

Stark Staring Bonkers

TECH -R 4WD
M-CHASSIS
CONVERSION

You'll love this", said Chris The Ed. "It'll appeal to your warped mind". If a warped mind is a pre-requisite for just building and running such a creation, then whoever actually dreamed up and designed it must be rather seriously disturbed. The formula at first glance is itself fairly straightforward: take a very popular production car available in only a

2WD format, and introduce a conversion kit to the marketplace allowing the to be run in a 4WD form. Fine. But this is not to be applied to a normal car; it's the Tamiya M-chassis range of pint sized retro-cars.

Tempted

Tempted? Well, once you've spent the time and money on creating such a hybrid, a fairly large problem arises: what class do you race it in? I'm sure that Colin Spinner would raise at least one eyebrow if you turned up at a Eurocup meeting clutching a 4WD Mini, so that leaves rather limited options. Either a whole new class of racing should be created to incorporate both this and the M1 4WD Mini Striker, or it could be entered in the scale saloon class; a sort of totally OTT, powersliding lightweight pygmy racer. Hmmm.

So, what does the average warped person get for his hard laundered money?

Tech Racing, a company unknown to me



prior to this review, is a Japanese specialist in unusual upgrades, all of which seem to be made to rather high standards. The box of bits is surprisingly full, as a large amount of the transmission is to be either replaced or heavily supplemented. In short, the following fell out onto the carpet, some of which was rescued and fashioned into something resembling a car:

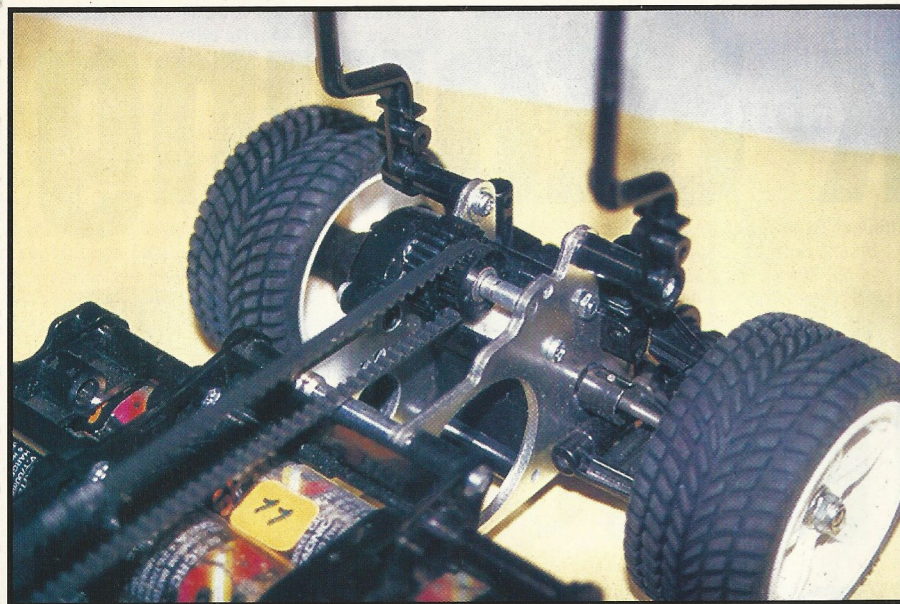
- 1) Two pairs of alloy transmission side plates, together with their accompanying nylon gear surrounds.
- 2) An entire front gearbox with a geared differential.
- 3) A pair of Aluminium driveshafts, new drive cups, and a selection of modified steering components.

Drive from rear to front is transmitted by a fairly coarse toothed belt, the tension of which is adjustable. Also provided is a choice of belt drive pulleys to enable the user to change the accelerative characteristics of the car to suit his or her driving style. All of the necessary nuts and bolts are included, and Tech Racing have also thoughtfully thrown in a selection of bushes; just in case the owner has no desire to fit ballraces during the initial build.

Like me.



The Fastrack Road Hawks gripped surprisingly well. Fitted the "package" well.



This is a lie

This is a lie. The desire was there, but the actual bearings were not, so the car was assembled 50/50; the rear end got the stainless steel rollers.

The instructions, all eight stages of them, take the form of clearly laid out diagrams with a little accompanying text. Frustratingly, the text was all in Japanese, though I'm not sure that the builder is starved of any important pearls of wisdom; the whole process being very straightforward. It is possible to assemble the car as an M01 or an M02; that is to say the motor can be positioned at the front or rear. Take yer pick.

However one word of warning: use a little thought with regards to the various spacers used to line up the gears, as I had to juggle one or two around to achieve a smooth gearbox.

