

Le Mans

the start

Le Mans

June, hot days, cool nights, fairgrounds, bars, bright lights, noise, NOISE! It's Le Mans time again! 24 hours of the very best, and the very worst GT and Sports cars in the world trying to prove they are faster than the rest. Le Mans is resolutely different, thank goodness. Like the Monaco GP it makes no sense whatsoever as we get ready to embrace the Millennium. The French authorities keep the regulations tantalisingly close to the rest of the world but different, they are French you see - no offence. Who else but the Le Mans organisers would in the past have had classes for efficiency where the size of suitcase you could carry mattered? Who else would have invited NASCAR and TransAm V8 racers from the USA to play? Did you know that the Americans have regularly featured at Le Mans? Deussenberg, Briggs Cunningham, Cadillac, Ford and Dodge have all had a go. These days the cars are split into three main groups. The GT1 category are the most powerful GT's, road car based (!), limited production exotics. The Mercedes CLK, Porsche 911GT1 and Nissan R390 are typical GT1 cars. The GT2 are heavily production based, BHP limited, budget conscious cars for the privateer. The 911 GT2, Viper GTS and Marcos LM500 are typical GT2 cars. Gaining in popularity are the WSC, World Sports Cars, Sports prototypes, open topped, BHP limited cars of pure racing design. Ferrari 333SP, Riley & Scott and Kremer are WSC cars. The Kremer won in '96 and '97. Now for '98 with Mercedes, Nissan, Toyota and Porsche driving a coach and horses through the intent of the GT regulations expect speeds to be close to the quasi F1 cars of the Group 'C' era. These new cars will be fast and spectacular, and in the view of this humble scribe they will kill GT racing stone dead, mort, kaput, bye bye... Ah well it was nice while it lasted. From '94 - '97 the GT cars grew and grew and then FISA took over the organisation from BPR and that was that. We racers in the meantime are starting to get kits and bodyshells that are drop dead gorgeous if you like sexy looking scale cars, and great shapes to paint cool colours on if you don't! They are also lower and more aerodynamic and have for the most part more down force than your humble Accord or Volvo. Of course next year we will all be building scale 190 mm World Sports Cars that look uncommonly like Pro10 cars with time locked Porsche 962 and Lola F3000 based sportscar bodies, ah well, Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose' eh?*

*The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Models with a Le Mans Pedigree

Two of the Tamiya cars modelled, the Porsche 911 GT1 and the Dome Mugen version of the Honda NSX can both lay claim to a Le Mans pedigree. The NSX was run in the lower catego-

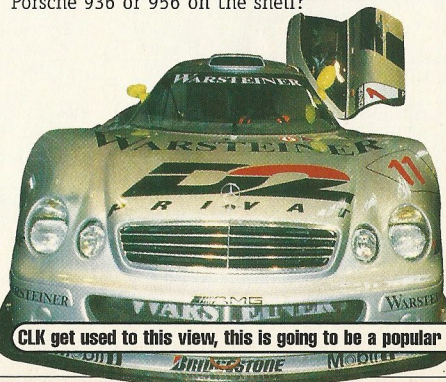
A pair of CLK's more to come in '98



RRCi gets sporty

ry GT2 by the 'works' Honda team of Mugen Dome. Mugen are engine builders run buy the son of Honda's president and Dome are one of the few successful Japanese race car constructors, heavy stuff. The cars had been a success in the German GT championships but were well and truly destroyed by the Porsches at La Sarthe. The 911GT1 arrived two years after Porsche had made a mockery of the GT category by running a 'private', road going (oh yeah!), Jochen Dauer 962GT version of the mega successful 962 Group 'C' car. This quasi GT car took one look at the GT opposition at Le Mans '94, fingered its nose and said 'bye bye suckers' as it disappeared into the distance, never to be seen again. This was a pretty nasty trick by Porsche bearing in mind the number of megabuck priced 911 GT2 cars and GT2 'Evo' cars they had sold to hapless privateers hoping to take GT honours. The 911GT1 modelled by Tamiya, and by Kyosho, is a 911GT1 as raced in 1996. The 911GT1 raced in 1997 was an 'Evo' version, or evolution, quicker, better handling etc. The 911GT1 raced at the 1998 Le Mans looks different again, think Mercedes CLK with a 911 GT1 nose and you are close. The Tamiya 911 Carrera is not modelled on an established Le Mans star although the Carrera can trace its lineage back to the late 60's in terms of Porsche 911 GT racers. The 934 and 935, Group 4 and Group 5 versions of the 930 turbo and the 911 Carrera RS were all giant killing class winners in the 70's and 80's. Expect the first appearance of the new 911 Carrera at this years Le Mans, expect a class win. This is one quite remarkable motoring dynasty. Oh, if you find that 962, 911, 934, and 935 are confusing don't get too involved in Porsche numerical nomenclature as the current 911 is a 996 and the previous 911 was a 993 and a Carrera 2 is a 964 and a... oh forget it life is just too short!

