

clubmans choice

Yokomo YR4-M2 J-Type - Fibreglass Racer Edition



The mean looking Protoform Mondeo

Aaaarrgh! Not another new variant on the YR4 theme I here you say. Surely Yokomo's already confusing scale saloon range doesn't need yet another car added to it, does it? Well, probably yes, since it is my guess that this particular YR4 version is likely to become the most popular out there in real racerland.

Back in the April edition of RRCi we had a preview of the top-of-the-range YR4-M2 J-Type which was the all-carbon Pro, YR4 that has subsequently gone very well in the hands of Chris Grainger, Andy Robson, Marcus Epstein and the like. This kit is simply the budget, fibreglass version of the same car that comes in at something like £75 less and sits somewhere in the middle of the Yokomo range. You get the same

new geometry, the same chassis design capable of taking stick or saddle packs, the big volume shocks and all the ballraces (bar a few unimportant ones). What you don't get is the carbonfibre chassis, the one-way front differential or, as I found out, an easy to follow manual.

Do these differences matter? Well, the one-way front diff will certainly help at tracks where outright speed and duration are important but, if it is ever wet or damp or the grip is otherwise low, you will be wishing you had the full-time 4WD you have here. In any case many top drivers run full-time 4WD all the time so I don't think this is a big issue. You can always upgrade to the new one-way diff if you think it will make a difference and it still won't have cost you as much as the carbon kit!

Why Carbon?

As for the carbon chassis I am even less convinced it is truly necessary. There are two reasons for having a carbonfibre chassis; one is rigidity to help the suspension work and the other is light weight. Once I built the review car with my nothing-special radio gear it weighed 1525 grams only just above the 1500g BRCA weight limit so I am unconvinced on the weight front. Chassis rigidity can't be that important either since Yokomo make a virtue of having the chassis flex and controlling it with the special centre shock. So.....

'the car went together very well and is obviously a good quality kit'



Ready for battle

Build Up

I am not sure whether this problem was unique to the review kit but the manual supplied was for the carbon J-type and there are some subtle cost saving differences between that car and this kit. There is a sort of addendum sheet supplied but it is in Japanese and therefore not too helpful. So, for instance, I spent some time looking through the numbered bags to find 6 aluminium posts only to work out in the end that they are plastic in this kit. Similarly, some cost saving has gone on in the steering post set up which is mostly plastic and actually simpler than the set up for the carbon car. Other minor differences had me wondering if I knew what I was doing but in the end I found myself with only a washer and 4 tiny balls left over so I guess it all went together properly! Have a look at the photos here if in doubt.

Other manual anomalies include track rods shown with hex adjusters (plain ones here) and the chassis has more holes in it than shown. I worked out that the front and rear differentials were slightly different and correctly guessed that the one which doesn't look like the one in the manual must be for the front of the car. Finally the addendum suggests making the centre shock to be 41mm long - this is too long if you are building the car for stick packs as the front drive belt ends up way too tight. I settled on a shock length of 36mm which worked fine. One final gripe was the use of servo tape to secure! the steering servo - this is OK if you don't crash much and never get hit by other cars but otherwise.....

Apart from the above, which are niggles really, the car went together very well and is obviously a good quality kit. I topped it off with the new Protoform Mondeo shell the Ed. sent

which looks nice even if it does look more like my Protoform Volvo S40 than a Mondeo. It is becoming clear that certain basic shell designs work well on r/c scale saloons and the major race-oriented companies are merely changing grille and window shapes so as to avoid making true-to-scale, but unraceable shapes.

Track test No 1

Off to Aldershot on a dry sunny day to see how it goes as it comes out of the box. No point messing about so it is straight in with the Demon 12 double and the supplied 22T pinion. First impressions were that the car handled well but the pinion/spur mesh was noisy and something was scraping on the ground. Having run for over 7 minutes it was clear that; a) the drive train was efficient and b) the 22T pinion was too small.

Run two saw a larger 25T pinion bolted on and the ride height raised by fitting larger spring spacers (supplied) than the middle-sized ones recommended in the manual.

