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COLLECTOR

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NEWS



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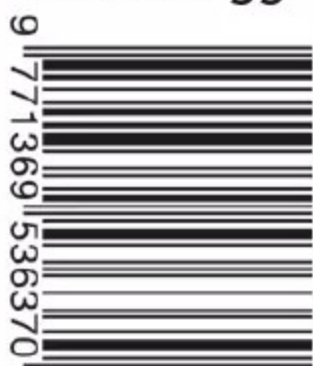
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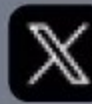
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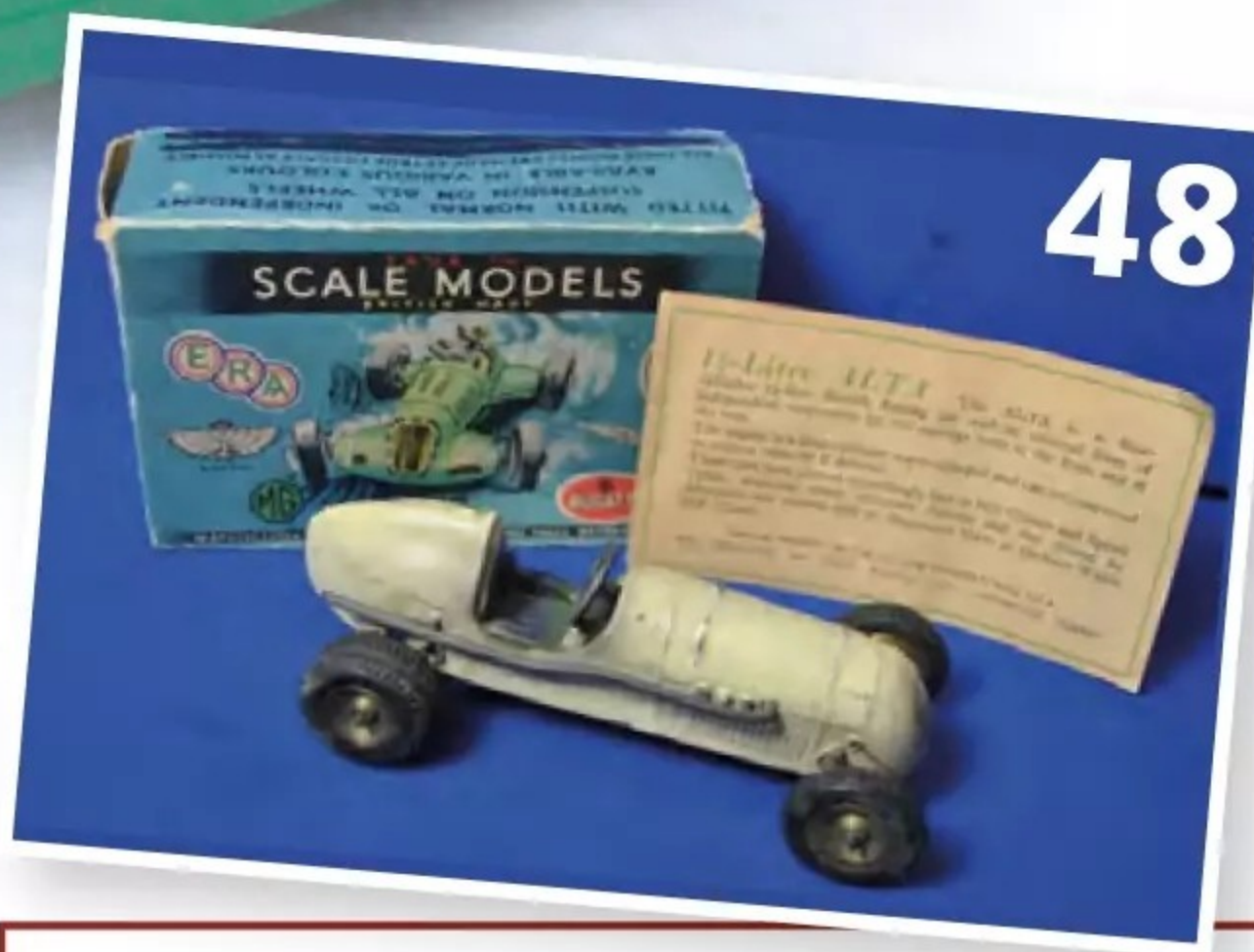


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NEWS

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ELVIS' ROAD TRIP CAR RETURNS TO CALIFORNIA AND TO 1:43 SCALE

ONE of Elvis Presley's most personal vehicles – a rare 1972 Cadillac deVille station wagon – has returned to its original home in Southern California, and collectors can now enjoy it in miniature form thanks to Matrix Scale Models.