The 'Silver Arrows' Mercedes CLK were absent from Le Mans last year but devastatingly quick everywhere else, we have a beauty for you from Mugen, the Prime 12 Tourer. Many more CLK releases will follow in '98, RRCi will bring you the best. The BMW Z3 has been put forward to appear at Le Mans this year but don't hold your breath. Certainly in Z3/M mode it has the grunt to frighten a Porsche but then so has our MRC kit, take a look. Finally take a trip back in time with Alex Jung from the USA. Don't you just wish you had one of those old Porsche 936 or 956 on the shelf?



CLK get used to this view, this is going to be a popular car in '98

tamiya TA03 twins

Two new Tamiya GT cars - Porsche 911GT1 and Honda NSX

Tamiya Dome Mugen and Porsche 911GT1
These are important product releases from Tamiya. The early indications are that one of these will be THE chassis for the 1998 Tamiya series.
First out was the Porsche with the TA03 RS chassis followed by the Nissan R390 and Dome Mugen using the TA03R chassis. The 'R' denotes Rear, the position for the motor. The 'RS' denotes rear motor, short wheelbase. Both of these chassis share common components with the Tamiya TA03F, where 'F' denotes the front mounted motor. The specification of both of these chassis includes belt drive 4 wheel drive and gear type differentials front and rear. A mechanical 3 step speed controller is included in the kit along with a standard Mabuchi 540 type motor. The provision of gear type diffs marks this out from the racing norm. Only Kyosho and Tamiya amongst the bigger manufacturers use gear diffs, most of the more specialised manufacturers supply the superior ball type differentials. One of the many 'Hop Up' items for the TA03 chassis are ball diffs. We initially built both the Honda and the Porsche as the standard kit using the standard mechanical speed controller and the optional Acoms Techniplus 27 Meg Radio. We then tried a few Hop Ups' on both chassis to help me decide which was for me.

Every picture tells a story

As always the box art is first class. The Porsche 911GT1 is the car which made its debut in such dramatic fashion at the 1996 Le Mans 24 Hour race where it took the GT class and second place overall, a magnificent achievement. The Graphic style of the Honda is simply astounding. These are really attractive cars, superbly modelled. Our body shells were superbly prepared by Tony King, we hope our photographs do them justice.

Building the cars

Both cars are typically Tamiya. Good quality components, superb instruction manual, minimum fuss. Nice touches abound such as each bag indicating the sequence it covers in the manual, steps 1 to 7 etc. Neat.

Assembly

As usual I will not carry out a 'blow by blow' description of the build, these are Tamiyas! I will only make mention of my notes made during the build. The assembly is straightforward and aided by the excellent, clear instructions. The use of clearly lettered bags, each covering a number of steps from the build manual, makes the assembly suitable for even a total novice. The gear differentials start things off. It is worth mentioning that the three screws holding the diffs together should be tightened up evenly, not one at a time, so that the top plate tightens down evenly. Both diffs are assembled at this stage. The front gearbox is then completed. If you plan to ballrace the model, either for longevity or for performance, then you should purchase the ball race set before starting the assembly to save a lot of stripping and rebuilding later. We always recommend fitting the full ball race kit if funds allow.

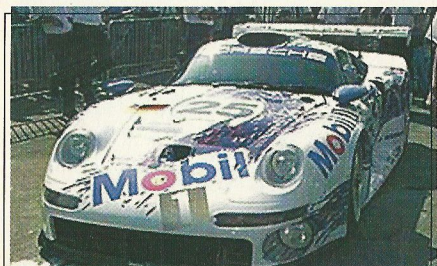
tip

If you are tempted to use a power screwdriver for assembly remember do not use it to tighten the screws all the way. Electric screwdrivers are very powerful and they can exert much more force than you might realise at first. Best to use them only to take up the slack, complete the last part of the screw by hand or you risk damaging components.

The completion of the front gearbox and hubs is next. Ensure everything moves freely. We found that the lower wishbones were a little bit tight but a bit of work with an Emery board did the trick. When you come to install the MA3 screw into the front hub to connect the top link take care to use the correct hole in the hub, the lower one, the drawing is slightly confusing here. The rear gearbox assembly follows a similar pattern, the quality of these complex mouldings really is superb.



