

JUNE 2001

Forza Tamiya!

A Tamiya for the tifosi

Peter E

One make racing is very, very popular in the full size racing world, it offers manageable budgets and, usually, a level playing field to the competitors. The one make racing classes offer a huge range from one litre engined Rover (BMW) Minis through to the Lamborghini Diablo series for (rich) gentlemen. A few years ago the mighty Fiat empire got into one make racing with a rally series for Fiat Puntos and - the Ferrari challenge. Originally the Ferrari challenge catered for the 348 model but this was superseded by the better handling (and far prettier) 355 before this in turn giving way to the 360 Modena model.

The 360 Modena challenge now caters for racers pretty much worldwide with a grand finale where the best of the regional competitions can fight it out for the world 360 Modena crown.

Now my chances of owning or even driving a real Ferrari are pretty slim given the pay of a humble magazine editor (pause for violins and sympathy) but my love of the marque is well known so you can imagine how pleased I was to have the opportunity to test this one.

Something new

New chassis from Tamiya tend to be something of an event and this one is no exception. Elsewhere in this issue you can find out what the family Chaldecott thought of the TA04 pro chassis whilst I bring you the 'cooking' version.

This new family of chassis can trace its lineage straight back to the 414X limited edition racing chassis that surfaced in the USA just over a year ago. A pure racer it was very expensive but quite beautifully built, albeit a very conventional 2 belt design.

This was followed by a slightly lower specification TRF414, a model that has just been extensively revised in the light of racing experience into the much improved TRF 414M.

Masayuki Miura, Takanori Aoki and Takahiko Yasui are the brains behind the TA04 and the TRF414.

The TRF414X chassis has chalked up impressive race results at several prestigious events including the ROAR Championships in the US. and the JMRCA sponsored All Japan Championships.

In the Y2000 Reedy International Tamiya scored a 2nd with Jimmy Jacobson and a 6th with David Jun.

That new wing should prove very effective



This really is a beautiful car

Classic layout

In their bid to produce a serious race chassis the Tamiya team have built a car that is almost a classic 2 belt, 4WD car. A tub chassis on this, the normal TA04 is made into a twin deck by the addition of a strengthening deck on top. The Pro has a flat FRP lower chassis. The very

long wishbones are complemented by adjustable, but not turnbuckle, top links. The CVA shocks are oil filled, plastic bodied items but none the worse for that. A new gold spring is fitted front and rear.

The chassis design shows some similarities with the Corally, Yokomo and HPI 2 belt designs but, to an extent, this is inevitable if you take this route.

New wheels, new inserts and new tyres and very effective they are too



Quick Spec

1:10th scale 4WD touring car. Twin deck chassis. 2 belt drive system. Gear diffs. Independent suspension by lower wishbones, adjustable upper links and coil over, oil filled, shocks.

Testers Kit

Adspec GT-1 27 MHz radio set with 1 x servo and a CPR unit.
Reedy Rage rebuildable stock 27 turn motor.
Reedy R3K battery packs
Tamiya Nissan Skyline interior

Likes

Bodyshell
Everything fits first time
Handling and grip

Dislikes

100 grams overweight with Adspec
I might scratch the Ferrari shell

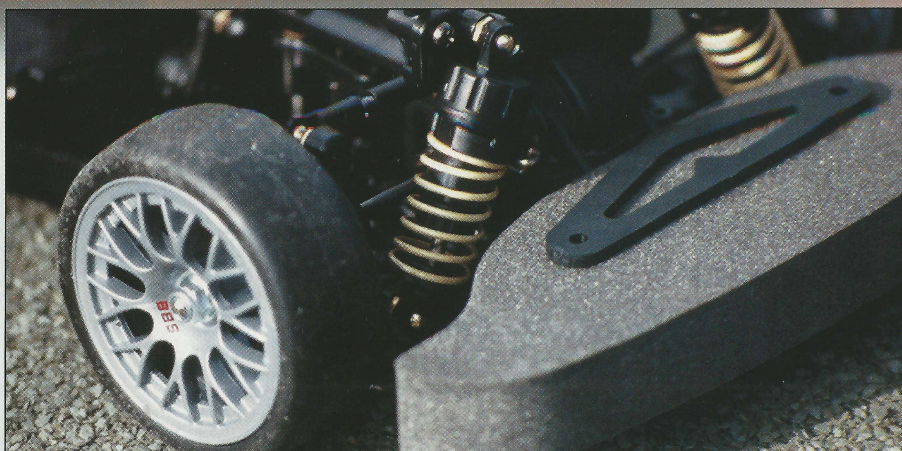
'The Tamiya instructions were, as ever, superb'

A full carbon upgrade set is available and can be used on either the TA04 or Pro.

The diffs here are of the gear type and will be familiar to anybody who has built a Tamiya in the last few years. The spur and pinion gears are of the Tamiya module 6 type and should not under any circumstances be mixed with the 48 DP gears they so closely resemble.

As with any Tamiya chassis you can expect a flood of body types. This first release is the beautiful Ferrari 360 Modena challenge. An optional wing is included and this alone will make it a popular choice for Tamiya Eurocup competitors as it is the same wing that Tamiya had available as a hop-up for some time but was ineligible for Eurocup competition. I have used this wing to absolutely transform a Proline Aston Martin DB7 so effective is the design.

At the Nürnenberg show I had a close look at the upcoming Corvette C5 and that is a beauty too, and it is pre-painted and pre-stickered, nice.



The provision of a full foam bumper is a nice touch

Another new item is the wheel/tyre/insert combo.

Brand new offset +2, BBS styled mesh wheels are kitted out with some fairly hard pre-formed inserts to fill out the new low profile 24 mm belted slick tyres and they work.