Once finished

Once finished, the rolling chassis makes a rather impressive sight, with lots of gleaming alloy on display. The drive belt takes a route over the top of



"M" CLASSY. The HPI Pajero makes quite a change, smart too.

split 'screen Volkswagen Camper. Used with standard Tamiya Mini wheels and given a traditional two tone paint job, this really does look the part. Brilliant. Next, a real 'lifestyle' (?) sport utility vehicle; the Mitsubishi Pajero Jr. This shell allows the use of proper scale saloon wheels and tyres to give the appearance of a really chunky 'Tonka toy' off roader, and to be honest it makes quite a refreshing change from the norm.

Insert favourite electrics

In readiness for a good track test, my favourite electrical bits of the moment were thrown in the car and shaken around until they fitted. A K.O. FET servo, an LRP Bee D motor, a Novak Tempest speedo and a few sets of rather impressive Orion cells fitted the bill, and I was ready.

Outlandish

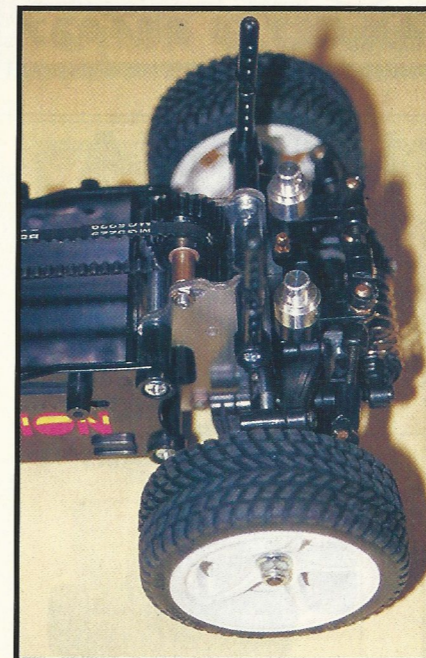
I really did not expect what followed. Far from being a rather outlandish, totally under-chassised novelty vehicle, it is instead highly impressive. On the track the chassis is so polite and well mannered that it beggars belief. The car was run with a set of scale saloon tyres, which had an effect on the unsprung mass and hence the suspension behaviour, and the grip was prodigious. The speed of the projectile was also notable, partly, I imagine, due to the gearing; though the run time was quite acceptable.

The car as a whole impressed me to such an extent

Heart of the conversion is the front and rear alloy mounting plates.

the chassis, so fitting the electrical equipment around it is suitably facile. The only real worry on completion was a seemingly overtight transmission due to the close proximity of the meshing of the non-adjustable gears. Running-in, I opined, would gradually clear the problem. So I did. And it did.

Now I have to admit that the Tech Racing 4WD conversion has been in my possession for an awfully long time before the review was completed. There was a good reason behind this; the bodyshell. I felt that such an off the wall car needed a slightly peculiar shell to complete the ensemble. It took ages for anything to fire my imagination but then, like buses, two came along at once. The first is a fabulous 1950s



Front mounting plate and gearbox.



that I firmly believe it would be a good club racer, particularly if equipped with a Tamiya anti-roll bar kit. Indeed, I understand that Paul Cook has been destroying everyone with one racing indoors. O.K, he is a fair stick twiddler, but it must prove something, surely?

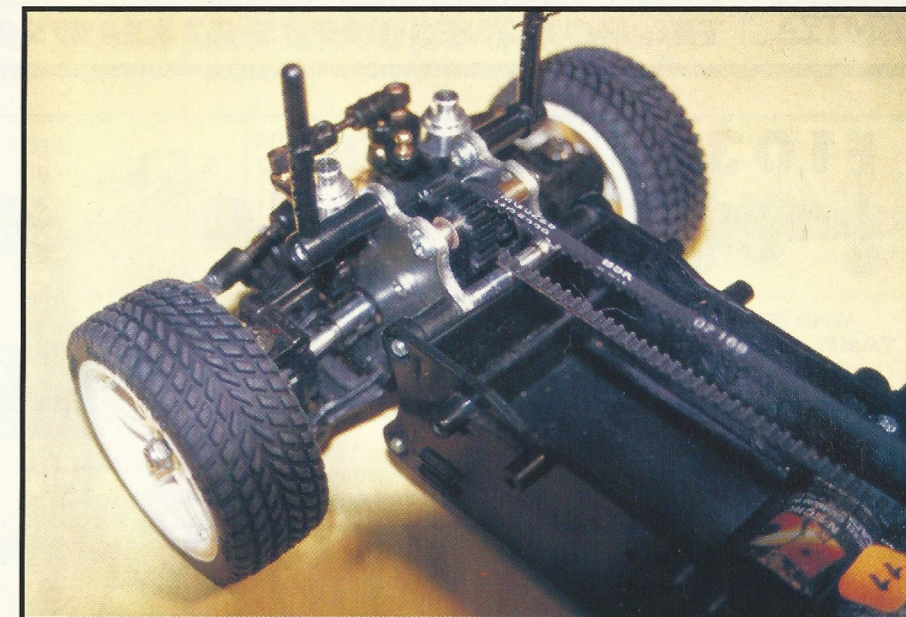
Merc's & BMW's

A further variation on the theme is provided in Europe. Frewer Bodyshells manufacture a selection of 1/12th scale touring car shells, Mercs and BMWs and things, and the Europeans have been fitting these to both the Tech Racing conversion and the M1 with standard M-chassis sized wheels and tyres. The result? Frantic 4WD 1/12th indoor touring car racing. Sounds manic.

