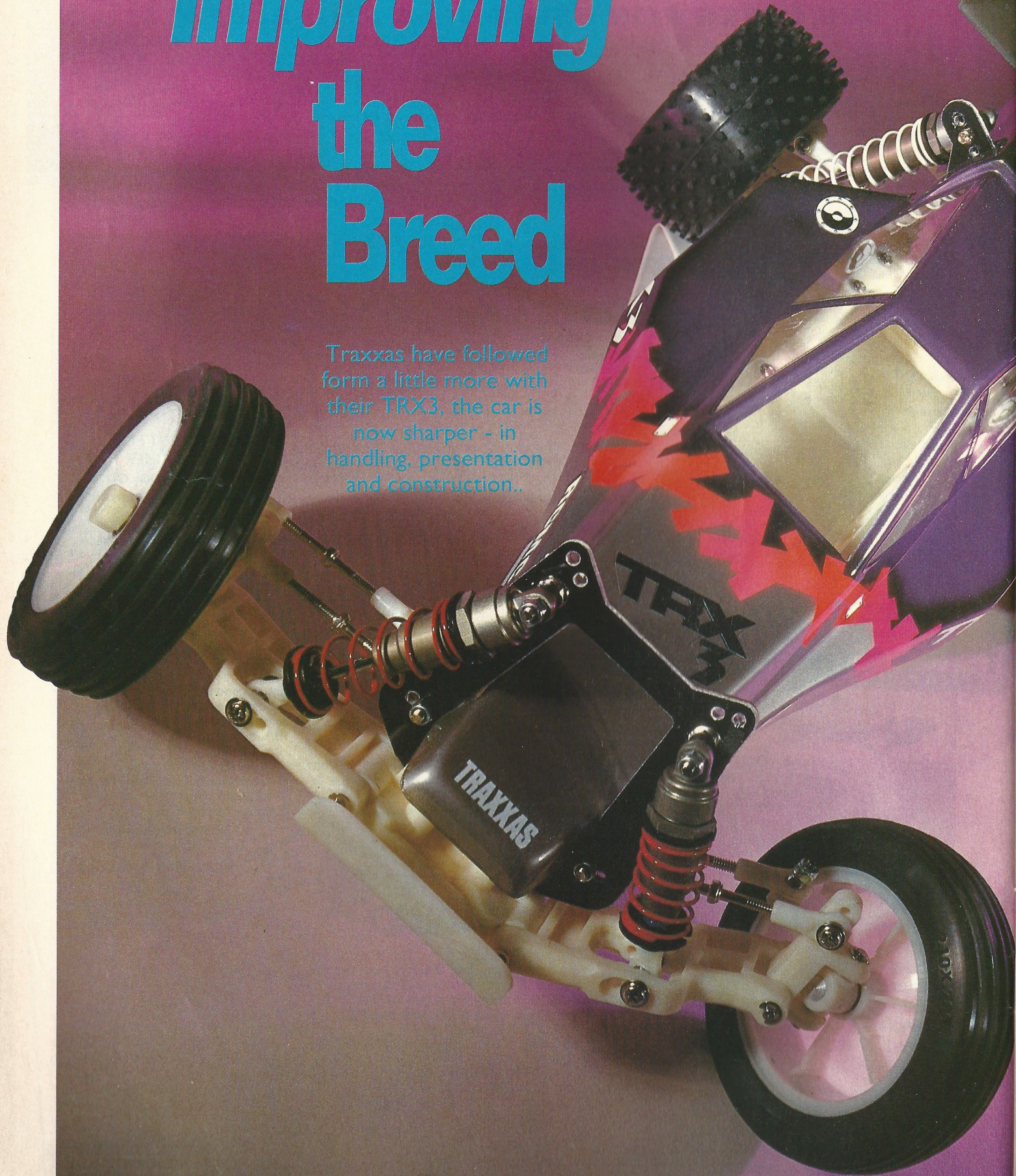


Improving the Breed

Traxxas have followed form a little more with their TRX3, the car is now sharper - in handling, presentation and construction..



