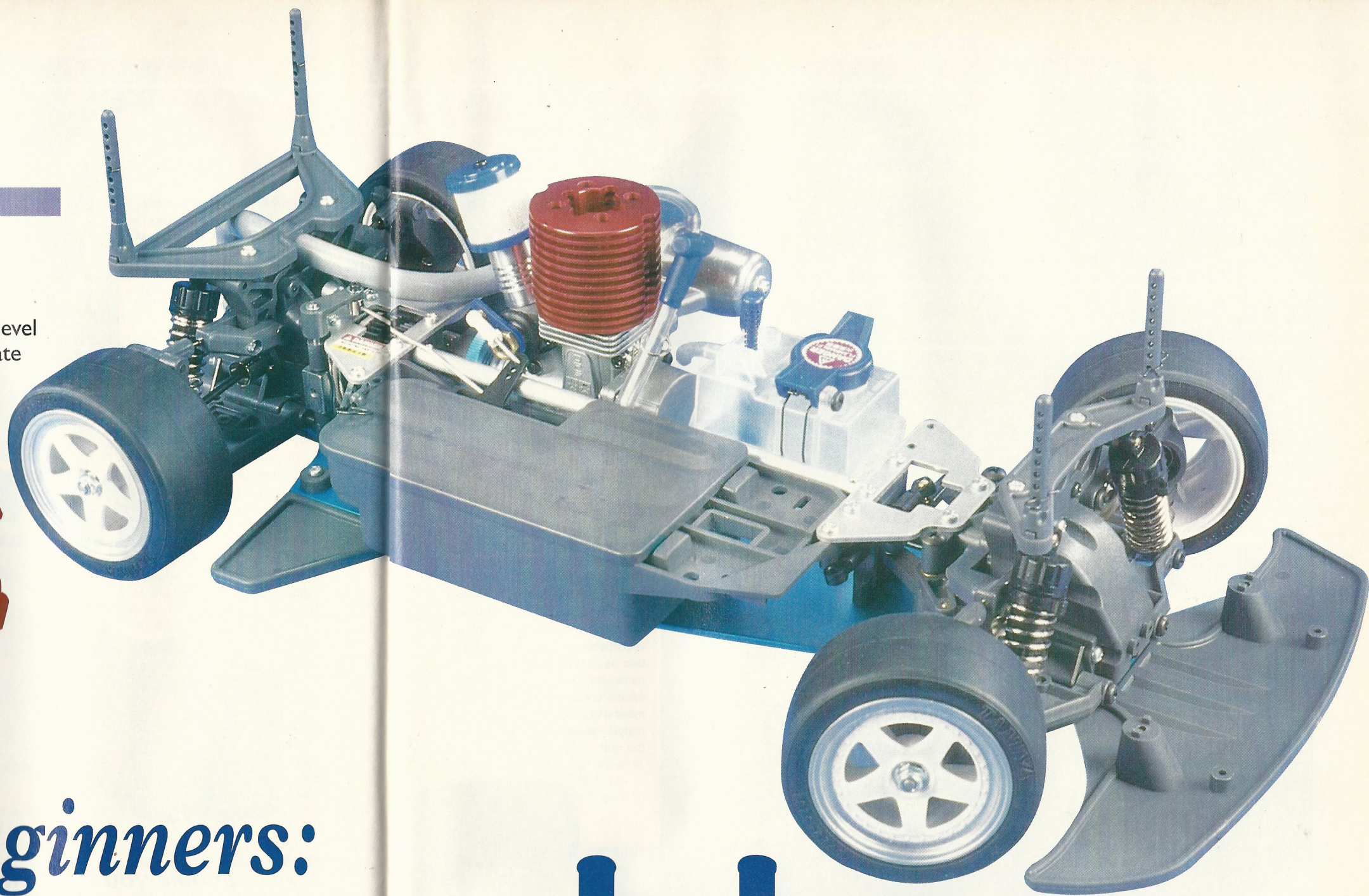
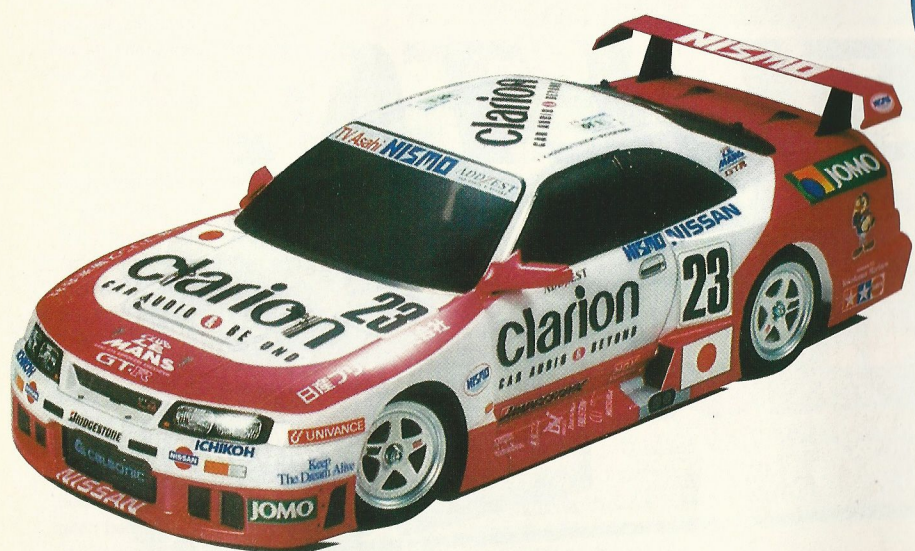