Pre-build

As usual I laid out my bench ready for action.

My trusty Hudy tool set to hand. A selection of empty yoghurt and margarine tubs to empty the bags into and a Texas CD for atmosphere.

I read through the manual and noted some familiar faces like the CVA shocks but also much that was new.

The Tamiya instructions were, as ever, superb and I literally did not have a single problem with the build.

Morning assembly

So, with Texas churning out the hits it was time to build. The gear diffs more or less assembled themselves and were followed by the rear motor mount/transmission assembly and the rear suspension.

As always I made certain that all the suspension components would fall under their own weight as I went along. honest, they all did, with no slop (!), and no reworking necessary - I like this new Tamiya already!

The kit is part ball raced which is mildly satisfying and mildly irritating in equal quantities. At least it makes the ball race upgrade set relatively cheap as there are very few!

I managed to turn up the missing ball races from the bits box so I replaced the bushes as I went along.

The fit of all the parts was exemplary and I hardly picked up a file or emery board at all. A new type of grease is included called Anti-wear - I wonder what other type there is? Joking apart it certainly looks the business and was also used in my off season re-build of my Pro2 for the new RRCI/HPI season.

I always make notes on the manual as I go along, very few this time. I also tick each part to confirm that I have completed all of the section before I move on.

I particularly like the idea of the Urethane blocks as mini shock absorbers inside the diff outdrives, full marks Tamiya.

Take care

The layshaft assembly relies upon one very small (MB5) grub screw to hold things together. I know that a TA04 Pro runner at an Ashby Winter series round had problems with this becoming loose and on the first run with the TA04 - so did I. Although thread lock is inappropriate you should be aware that this screw really needs to be tight.

Note that if you are considering a competition career for your TA04 the 4 x 850 ball races needed to ball race the steering might well be money well spent.

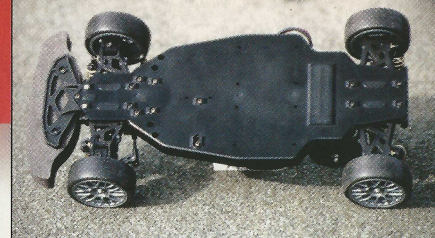
An illustration of how Tamiya are suddenly more competition minded comes at the bottom of page 10 of the manual. And where would sir (or madam) like to fit his transponder mount? For those of you who don't currently race (go on, join a club and have a go!) the transponder is a small 'bug' that is contained in a 35 x 30 x 9 mm unit that tells race control that your car has completed the lap thus allowing both lap counting and lap timing.

The provision of a mount for this standard bit of racing kit speaks volumes for the change at Tamiya.

Final run

By now we are finishing the assembly of the chassis. The top deck needs a little care to ensure that it is seated properly before tightening the screws all the way.

The shocks are next. I used Associated green slime as usual to ensure that the threaded shock shafts did not damage the 'o' rings on the way through. I also dumped the Tamiya silicone oil in favour of some Chris Grainger 40 wt. Why? well, nothing wrong with Tamiya oil but as it does not say what weight it is this makes it a bit difficult to tune the car. For instance if you thought 'I will put a heavier weight oil in the front shocks' how heavy? Better all round to start off with a known oil weight.



Clean and part recessed underside

The shocks built up beautifully with a lovely smooth action far better than I expected a plastic shock to be.

I was a little surprised by the size of the travel limiting spacers that were fitted under the pistons. The TA04 runs with very little suspension movement.

Unlike the TA03 series the shocks front and rear are identical so no embarrassing mix ups (who me?, get it wrong?, Nah!).

I completed the car with an Adspec GT-1 27 MHz steer wheel radio and the CPR, combined radio receiver and electronic speed control unit. The CPR is very convenient but is limited in the range of motors it will cope with. Basically don't go hotter than a 27 turn stock motor and all should be well, anything more and the thermal cut out kicks in and spoils the fun.

I decided that the standard motor might be a little tame so I fitted a Reedy Rage rebuildable stock and used a couple of Reedy R3K NiHMi cell packs to keep everything running.

With the tyres carefully glued in place - eye protection used of course - it only needs a body beautiful and a test drive.

Enter Tel'

The bodyshell preparation is pretty straightforward on a Ferrari, find the blood red paint! But, as time was pressing, I entrusted the shell to Terry Tel's Shells Atkinson and he did his usual neat job.

I added the Tamiya Nissan Skyline interior partly to enhance the photographs and partly because I like the way it looks.

The rear wing was to be left clear but photographing clear Lexan is like photographing a ghost so I used some Tamiya smoke to tint it. Despite my best efforts at cleaning the wing before spraying it still came out a bit blotchy, annoying that.

The provision of a full width foam bumper is excellent news, a recent trend from Tamiya that we hope will continue. All that remains now is to run it.

Street style

The first runs were at a local, and very empty, car park.

Admittedly this is a high grip surface but my, has this car got some grip! And a lovely balance. On the looser stuff the car could be held in four wheel drifts and almost drove itself it was so easy. Given such a wide open space the performance, even with the Reedy, felt a bit tame but I am certain that this will not be the case within the confines of a track.

First impressions - nice one Tamiya. No understeer, no oversteer, just a great neutral balance.

Next step will be to kit it out with some Schumacher yellow minipin tyres and give it a blast at the local club - absolutely stock except for the reedy motor. Oh, the Ferrari body will NOT be used. The local club can be a little - er - robust so a substitute shell will be used.

I will let you know how we get on in a future 'Sunday drivers'.

My thanks to Tamiya Japan for help with this feature.

RRCI

'No understeer, no oversteer, just a great neutral balance'