Kit Review

The Traxxas TRX3 is another contender to the 2WD championship crown which is, at this moment in time, arguably the most hotly contested crown in 1/10th electric off-road model car racing. Last year's World Championships held here in the UK was witness to a proliferation of new(ish) models from various manufacturers including Losi, Schumacher, Kyosho, Tamiya and Traxxas. Only one name, Associated, remain conspicuous by their absence of a new model as they (successfully) retained the 2WD crown for the third successive time with a standard RC10 team car - although the prototype 'Stealth' car had been used in the previous two events. What was most noticeable was that the other manufacturers have caught up the guys from Santa Ana and, I believe, frightened them. They say that competition breeds competition

and the RC10 has remained one of the greatest goal posts to aim for in the history of buggy racing so, it is no surprise that the latest offering from Traxxas is not radical but is sufficiently improved to warrant it becoming a serious contender for the crown.

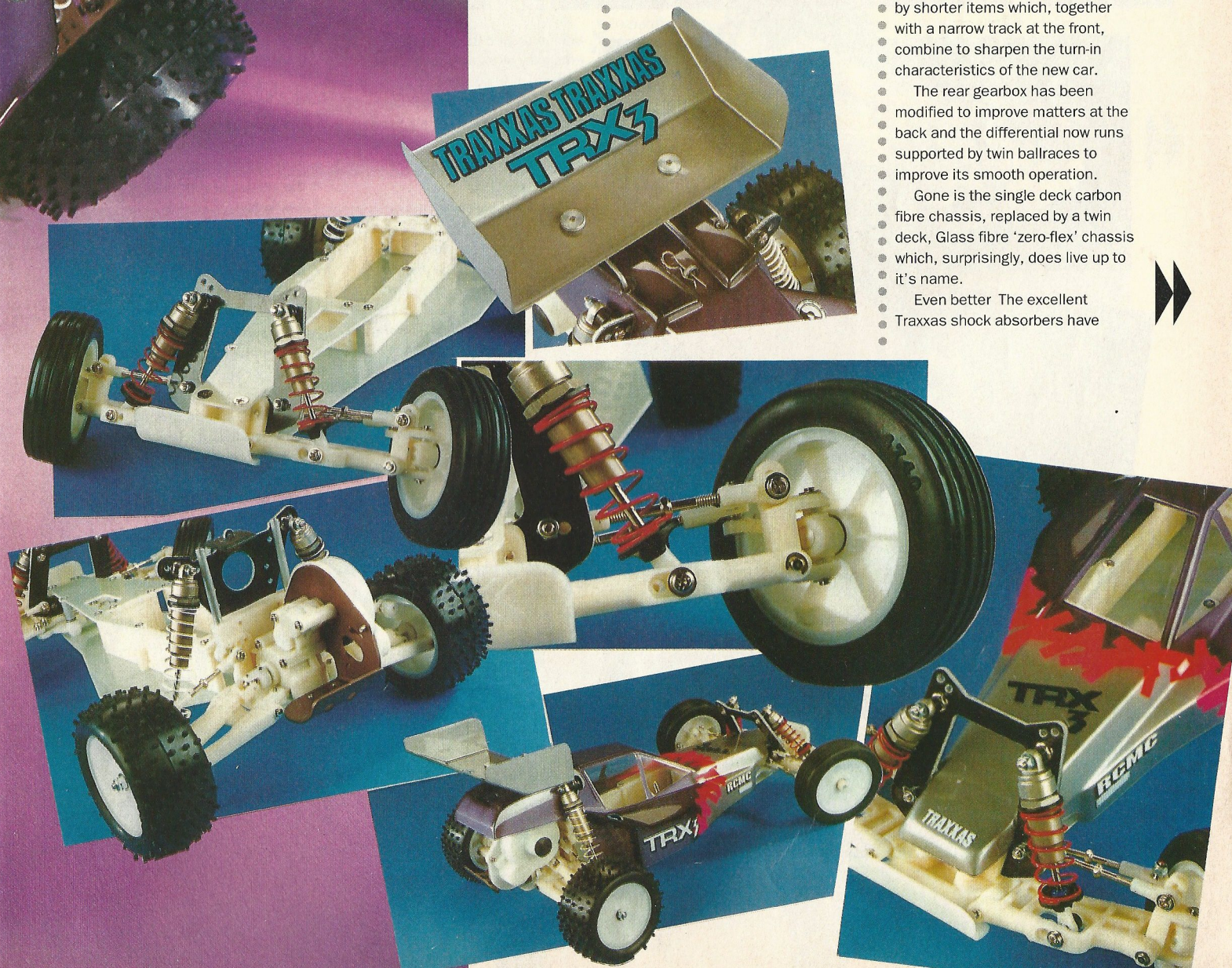
In order to be a successful racing team, lessons about an existing model must be learnt quickly and remedied even quicker. Even at the pinnacle of motor sport, teams are constantly making slight modifications to their products based on the influx of data from the team drivers who play an enormous part in true, product development and this is where, the USA, Traxxas have scored highly. Their team has transformed the TRX-1 into the TRX-3 by sharpening up the mediocre areas of the car and continuing to utilise the good aspects of the car.

