

heavy metal

The Wedico Mercedes 3850 Tractor and Trailer



Good wheel detail, alloy trims are an option

Wedico

Wedico or Wesenfeld, Dicke GmbH & Co, to give them their full title have been producing the current line for around 8 years but actually claim around 100 years experience. A superb glossy catalogue was included with our sample. This detailed a simply huge, huge range of add-ons to customise your truck. If you like trucks, or even just like big models, you will be occupied for days! The catalogue covers the truck systems, trailers, electrics, accessories, and even includes a remote control, operating ferry!

Owners are advised to study the catalogue carefully in order to select the right components to produce their dream truck. Various different cab designs are available including Freightliner, Mercedes 3850, Mercedes Actros, and Volvo. Add in twin, triple or triple heavy duty axle chassis, single or dual motor, single or dual diff arrangements and you begin to see the possibilities. Electrics begin with headlights, tail lights, hazards arrangements and

include Diesel sound modules, horns etc. Three speed gearboxes allow shifting on the move, coupled to a sound module and you have amazing realism. The catalogue even details a custom airbrush service to get that unique truck. A PC version of the catalogue also exists although we have not yet had a peek.

It is clear that Wedico have approached the truck modelling world in a totally different manner to Tamiya, so comparisons will be kept to a minimum to be fair to both manufacturers. One major difference is that Wedico use a 12volt NiCad and a special Buhler motor which combine to give much longer run times and greater hauling power than a 540 type motor and a 7.2 volt NiCad pack. After the Aeromax featured a couple of issues ago, the Wedico Mercedes is a Eurotruck rather than a big American hauler and comes across from the start of being much more of a heavy duty truck than the Aeromax, which is a long-haul freight lugger.

The Wedico is 1:16th scale and the Tamiya is 1:14th and plastic is a scarce material in this Merc. The cab is made up of die-cast panels



Tail light detail

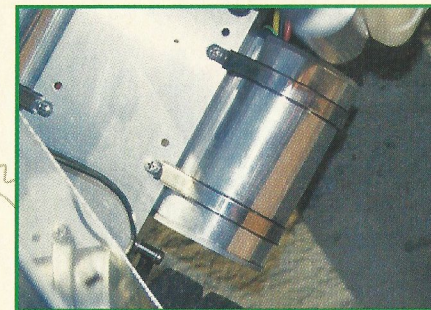
which are screwed together and with self tapping screws. The chassis is aluminium, the axles are aluminium tube, the leaf springs are spring steel.....in other words, this one's metal. This is some piece of mechanical engineering.

Instructions

The instructions come in the form of sheets of drawings which are accurately drawn with text written down the side. On one side it's German, the other English. Guten Tag. Clarity is generally good and it is obvious where most parts go. At times though, location of certain devices, particularly those which are reliant on sticky pads for location, is a little vague, though these can generally be left until surrounding structures have been built and location becomes more obvious.

Assembly Lines

The chassis goes together easily. In fact most of the rest of the truck does. A solid piece of extruded aluminium forms the main chassis structure. On to this we fit, in order, the cab mount complete with inactive springs, and a pcb for the lighting systems. The wiring is generous, very. Miles of it that you loop and loop and wonder quite where to put it all. Still, better too much than too little. You could re-solder and cut if you were a perfectionist. I did not and used copious amounts of electrical tape to tuck it under the chassis.



This tank houses the Electronic Speed controller, you can put a Diesel sound module in the other one

The rear panel contains the lights and is all quite neat. One has to keep track very carefully of what is a wire for the head lights, rear lights, brake lights and indicators - otherwise you switch the lights on and a headlight starts flashing, an indicator stays on and the whole thing resembles the village hall disco.

The rear light lenses were a bit tight, better than loose. The trailer attachment looked a tad flimsy but is functional with spring loading. The steel leaf springs are fiddly, but then leaf springs generally are. They work extremely well actually giving the whole truck a lot of versatility, but there are no shock absorbers, so it is possible to induce more bounce than you might like.

Tyre mounting needs care not to flake the chrome off the wheels themselves, which are plastic. The tyres themselves are heavy duty and allow decent traction. The diff come ready made which was nice. The gearbox needed assembly and once again, the screw provided for assembly of the single box were barely long enough. Also the box was very tight and needed greasing. None is supplied, which was a surprise although a beautiful socket headed screwdriver and a Philips head, complete with Wedico on the handles, are included in the kit.

The mudflaps and mudguard assembly is integral with the assembly of the leafspring and axle. The electronic speed controller is very neat, located inside the right hand fuel tank. The tank straps are spring steel and will catapult your screws across the room a couple of times if you are not careful, but they look superb when finished.

The instructions then tell you to install the switch panel in the cab. I would do this a lot earlier than when they say, like when building the cab. However, the schematic for the electrical installations is absolutely superb. A non electrically minded person should be able to install all the devices with no trouble.