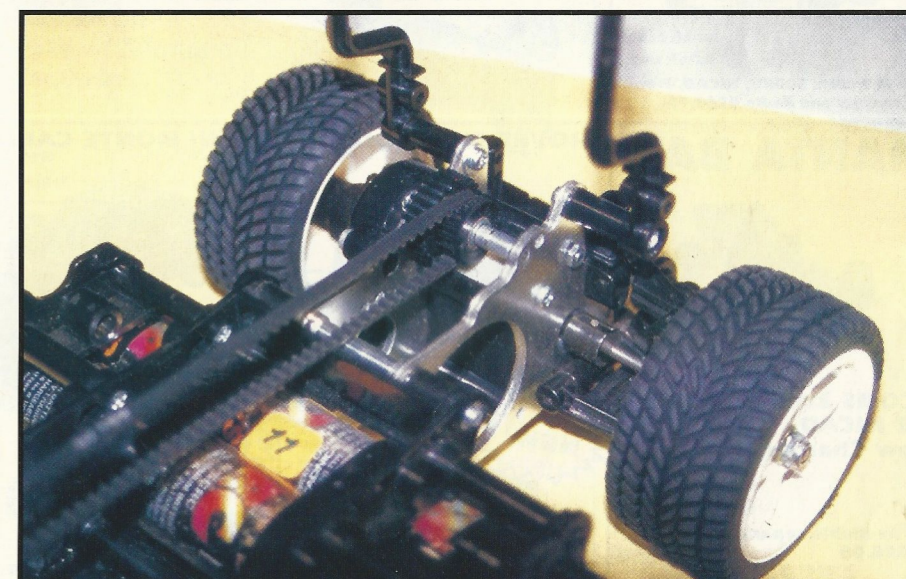
So go on then, have a laugh and buy one. For 79 quid you really can't go wrong. Dial 01642 241511 and those kind people at Cleveland Elite Models, who import the kit, will gladly relieve you of your money. **HPI**

Testers Kit

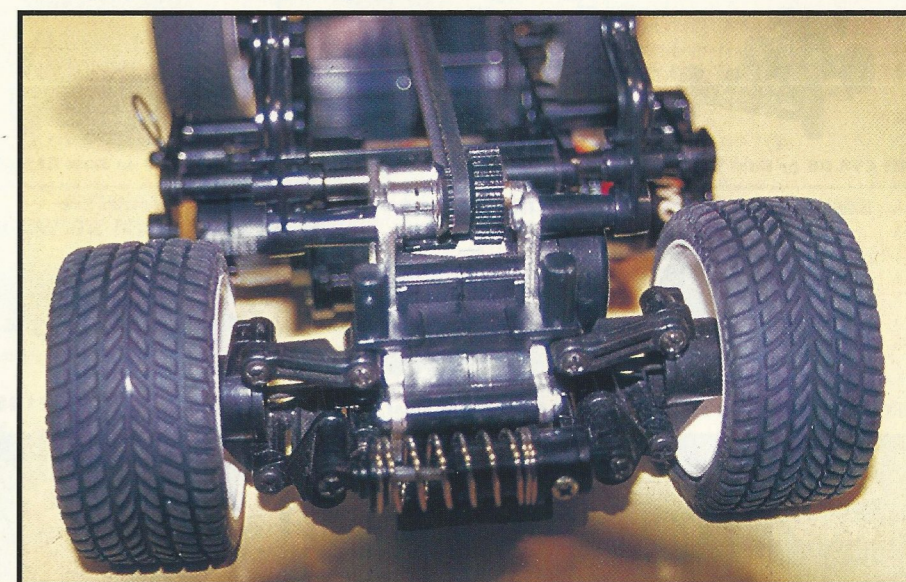
- Radio: Futaba Attack
- Servo: KO 1002 Fet
- Speedo: Novak Tempest
- Motor: LRP BeDee
- Nicads: Orion Activated
- Bodyshell: HPI Pajero
HPI VW Combi
- Tyres: Fast Track Road Hawgs (Treaded)
Schumacher Yellow (Slicks)
Hot Laps Bell-Tec (Slicks)



A series of spacers are included to set the belt alignment. Also note the slots to adjust the belt tension.



The alloy side plates are a very good heat sink, so any "hot" motor can be fitted. Although we built the car as "rear engine", it can be built as "front engine".



The wide rear tyres markedly improved the balance.