KIT REVIEW

Report by Marcus Nicholls

The Tamiya TGX brings 1:8 scale gas cars to a new level with ease of build and ease of use, RCMC investigate



Gas Beginners: Queue Here

Nobody would deny that Tamiya's experience with electric powered RC cars is virtually unparalleled within the model world, so when the company released the 1:10 scale TR15T Racing Truck a couple of years back, everyone was confident that it would be a success. This was certainly the case, and the truck became a highly desirable to those wanting a high speed IC

(Internal Combustion) powered car, that was as easy to build and maintain as a Tamiya electric model.

The TR15T featured an all new chassis, formed from thick aircraft grade aluminium with a composite upper deck acting as a stiffener. Tamiya and Italian manufacturer OPS developed the VR-15S powerplant, and this glow plug engine appears in all of Tamiya IC cars to date. The standard set up

now for RC cars is all round independent suspension with oil filled dampers at each corner, and the TR15T featured an ultra wide track to keep it on all fours when cornering.

Moving on the road

The second IC car from Tamiya was the four wheel drive, 1:8 scale TGX Mki TS. This was

intended for track racing, and was supplied as a chassis only kit, with a choice of separately available bodyshells. The car was fully ballraced, and consequently quite expensive, so a version aimed at modellers with less money to spend was released. Whilst the overall design is identical, the TGX Nismo Clarion GT-R LM includes a bodyshell for the thundering Nissan based Le Mans endurance racer, plus new