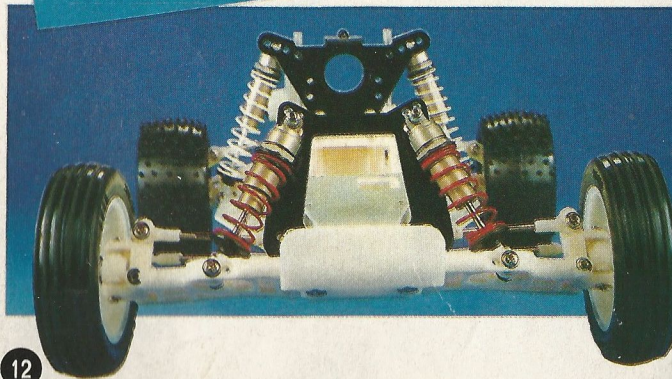
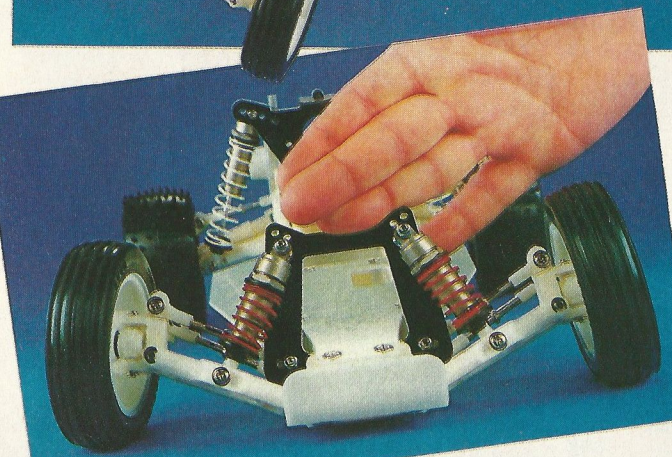
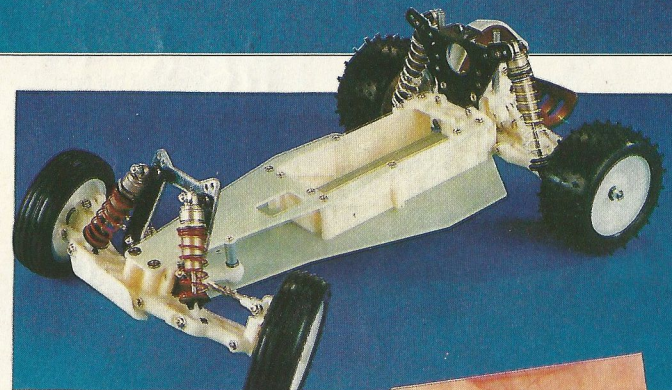
Gone are the ultra-long wishbones of the TRX-1, replaced by shorter items which, together with a narrow track at the front, combine to sharpen the turn-in characteristics of the new car.

