Review of the Yokomo YR4 II - Compact

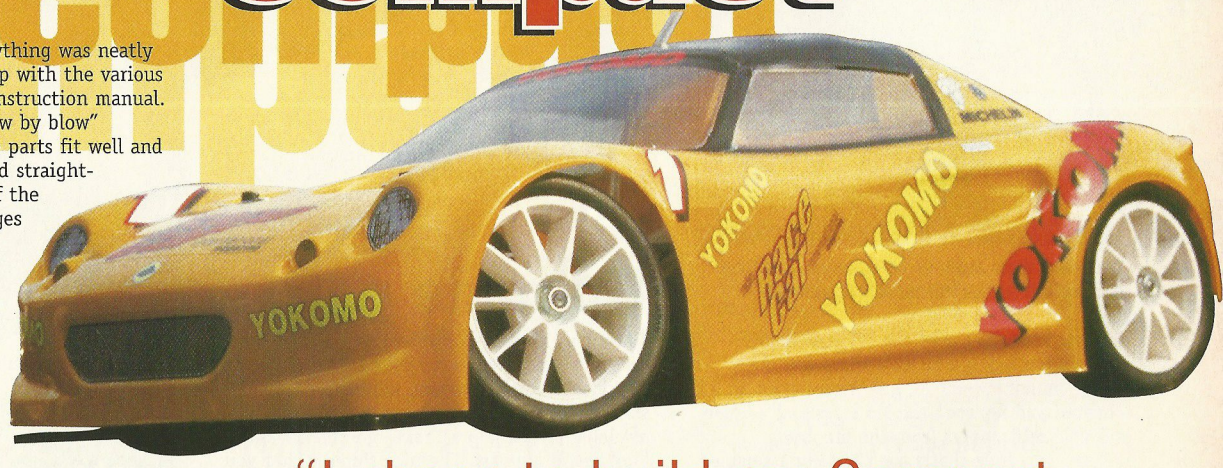
competitive, clever and compact

Please Dad I want a REAL race car! So said my son and heir after flinging his somewhat "used" first R/C car around the garden. Oh dear me here we go again, the pressie' season is upon us. Well, by a real race car I guess that means something with a little more performance and tuneability than the mainstream products from the larger manufacturers and importers.

If you are looking for your first "serious" race car then the Yokomo Compact may well fit the bill. The Compact is a 1/10th scale, belt driven 4 wheel drive model suitable for Electric RC racing. Normally you would need to buy a motor and Speed controller separately but this Yokomo is a special "bundle deal". All you need to supply are cells and a suitable radio, the deal even includes the "must have" ball race set. I chose to build my Compact with a Lotus Elise body.

The big build up

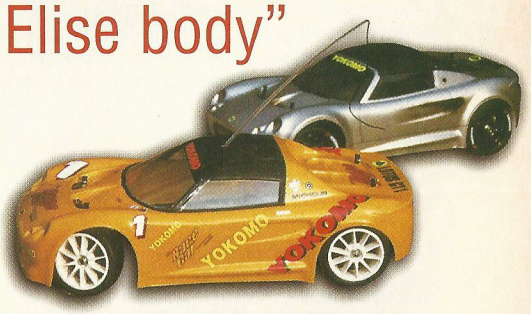
In true oriental style everything was neatly bagged and the bags lined up with the various stages in the construction/instruction manual. I won't bore you with a "blow by blow" description of the build. The parts fit well and the instructions are clear and straightforward. I took the advice of the manual and ran over the edges of the chassis with fine wet & dry used wet. Not absolutely necessary as the fibreglass chassis was not too sharp but it does make for a nicer finished job. As usual with far east kits the instructions include drawings of all the screws and fasteners at each stage of assembly, so much more helpful than the "fit M3x6 screw to flanged bracket..." type of instruction.