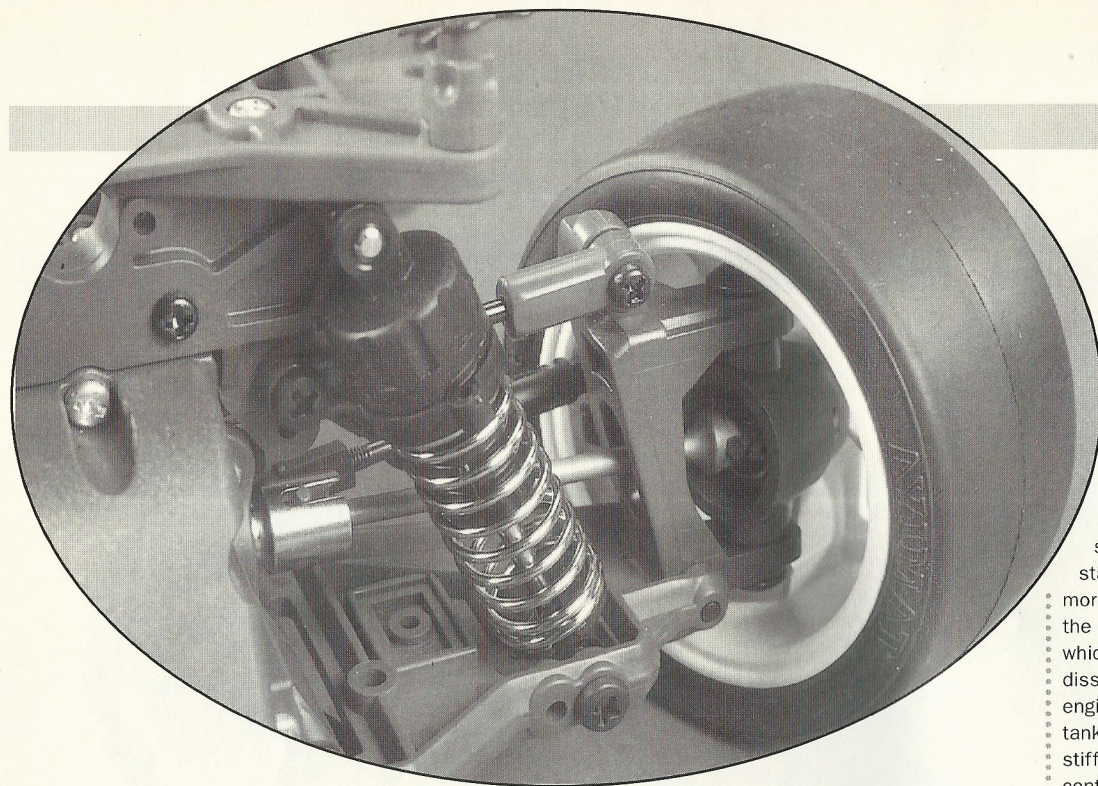
design wheels. Most of the sealed ballraces are deleted from this kit however (the ones in the gearboxes remain), and a plain heat sink replaces the attractive red anodised item found in the original release.

Like the TR15T, the chassis plate of the TGX is formed from thick section blue anodised aluminium, but stiffening is undertaken by a longitudinal alloy beam. The modular

gearbox/suspension units are subsequently are bolted to this plate. Construction of these units is very straightforward, and are reminiscent of the gearboxes found in the smaller 1:10 electric touring cars. Chunky cast alloy geared diffs are employed in both front and rear 'boxes, and a solid steel drive shaft connects them. This shaft is in fact upgradeable to a very stylish carbon fibre item which is lighter, stiffer and looks superb!

The differences between electric and IC powered cars become clear as assembly progresses. The first one is encountered at stage 6, the assembly of the disc brake. Electric cars can be stopped by pulling back on the throttle stick, which activates the electronic braking circuit, or simply throws the motor into reverse. Obviously, neither of these options are available with an IC car, so a