The rear gearbox has been modified to improve matters at the back and the differential now runs supported by twin ballraces to improve its smooth operation.

Gone is the single deck carbon fibre chassis, replaced by a twin deck, Glass fibre 'zero-flex' chassis which, surprisingly, does live up to it's name.

Even better The excellent Traxxas shock absorbers have





been modified to improve their efficiency by increasing the bore and hence the volume of the oil in the shock. Pressure diaphragms at the top of the shocks help keep unwanted air bubbles out of them and ensure smooth operation time after time.

The durable, telescopic driveshafts have been retained which ensures a trouble free transmission from the gearbox to the wheels for many races without maintenance.

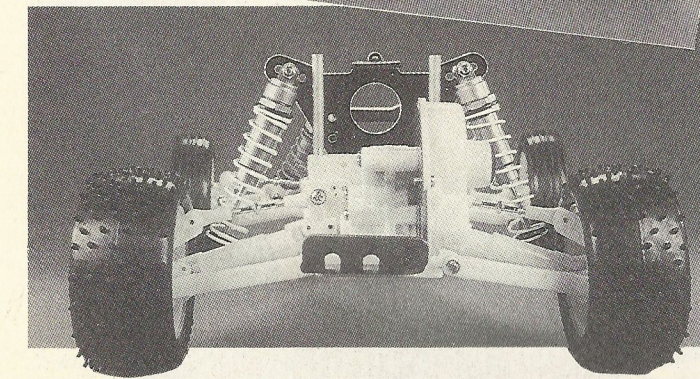
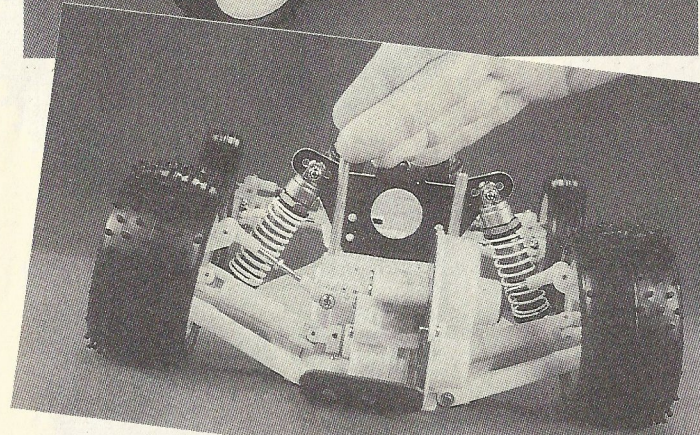
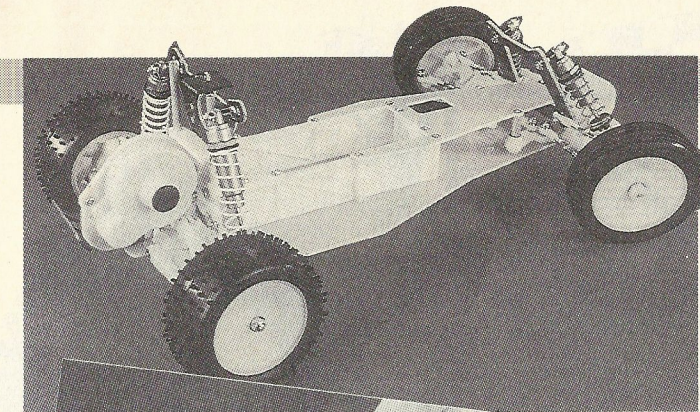
The 30 degree kick-up at the front of the chassis is also retained, although it is now achieved slightly differently which has now become the industry standard for 2WD in order to smooth out the bumps.