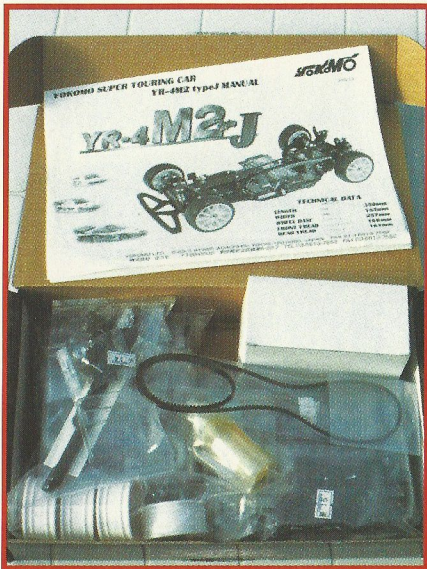
The scraping was the chassis grounding out on the corners. The Hot Laps tyres worked fine producing a reasonable balance erring on the side of turn-in oversteer/power-on understeer exaggerated if brakes were used. Still a good long run time was had so for the third run I dialled in weaker brakes on my ESC and the car was pretty smooth and now very predictable. A fourth run with an even larger pinion was frustrated by me not having one (I used to think 25T was big!) but I was sure that I could go to a larger pinion as I was using ancient practice 1700 SCRCs for this test and not my good 2000mah race packs. Basically this transmission is efficient - by the way the pinion mesh noise completely disappeared with the 25T pinion producing that impressive scale saloon whistle that you know means everything is fine.

Track test No 2

I planned to run the lad Tim with the Yokomo in Aldershot's Stock 27T class as he has been running with uncompetitive gear this year (I usually nick all the good stuff) and he needed the advantage more than I did. In practise he soon settled into running with less braking and was putting in smooth, regular laps so things were looking good.

Given the 25T pinion was too small with the Demon modified I attempted to fit the largest pinion I could. A 30T was the biggest that would fit and the motor was tight up against the bulkhead. Tim's first heat was a bit erratic but some 22 second laps were recorded which was an improvement on the 23s laps he usually achieved with his old car. The subsequent runs were all improvements with him putting in regular 21s laps by the third and fourth runs and setting a new personal best time. Pole in the 'B' final was translated into a win so we ended up pretty pleased with the car. In fact, he could have gone even quicker as his car was far from the quickest in a straight line hampered by the limitation on pinion size. He was finishing races with enough juice for another couple of minutes suggesting a