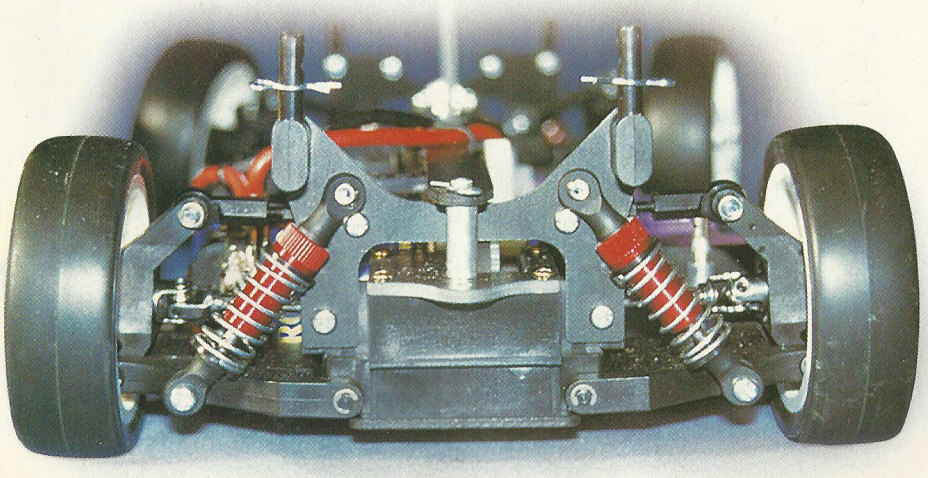


"I chose to build my Compact with a Lotus Elise body"

Noted

My taped notes have very few comments other than commenting on the good fit and quality of the parts. A countersunk bottom chassis is standard to keep the screw heads off the tarmac. The motor mount is notable for being Magnesium alloy, an excellent heat sink material. Both of these items are likely to be a high priced "hop up" parts with some manufacturers. I know I have just paid for two (expensive) countersunk chassis plates to upgrade two of the Emery fleet, ouch! When fitting the completed Centre shaft assembly watch out for the clearance between the spur gear (15) and the battery holder (8) I had to trim the battery holder to clear. I initially built the car without the ball race set as these bits were not with the kit when it was received. If you buy a Compact that is not one of these "Special bundles", which include the ball race set, then spoil yourself and buy the ball race set. The difference is like night and day.

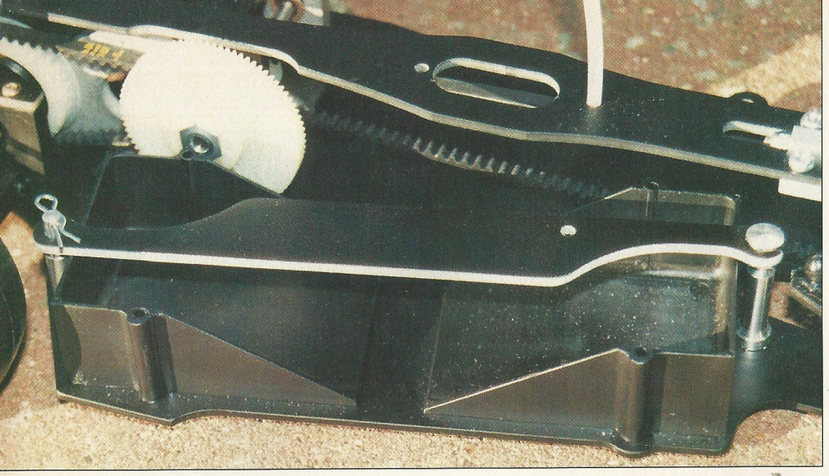




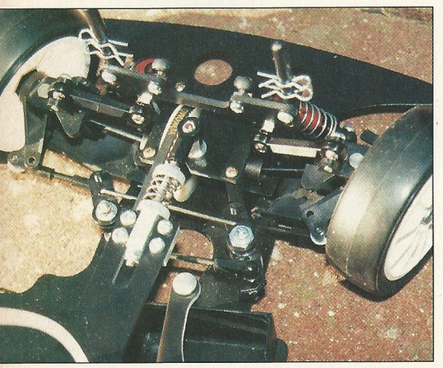
The red anodised shockers a nice touch

When you are assembling the Diffs' try to put some paper underneath so that you can catch and locate any dropped items. I built the Diffs' sat on some 1970's shag pile carpet..... Wrong! The Diffs go together well and operate smoothly but try holding your breath when assembling the cap screw/washer/eight small balls/washer/spring washer!

Now I could not fit the body mounts with the M3 screws provided, and indicated on the drawings/instructions. I have seen another



Secure battery compartment



The unique shock absorber arrangement on the top deck for belt tension and handling adjustments

Compact that had used the M3 screws so I guess I was being a bit of a wimp and not using enough "welly" to get them in. Anyway I cheated and replaced the M3 screws with some suitable self-tappers from the bits box.

The front drive shafts are the fully assembled CVJ type but the rears are the normal "dog bone" type. A worthwhile mod would be to put CVJ types on the rear as well. I had a pair of Powers Products CVJ's so I popped these onto the rear during the build. The top suspension links front and rear, and the steering arms are adjustable. Again, these CVJ type drive shafts and the adjustable suspension would be extras on some kits.

The shockers have attractive red anodised aluminium bodies, a nice touch. I set up the pre-loads as per the instructions and they were spot on.