Gone is the old bodyshell which always looked to me like a fairly liquid bottle cut in two and which never did the TRX-1 any favors in the eyes of the racing and buggy

The Traxxas 'Zero Flex' chassis lives up to its name being the best yet from Texas.

buying fraternity. That's replaced by an altogether much neater looking, angular bodyshell which is infinitely more pleasing to the eye, also coupled to a deep sided lexan undertray which will keep the elements away from the insides of your TRX-3 Assembly

The assembly process begins with the gearbox and the ball differential. Unfortunately, ball diffs are not all the same; some are easy to adjust and some are not. Even with the mods' the new differential is still a little tricky to get a perfect setting. The only difference is that the new one is noticeably smoother which does act in it's favour. Having just said that, it isn't too difficult to achieve a properly adjusted unit but, there are easier ones available in other cars. The rest of the gearbox is really straight forward, even the pin in the top layshaft which is notoriously tight and difficult in other kits has now been pre-



assembled for you (which goes down as a big plus in my book!) The slipper clutch is carried over from the other Traxxas kits and, in my opinion, could have been modified. Without trying to be too harsh about a system that I have never tried in anger myself, the existing slipper clutch appears old fashioned when compared to other types. Six little Ruon pegs are held in place by the spur gear between two metal rings and work well once set, but the spur gear cannot be changed without taking the slipper clutch apart which always leaves a doubt in your mind as to its setting for the next race.

Next up is the rear bulkhead and the rear upper track rod arms. The track rods are turnbuckles and are used throughout the kit. Unfortunately, it is difficult to establish which end has which handed thread on it - a careful read of the instructions is required. Apart from that, the trackrods are smooth and do not bind up at all which is an often overlooked important factor in a car's handling characteristics.

Shorter wishbones than the TRX1 give the new car sharper turn in and response. Below; We at RCMC really like the new body for the car - a more conventional 'Baja' style.

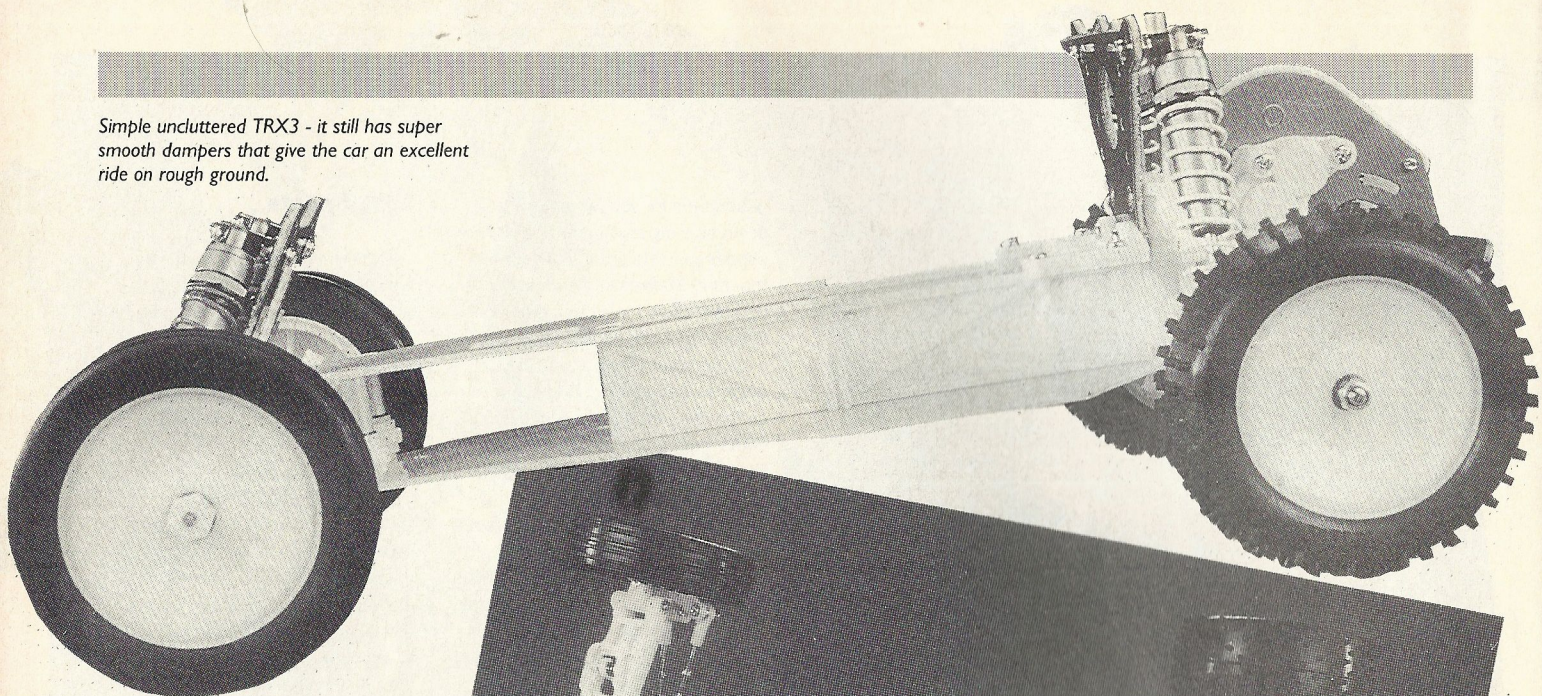
Adjustments..