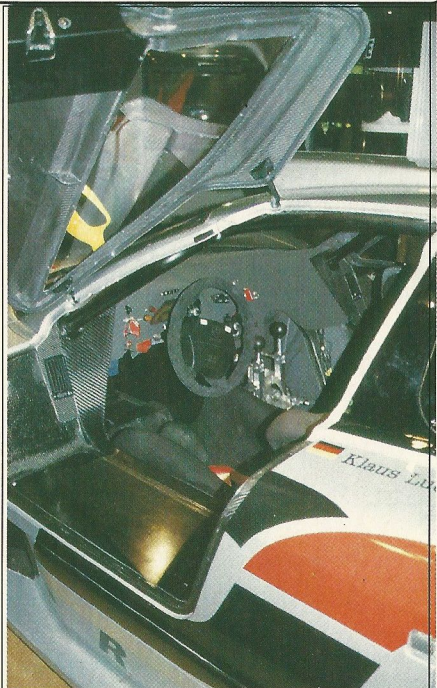
The top views show the superb decal sets



Real porsche 911GT1 at Le Mans

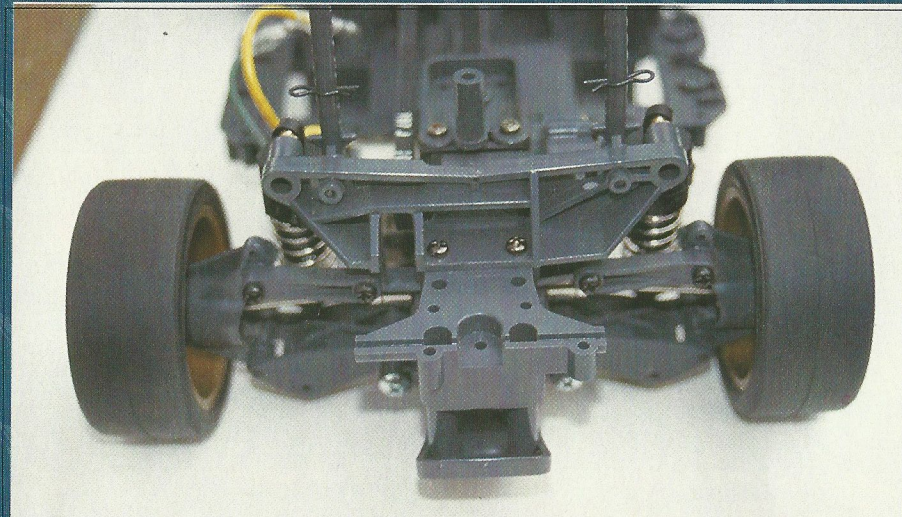


Dodge Viper GTS, GT2 front runner, 8 Litres and only 650 BHP

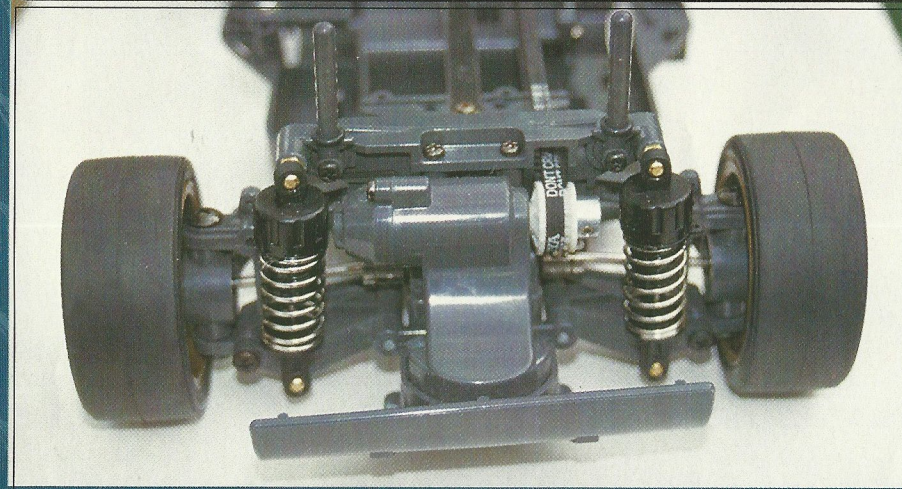


CLK interior, just right for popping to the shops!





Above and Below: The front and rear suspension/gearbox assemblies are almost identical, only one steers!



Quick Spec

1:10th scale touring cars. Belt drive, 4WD Chassis with independent suspension all round by wishbones and oil filled, coil over shock absorbers. Rear mounted Mabuchi 540 type motor and 3 step mechanical speed control supplied in kit. 6 cell Nicad packs, 2 channel radio and charger required for operation.

Tester Kits

Acoms Techniplus 27 Meg and JR 756 40 meg radios and matching servos. Standard 540, Tamiya Dyna Run and Trinity D2 Motors. Tamiya Powers and Orion cell packs.