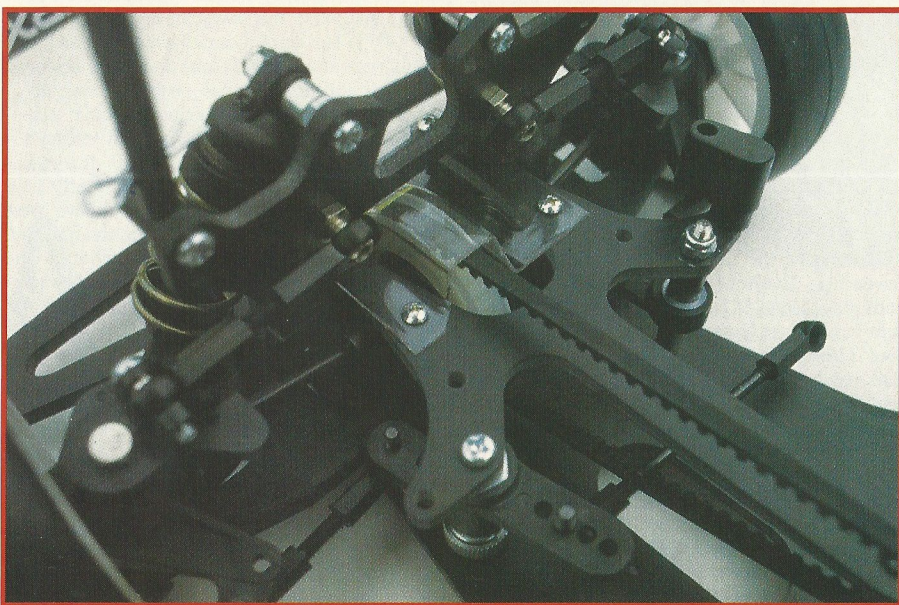




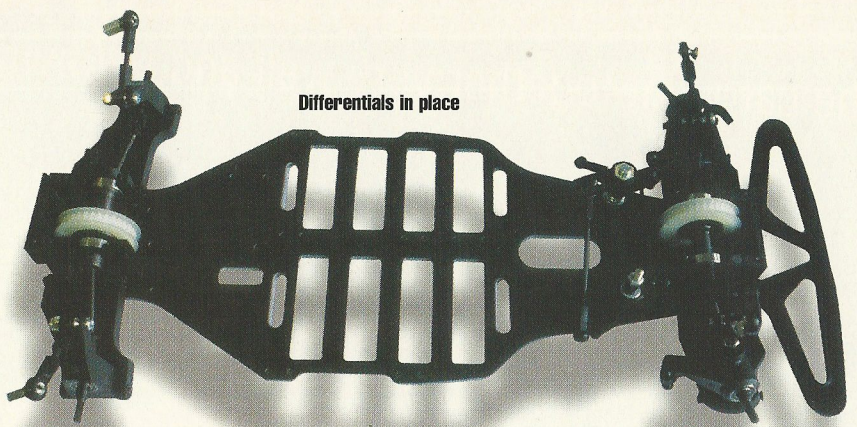
That manual



As it comes out of the box



Steering gear in place



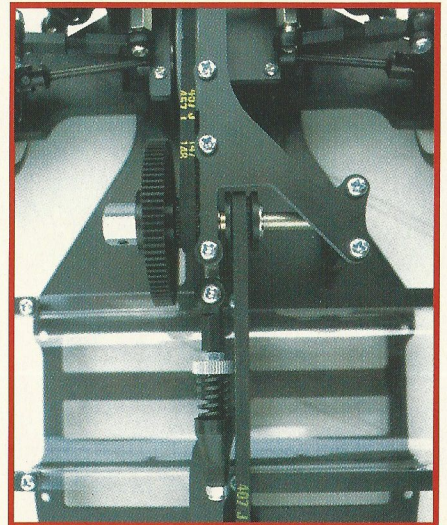
Differentials in place

much bigger pinion or smaller spur was needed. Unfortunately Yokomo do not yet make alternative size spur gears for this car and the conversion to the Pro, J-type set up (this allows bolt on spur gears) is a bit of an expensive option for a budget car - cheap alternative spurs Yokomo, please.

Summing Up

This is a really sensible, value for money racer aimed at the driver who wants to race with the big boys but maybe cannot quite afford it. Buying this version in preference to the carbon one could see you buying good quality racing battery packs with the money saved and undoubtedly good cells will make you go quicker than a carbon chassis. If you intend to run with modified motors then the car is pretty well set up as it is - if you want to run a 27 turn stock then budget for a spur gear update. Let's hope Yokomo sort out the manual soon because I doubt that the novice racer would be able to work out how it all went together which is a shame since this car is equally relevant to the new recruit to the sport as it is to the seasoned racer on a budget. At the moment the price (around £140) is pretty competitive and I doubt that you could do much better for the money.

RCRi



Spur and layshaft setup differs from Pro, J-type

Quick Spec

Full-time 4WD belt-drive 1/10th scale saloon
Stick or saddlepack chassis
Important ballraces included
UJs all round
Big volume shocks
Hot Laps tyres

Tester's Gear:

MRT VFX speedo
KO 712 Servo
Acoms 27Mhz radio
Protoform Mondeo (not included in kit)

Likes:

Price/value for money
Top-line chassis geometry
Good handling out of the box
Efficient drive train

Dislikes:

Interim (hopefully) manual
Servo mounting
Lack of cheap alternative spur gears