Different rear wishbone blocks are provided in order to change the car's toe-in as are various caster wedges in order to alter the anti-squat. If these terms sound foreign to you, a useful guide is incorporated into the back of the instruction booklet which will help you through the jargon.

Once again, the Traxxas suspension is extremely free and doesn't bind up at all throughout the entirety of the wishbone movement. This, no doubt, is one of the main reasons as to why, historically, the Traxxas cars have always handled the bumps well and the TRX-3 would seem to be (at first glance) no exception to the rule.

The other reason for the car's good handling is the shock absorbers which are next up on the menu. For a long time now, Traxxas shocks have been highly regarded for their smooth operation and long throw and, it came as quite a surprise that the TRX-3 has new shocks in. What isn't surprising however, is that after building them, I can safely say that they are every inch as good as the old units, if not slightly better. The shocks appear to have a more damped

Simple uncluttered TRX3 - it still has super smooth dampers that give the car an excellent ride on rough ground.



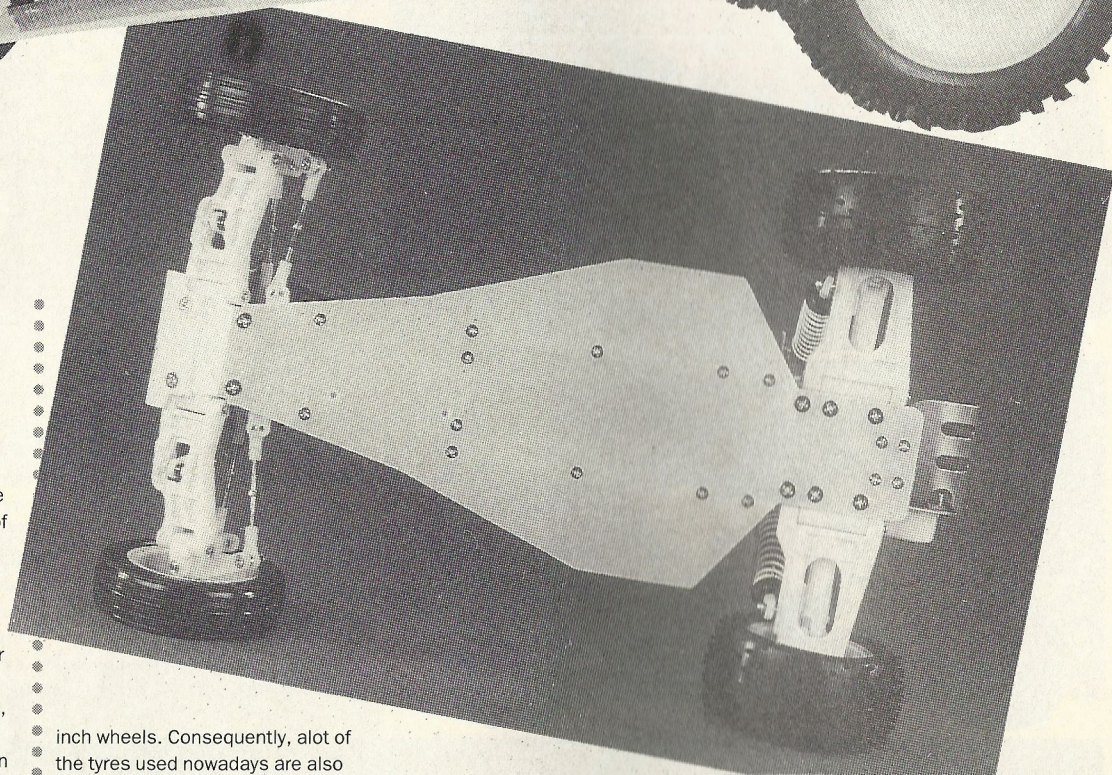
action - probably due to the extra volume of oil, and the spring rates have been altered and, as is the fashion, colour keyed for quick reference.

The front suspension doesn't hold any nasty surprises although the steering arm and stub axle ride height can be altered, by the use of washers, within the caster block. This, according to the instruction booklet, enables you to use different size front and rear tyres without upsetting the ride height or the chassis balance. This is quite fiddly to assemble and, if adjusted, the steering bellcrank height must also be adjusted correspondingly in order to maintain zero bump steer.