Upgrade path

As I have indicated the basics of a good race car are all included; ball race set, decent Esc, a reasonably powerful motor, adjustable suspension, good shockers etc. The range of parts available for making a "Yoke" go quicker and look better are vast. The nice thing is that you could race it just as it or add bits as the budget allows.

Body Beautiful

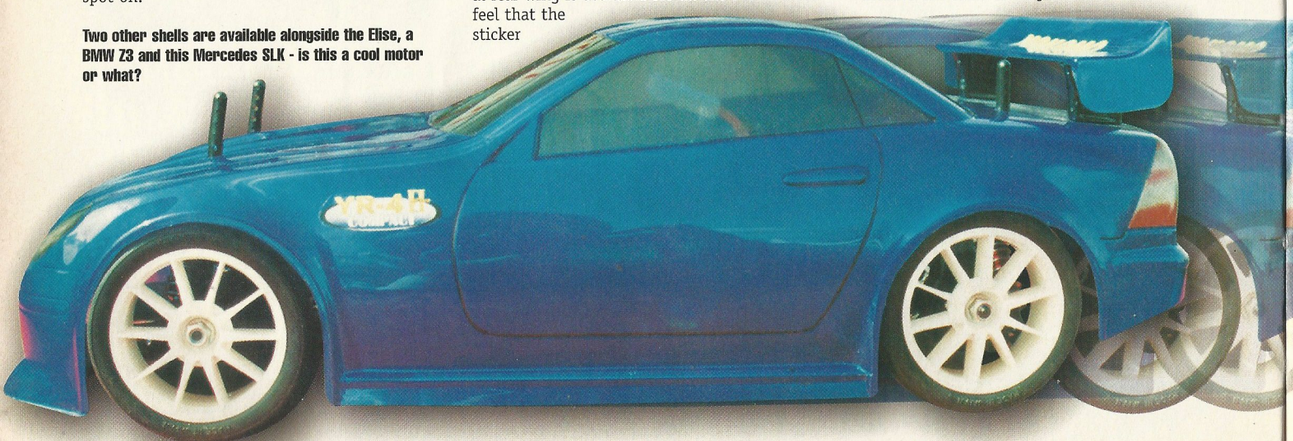
A range of alternative bodies are available for the Compact. The Bond movie star BMW Z3, the svelte Mercedes Benz SLK and the incredibly pretty, but surprisingly NOT girly Lotus Elise. Take your pick they all look superb. An optional rear wing is available for all the shells. I did feel that the sticker sheet was a bit minimal but your local model shop is going to have enough different sheets to inspire you to finish the model in a distinctive and individual way.

Fitting the radio

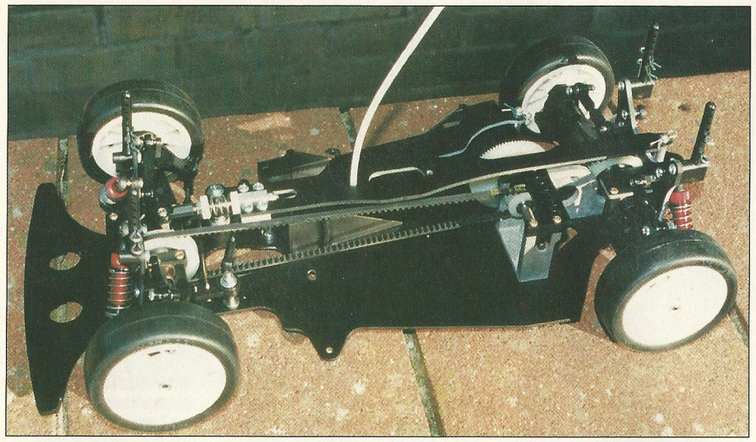
Plenty of space for all the components. I was using a Futaba receiver which is not the smallest around but no problems here. The Esc fitted to this car was the GM racing Apollo but at the time of writing CML had not decided if this was to be the "Bundled" Esc, if not then a similar quality racing Esc will be included. I fitted a standard Futaba 3001 servo but I will upgrade that to something a bit quicker and meatier before racing the wee beastie.

