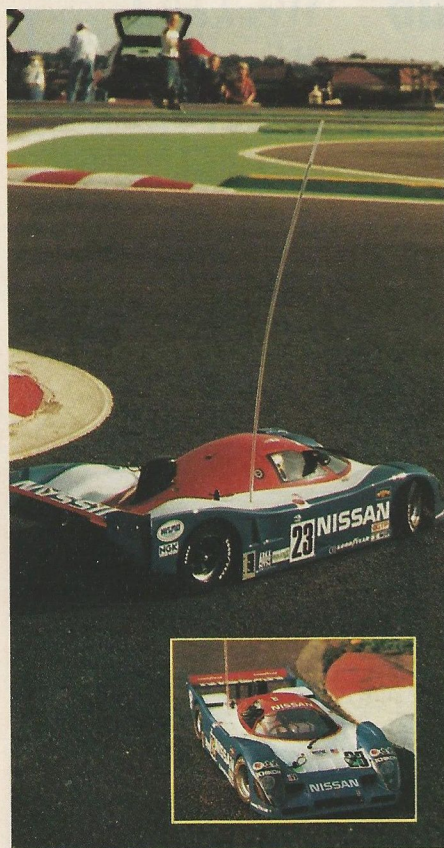




TAMIYA NISSAN R91CP

Daytona 24hr winner.



Tamiya do not hang about when it comes to releasing new models. Though this car has '91 in its name it is, in fact, a replica of the car that won this year's Daytona 24 hour race. The Daytona 24 hours is America's second biggest race after the Indy 500 and winning it carries an awful lot of prestige in the US. Nissan know this only too well and have put a great deal of effort into their Stateside IMSA race programme in recent years.

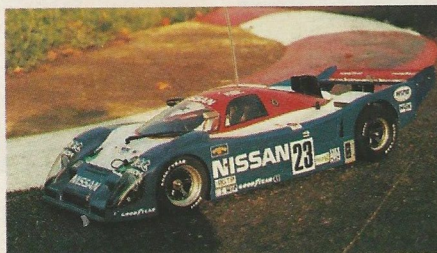
This is the 4th Group C/IMSA car Tamiya have produced (and the best looking?) and it shares its running gear with the existing Mazda 787B, Jag XJR-12 and Mercedes C11. Indeed, it also shares a good number of parts with Tamiya's F1 cars which is handy when it comes to finding hop-up parts.

The main chassis component is a bathtub affair onto which is mated a floating T-piece that gives a

certain amount of rear suspension movement. At the front we have fixed wishbones (same as the F1 cars) with sprung sliding kingpins offering some limited suspension travel. The springs included are stiffer than the F1 equivalents so if, in the unlikely event you wanted even more front end grip, the F1 springs might be one way of achieving this. Whilst working at the front end it is worth making sure that the small grub screw that holds the kingpin in the stub axle assembly is done up tightly. If the screw does come loose you will almost definitely lose the spring (don't ask how I know this!).

Assembly is pretty straightforward, with the chassis potentially finished in an evening. A ratchet screwdriver is a good idea as there are quite a few screws to do up. Fitting the tyres onto the wheels uses Tamiya's double sided tape approach which is a lot less messy than Evostik. There is a knack to doing this, though, and pulling the backing tape off slowly will be rewarded with it coming off in one piece. Be too hamfisted and the tape will break. This is not the end of the world as the 'sticky' takes a while to set, and you can lift the end of the tape with a sharp knife and carry on.

By far the greatest amount of building time is spent on the excellent body. Tamiya give you some long edging transfers that run along the joins between colour blocks. This means that even if you are like me (i.e. a very dabbed hand when near a paint brush) it is still possible to end up with sharp edges where they are supposed to be. A minor criticism is that despite using the recommended Tamiya colours the red transfer is



a somewhat brighter red than the red Tamiya PC2 paint.

To avoid you making the proverbial pig's ear of the wheel arches, Tamiya pre-cut these so you only have to do a limited amount of hacking to get the right shaped shell. The driver figure (new to this model) can be painted up as either Kazuyoshi Hoshino or Toshio Suzuki and the whole driver/cockpit assembly is held in the car with velcro. This means that it can be left off the car for racing and put back for display purposes. Ditto the windscreen wiper and mirror which are held on with clips.

In response to public demand, all UK versions of these kits have a manual speed controller included. This makes the kit more complete and means you only need batteries and radio gear to get rolling. If you do use the manual speedo it would be a good idea to shorten the motor wires as they are rather too long as supplied. The supply lead for the radio gear is a little too short, on the other hand!

The big questions you probably want



answered are 'how does it go?' and 'can it be raced?'. A quick thrash around the Aldershot circuit showed the car to be quite well set up out of the box. On the straights in particular it was very stable. The back end will come around if you are heavy handed with the throttle and, personally, I would have preferred slightly less grippy tyres on the front — the 'old' F1 front tyres might be worth trying. Loosening off the T-piece screw improved matters quite a bit. A tad more rear wing angle would help too. Speed wise the car is not as slow as I had expected, being quite fast when up to speed.

The Nissan falls into the Pro 10 class of racing and at under £100 (assuming the pound retains some value) with speedo and motor, is the cheapest route into this kind of racing by miles. In stock form it is a bit heavy and it isn't going to beat the Corally and Lynx brigades. However it isn't appallingly slow either. The basic good



handling will be enough to beat many of the people who struggle to get their pan-chassis Pro 10 cars to grip the track week in week out.

In modified form these cars can become very competitive indeed. Uwe Dorner and friends in Germany, for instance, have managed to feature in the top 20 of the Euros with these chassis and getting the car to go quicker is pretty straightforward. First, you need the front ballraces, then you can go for the lightweight axle, the metal motor plate, the fine pitch gears, titanium screws, an ESC, modified motors, top quality cells etc, etc. Not, of course, very cheap once you have bought all this gear but at least you can do it in stages while still enjoying the car.

Universal opinion both at Aldershot and WLRC was that this was the smartest looking car yet in the Group C/IMSA series. The big question though, is whether anyone would have the nerve to risk damaging the bodyshell after spending all those hours putting all the stickers on!

REVIEW by CHRIS FIFE-SCHAW