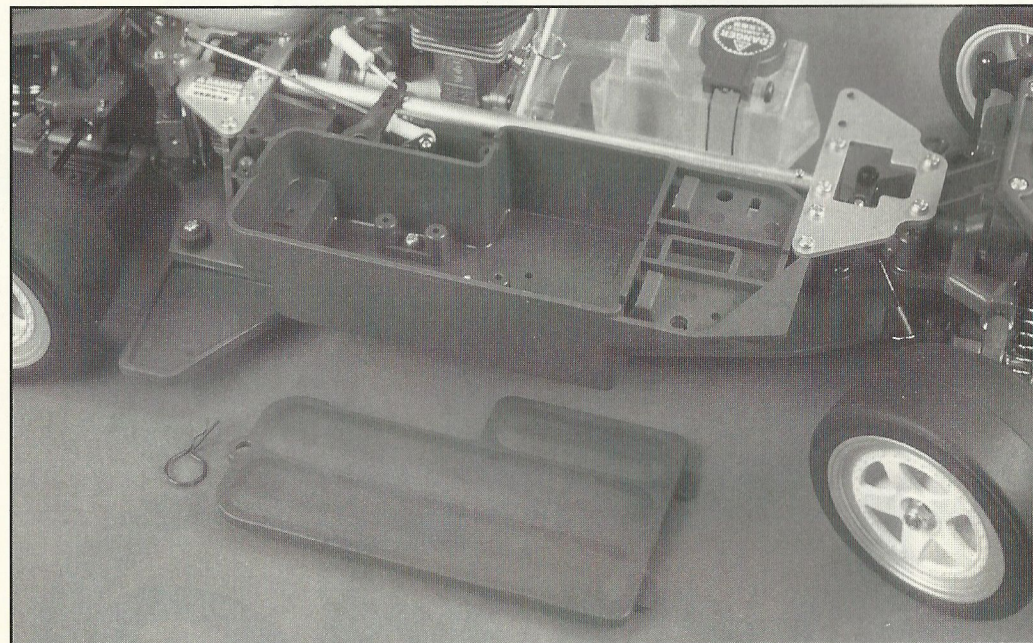
mechanical brake is very necessary. A single, hefty composite disc is mounted on the central drive shaft, and a servo actuated calliper provides the stopping power. We incorporated Tamiya's two speed gearbox Hop-Up Option, which as the name suggests, is a centrifugally operated 'box with two ratios that changes up automatically as the revs increase.



Power input

Stage 26 deals with the installation of the VR-15S glow plug engine, and we installed a couple of Hop-Ups here too. The most obvious is the striking red anodised cylinder head, which has a much larger surface area than the standard item, and is therefore more efficient. Also used were the neat alloy engine mounts, which feature cooling gills to dissipate more heat. Of course an engine needs fuel to run, and a tank is supplied in the kit. A stiffly sprung lid keeps the contents in, while allowing quick fill ups during running.

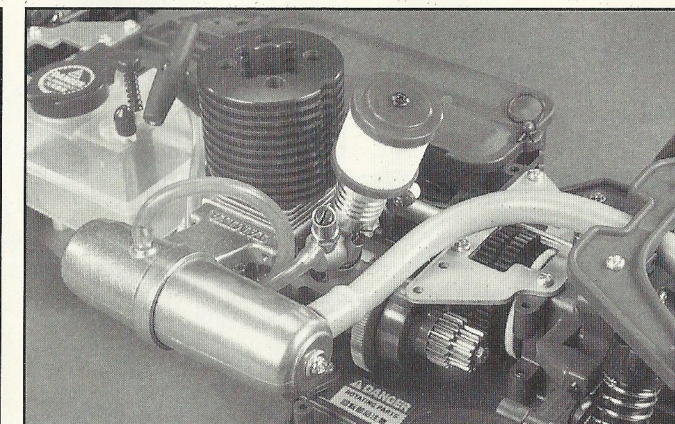
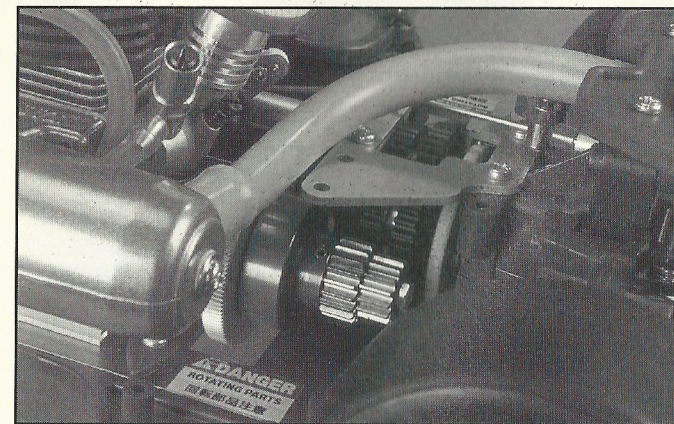
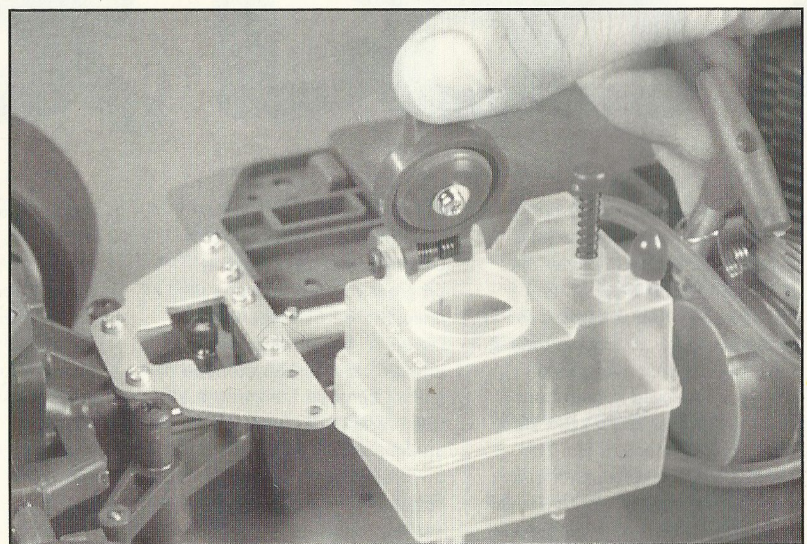
In inimitable Tamiya style, a "DANGER FLAMMABLE" sticker is supplied for the tank lid, as well as other warning logos for the hot exhaust and for rotating parts. It is probably this attention to detail that has endeared Tamiya to modellers over the years, and the company keeps coming up with more and more original ideas that makes Tamiya simply better than the rest.