The chassis has plastic moulded sides which screw between the two plates. This makes for an extremely rigid structure, similar to the one found on the Cougar 2000 and enables the glass-fibre chassis to be torsionally rigid like a carbon fibre chassis. The rear bulkhead also becomes part of the chassis structure and careful consideration as to the placement of the mounting screws has minimised the problem of the bulkhead flexing.

The steering bellcranks are bushed, not ballraced, although this doesn't appear to have detracted from the smoothness of the operation. Once this is assembled, the front suspension unit is assembled to the chassis and all that remains is to screw the top plate down into place thereby completing the chassis 'box-section' and increasing the overall rigidity.

Two inch rear wheels are a surprising addition to the kit as most manufacturers are using 2.2



inch wheels. Consequently, a lot of the tyres used nowadays are also 2.2 inch diameter which means that new rear wheels will have to be bought.

Dare to be Different - Conclusions

This kit only took me three hours to build, including the shocks. It is no exaggeration to say that it is one of the easiest cars in its class to build and it is, by far, the best package from Traxxas to date. The TRX-3 will provide an extremely durable racing kit for anybody who is brave enough to buy something that is relatively unknown over here in the UK and this is the major problem that Traxxas and their UK arm, Traxxas UK face. In my mind, the kit is competitive, well built, and durable. What it requires is a presence at the race tracks in the form of a well organised team.

Unfortunately, with your hard earned cash in your pocket, it is all too easy just to invest in the most popular kit which, arguably, is the easiest and safest option without considering the competition. If,

however, you want to be a little bit more daring, the TRX-3 may just offer an attractive overall package but, in order to ensure greater success for the kit - which I feel it deserves, more coverage at race meetings and in the model shops is definitely required. If you get the chance, check one out because you'll be pleasantly surprised. Available in all good shops at around £180.00