Driving impressions

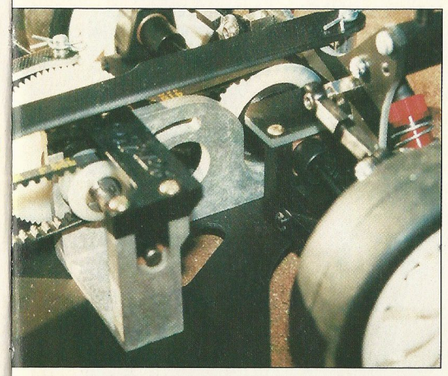
OK I was seriously impressed. This was my first "Yoke" and the design concept is very different from the other cars I have built. I am used to cars that have a stiff chassis and relatively soft suspension. I am comfortable with this and feel I know how to go about altering the suspension settings to get the results I want in terms of a handling change. The "Yoke" is very different, it uses a very soft, flexible chassis and fairly stiff suspension to achieve the same ends, just a different approach to adapt to. Or not! In my case I found that I did not want to change a thing. What a super little car. With the settings exactly as per the manual I found that the car was very easy to drive. The short wheelbase means that it will swop ends very rapidly but you would have to be asleep to let it happen. I found that it flattered my minimal driving ability by letting me kick out the tail under power and hold it there, literally balanced on the throttle. The only down side to this fail safe handling was that if you arrived too fast at a corner the Yoke tended to understeer, a lot! Slow in and fast out balanced on the throttle appears to be the method. On the day I tested the car it was wet, dry, wet, dry so the tarmac was a bit greasy and Autumnal but hey who cares the little "Yoke" was up for it anyway. Now I just want to set off for the Ashby circuit and have a play with a couple of dozen freshly charged packs and learn a bit more about setting up the "Yoke" so that I can enjoy the odd outing in the Yokomo Cup this summer. That's if my lad, JonoE lets me have a go of course!



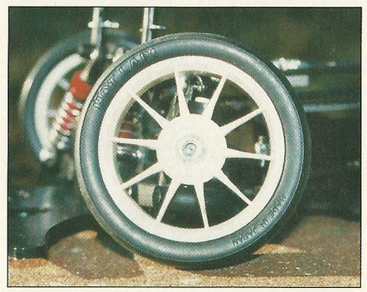
Two other shells are available alongside the Elise, a BMW Z3 and this Mercedes SLK - is this a cool motor or what?



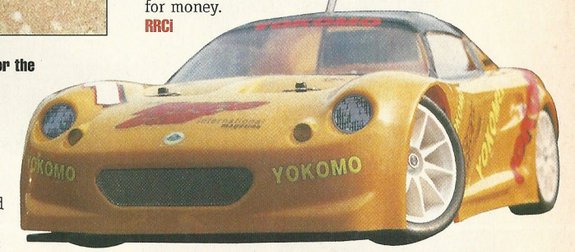
The completed rolling chassis ready for the radio and motor



Heat sink alloy motor mount is standard



Kit wheels and tyres are attractive and effective



"it will swop ends very rapidly but you would have to be asleep to let it happen"

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"the basics of a good race car are all included"

Sum up

The biggest single fault, if a fault it be, with the Yokomo Compact is that it is considered to be too short in the wheelbase for racing in a BRCA class in the UK. Well, that might not be a problem if you want to race. All you have to do is enter one of the RRCI Touring Car GP meetings this year and your Yokomo Compact, or your Mini will be welcomed with open arms provided that everything else other than the wheelbase complies with BRCA Scale Touring car rules.

Thoroughly recommended and excellent value for money.

RRCi

Quick Spec.

1/10th Scale 4WD Electric RC Car	
Length	340 mm
Width	180 mm
Wheebase	240 mm
Tyre width	20 mm

Testers Kit

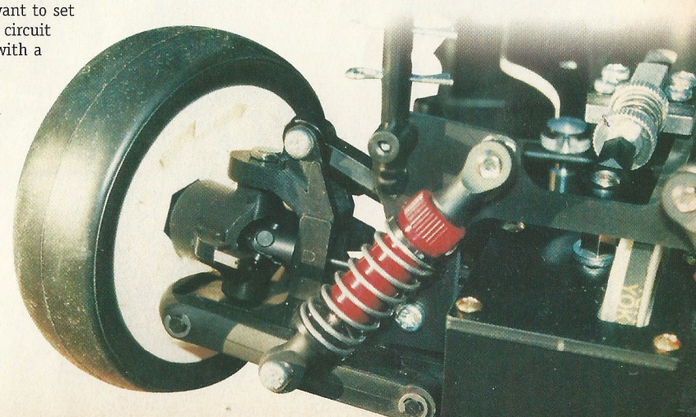
Battery packs	Sanyo
Transmitter	Futaba Megatech Steering Wheel
Receiver	Futaba
Servo	Futaba 3001
Wheels/Tyres	Kit
Speed Controller	Kit - GM Apollo (see text)
Motor	Kit - Yokomo Pro Stock

Likes:

Good quality of the components
Race bred handling
Appearance, especially with Lotus body

Dislikes:

Sticker set not the best
Illegal for BRCA touring cars



Left: All wired up and ready to race

The front drive shafts are the CVJ type not "dog bones"