Above; Radio tray is very protective of the RC gear.

Below; Fuel tank and other detail is so neatly designed and finished for ease of use.

Right; Chassis on the car is an alloy work of art...



Left; Optional two speed auto gearbox in place can be seen behind the exhaust. Right; Optional alloy red head fitted and again exhaust detail.

Radio installation differs slightly from that of an electric car, as two servos will be needed; one for the steering, and one for the throttle/brake. A power pack for the system will also be needed, and rechargeable nicads are the best for the job. The RC gear is contained within a moulded case which is reminiscent of the good old Sand Scorcher/Rough Riders cars! The need for a sealed box becomes apparent when the model is run for a while - all glow engines spit out oil, and it's a good idea to keep this off servos etc.

New wheels

Peripherals such as fuel lines, exhaust piping, linkages and body mountings are the last items to be fitted to the chassis. As this kit was originally supplied as a chassis only and the first available bodyshell was the Mercedes DTM, the body, wheels and tyres shown in the instructions relate to this car, not the GT-R. In fact, new design five spoke split rims are supplied, along with slick tyres and of course the Nismo GT-R bodyshell.

The decal sheet is extensive, and some if you can't get hold of the correct paint (Cherry Red) some tricky colour mixing and matching will be needed.

There are yet more Hop-Ups on offer for this, and the other IC cars from Tamiya. One of the most useful is the Electric Starter Unit, which comprises of an electric starter motor that is mounted on

the back plate of the engine, plus a power lead to the glow plug. A hand held battery pack unit is plugged into a socket on the chassis, a button pressed, the engine turns over and so long as fuel is present in the carburettor, the engine should fire up!

Concise operating instructions are given in the back of the instruction booklet, from obtaining the correct mixtures to starting and suspension set-up. If problems are encountered, a trouble shooting guide gives a list of options to try.

IC powered cars are not as easy to operate as electric cars, and they are noisier, smellier and messier than their battery powered cousins - but the payback is that they are very rewarding to drive. The speeds obtainable can be awesome, the sound of the high rewing motor is exciting and the feeling that you are driving a car powered by a real internal combustion engine can not be beaten.

Summary

Even if you have never experienced any IC or 1:8 RC cars before, the buildability of Tamiya's TGX is unparalleled, and it represents the perfect way to get into IC powered car action. Add to the basic model a handful of Tamiya Hop-Up Options, and you can have a serious vehicle on your hands...