Likes

Superb looks
Robust components
Fail safe handling

Dislikes

Sloppy steering joints
Standard 540 is a bit slow for these cars, they look fast!

MADE IN JAPAN R/C ELECTRIC CAR © 1998 TAMIYA

HOP-UP OPTIONS

53275 TA03 ALUMINUM MOTOR HEAT SINK
ホップアップオプションOP275
TA03アルミモーターヒートシンクセット



Dyna Run motor and Heat sink warmed up the performance nicely

DYNARUN SUPER TOURING MOTOR HOP-UP OPTIONS
ホップアップオプションNO.263 タイナランスーパーターニングモーター



tip

A quick dab of grease inside the drive cup will retain the 'O' ring nicely until the drive shafts are fitted. But don't use too much as this will attract dust on the track forming a really nice grinding paste!

Installing the motor, a stock 540, is next. We will introduce something a bit warmer later but for now the model is all stock. The 14T pinion needs to be installed so that all of the gear teeth are lined up with the spur gear, you want to spread the load right across the teeth. A bit more guidance on gear mesh set up would be helpful for the total novice. The illustration in the manual does show the correct mesh but you do need to look closely.

Shockers

Note that the front shockers use the dark metal piston rods and the rear shockers the chromed rods. Make sure that you use the correct pistons, (V8) these are single hole, the others on the sprue are 2 and 3 hole pistons. Check for any moulding 'flash' on the pistons, if any is present gently file away with a smooth Emery board or similar. Nice touches abound, as you fit the belt tensioner in place in the chassis pan notice how the two pegs stop the assembly from turning - nice one.

tip

When threading the bottom fixing onto the piston rod we use a bit of masking tape to ensure that the rod is not scored.

Radio

If you are fitting the kit mechanical speed controller you will need to switch between the manual and the supplementary sheet for the speed controller. We suggest that you read both the manual and the supplementary sheet and then mark up your manual where you need to switch. We would also recommend that you fit an electronic unit (Esc) but the mechanical unit is perfectly adequate for sport use.

Bodyshell

Both kits feature a beautiful, static display quality, Lexan shell, pre drilled for the body mounts and with a removable protective film to catch any overspray and scratches during the preparation sequence. Window masks are provided, a thoughtful touch that makes the job much simpler. Ours were particularly simple as we asked 'Readers Wheels' winner Tony King to do the honours. Tony told RRCi that he used the soapy water technique described in the March '98 issue for the larger stickers.

Hop Up time

We fitted some basic Hop Ups and then tried them on both chassis. The fact that the major

components are interchangeable helped a lot here. We simply added the Hop Ups to one set of front and rear end assemblies and then switched the central tubs, easy peasy! We first off fitted the #53296 Ball Bearing set. The most important Hop Up? We think so. Next came the Super Grip radial Tyres. Lightly treaded, soft synthetic rubber. 2 x Pairs went on to the Porsche 911 wheels. As we had used the Tamiya special chrome rim Mesh wheels rather than the Kit wheels for photography purposes it meant that we could use the Kit Porsche wheels for the new tyres. The Dyna Run Super Touring Motor and the #53275 Aluminium Motor Heat Sink made the straights a bit shorter and the #53299 Torque Control Unit (which includes front one way unit and different size, aluminium, belt pulleys) helped to give more

steering in the corners. We also fitted a 23T Pinion before hitting the track.

The benefits of the Aramid Fiber Reinforced Drive Belt are more in terms of longevity than performance as is the OP-266 Stainless steel suspension shaft set. We reckon the #53172 Universal Shaft set which replaced the normal 'Dog bone' drive shafts. (2 Pairs) helps the efficiency, especially the set fitted to the front. We also fitted the OP-191 Turnbuckle Tie Rod set as they make adjusting the steering 'toe' a lot easier.

Testing

We tried both cars in standard form and in modified form and we came to the same con-

clusions as the Elliots did last month, you need both! The Porsche is definitely more agile and turns in much more aggressively. The Honda is almost lazy, it does not want to move off line and it is very stable. The Dyna run motor and 23T pinion transformed the straight line performance, these are pretty quick racecars in this form. Battery efficiency was great and we found that we were going well into the 6th or even 7th minute without an early 'dump'.

We liked both cars enormously, they look fabulous and Tony King has done a magnificent job on the shells, thanks Tony, take a bow! I will be out to play in the Tamiya Eurocup this year in at least one round with the boy Jono, he will just have to fight over who gets which. If I had to decide which one I prefer, it would have to be the Honda, the more friendly responses suit my reflexes!

See you trackside at the Eurocup. RRCi

The 911GT1 poses with the kit wheels and special Hop Up tyres. Superb chrome rim wheels are Tamiya option.