There are two jack plugs that fit in the back panel of the cab. These are the only devices that have insufficient wiring to make the job

easy, but I like the feature of the wiring from trailer to cab, which is their purpose, very much.

The cab assembly caused us some problems. Having visited King Cobra and seen the finished trucks on display ours is clearly not typical. The panel fit was poor and a lot of time was spent trying to make the panels line up neatly. The doors, contained neat and intricate latches, but, because of the main panel fit problem they fit poorly and no amount of fettling straightened them out. The plastic mount for the battery, seats and electrical switch panel forms an internal brace for the side panels of the cab, giving the whole structure a good degree of stability.

The log trailer is obviously simpler to build, but again has some quite fiddly mud-flap assemblies to deal with which are no great problem. I like the chains and the way they clip into the posts. I love the simple operation of the landing gear. And it is long, very long.

Conclusion

This is perhaps not a model in an 'exact replica of the real thing' kind of way. It most certainly is a piece of engineering in its own right. And because of this, it is not really a competitor to something like the Tamiya kits. Potentially it has a life of its own - it is much more heavy duty and it would stand a great deal of abuse. The aluminium chassis, for instance, is as rigid as a stiff thing. The diffs are sealed and protected against muck. You would take this thing out in fields in the winter and it would work, get dirty, and live to do exactly the same the next day.

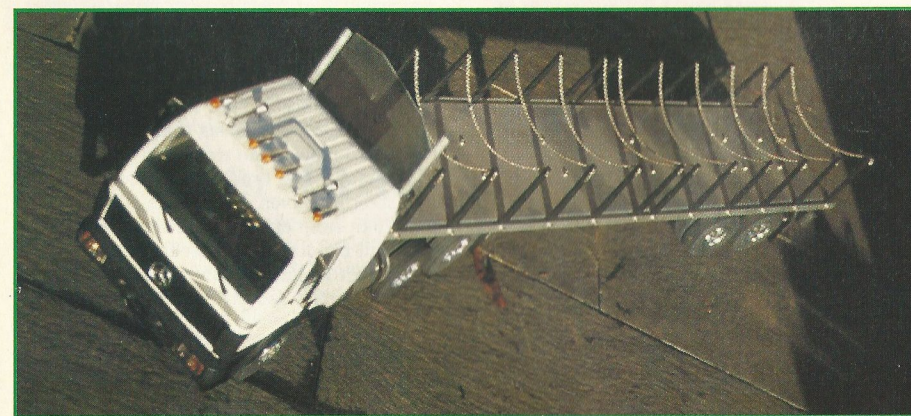
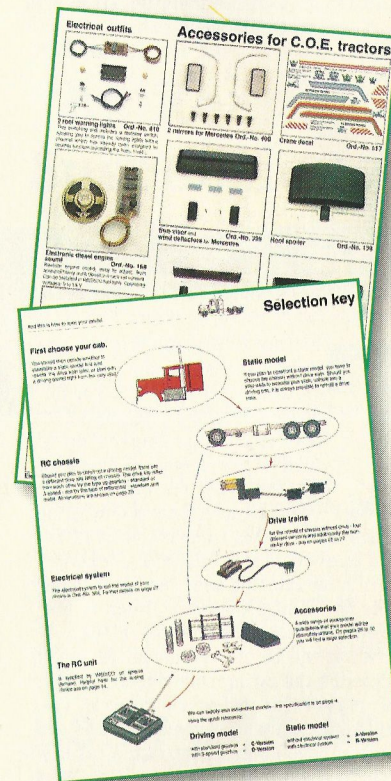
The fact is this truck is rather good. Our sample suffered from some poor fit in the cab panels and perhaps using self-tapping screws into die-cast steel is not ideal. I am more enthusiastic about the finished item than I was during build; put this down to it being built by someone whose staple diet has always been plastic kits with a wicked eye for detail. If you are into working machines, building functional working models, the Wedico range is for you.

Club Spot

In Germany and elsewhere on the continent clubs abound for truck enthusiasts. Not so in the UK, although we are happy to publicise any that do exist in 'Racing Round Up'. Bob Stiles at King Cobra Racing hopes to address this problem by starting a club for Wedico owners at his premises in Lancashire. Truck enthusiasts should call Bob on 01706 250007 for details. Our thanks to King Cobra Racing for supplying the review model. **RRCI**



Doors open, lights light



It is long

Quick Spec

1:16th All metal kit or Mercedes Tractor unit and Log Trailer. Suitable for remote control. Specification depends on customer choice at order point. Requires a minimum of 2 channel radio and servos and a 12 volt NiCad to operate.

Likes:

Robust
Enormous range of add-ons
Well finished.

Dislikes:

Not as finely detailed as a Plastic shell would be
Panel fit on sample

'The catalogue even includes a remote control, operating ferry!'

New Year New Gear