Elvis originally bought the car as a gift for his manager, Colonel Tom Parker, but drove it so often between his Beverly Hills home and sold-out Las Vegas shows that Parker eventually handed it back. In 1976, the King loaded the Cadillac for a cross-country drive from California to Graceland – a journey that would be his final road trip before his death four months later at the age of 42.

For decades, the car was a star attraction at the Elvis Presley Museum before being moved

to California. Cadillac built only two of these wagons, converted from Sedan de Villes by the American Sunroof Company – the other was owned by Dean Martin.

The real car's story even includes a stint in the Netherlands and a spell as a quirky shuttle vehicle at The Bridge Golf Club on Long Island, before its return to the West Coast.

Matrix is offering three 1:43 scale versions: Elvis' cream-and-black wagon (MX20301-481), Dean Martin's cream-and-green version (MX20301-482), and a blue-and-cream example (MX20301-483). As usual, detailing is to Matrix's high standard, with reference photos including shots of the full-size originals. ■

LANDSDOWNE EXPANDS MONTEGO LINE-UP WITH ESTATE VERSION



FOLLOWING the launch of the Austin Montego 1.6L saloon earlier this year, Lansdowne has now added the estate version to its line-up. Available exclusively from Brooklin Models, the 1:43 scale white metal model comes in a choice of Oporto Red with grey interior or Champagne Beige with beige/brown interior. Both versions carry the reference LDM122 and are priced at £134.99 each.

While the interior is integral to the casting, key elements such as the handbrake and gear lever are separately fitted, and in the luggage compartment you'll even find two neatly modelled suitcases.

The real Montego estate made its debut at the 1984 Motor Show and went on to become the most successful variant in the range. It featured two additional rear-facing seats – although these aren't included on the model. ■

At a Glance

Model: Austin Montego 1.6L Estate
Maker: Lansdowne Models (Brooklin Models exclusive)
Colours: Oporto Red / Champagne Beige
Scale: 1:43

Material: White metal
Reference: LDM122
Price: £134.99 each
Details: Separate handbrake and gear lever, two suitcases in luggage compartment



MBC AND BCE VENTURE HEADS TO DUBLIN

MODEL Buses Creations (MBC) and Brian Collins Enterprises (BCE) have revealed the next release in their successful joint venture – and it’s one that collectors have been asking for.

Following the sell-out success of the first two Alexander Dennis Enviro 500 models (MBC/BCE-IE001 in Dublin livery and MBC/BCE-IE002 in dealer white), the pair are now set to launch **MBC/BCE-IE003**, a striking Dublin Bus example in the Transport for Ireland (TFI) livery. This latest release depicts VT36 (07-D-70036) operating the 39A service to UCD Belfield via the N3 Bypass.

A total of 1,000 models will be produced, with allocations for MBC, BCE, and 80M in Hong Kong. Each comes in a new-style display case complete with a grass verge, road layout, scale bus stop, premium packaging, and a numbered certificate. As with previous releases, a QR code on the box links to MBC’s Production Suite for behind-the-scenes facts and future release news.

Given the popularity of the first two models – which sold out in hours – collectors may want to act quickly once this one arrives. ■



Model Specifications

Vehicle: Alexander Dennis Enviro 500
Operator: Dublin Bus
Livery: TFI Dublin Bus
Route: 39A UCD Belfield via N3 Bypass
Fleet Number: VT36
Registration: 07-D-70036

Production Run: 1,000 units
Code: MBC/BCE-IE003
Extras: Display case with grass verge, road layout, scale bus stop, premium packaging, numbered certificate, QR code for bonus online content



ENVIRO 200 MODELS READY FOR PRE-ORDER

MODEL Buses Creations (MBC) opened pre-orders for its first UK release of the Alexander Dennis Enviro 200 on Friday 6 June at 12:00pm – and the debut line-up is set to make a big impression on modern fleet collectors.

Three versions are available: Stagecoach East in local livery (36306 on route 51 to Oakley), Stagecoach London in red (36326 on route 124 to Catford), and a plain dealer white variant with no destination. Each model is supplied with MBC’s unique diorama plinth complete with bus stop, adding extra display appeal straight out of the box.

Collectors can also opt for the *MBC Triple 1* value pack, containing all three models, but this will be strictly limited to one pack per customer to ensure fair availability. Individual models will have no purchase limits. Delivery is expected in August 2025. ■

FIRST SUPERLOOP MODEL SET FOR AUTUMN

MODEL Buses Creations (MBC) has announced its first Northcord Enviro 400 MMC release for 2025 – and it’s set to be a landmark for modern London bus modelling.

The model depicts Go Ahead London’s EH213 (YY67 UTN) working the SL6 Russell Square route in the eye-catching Transport for London Superloop livery. Fully licensed by TfL, the release will be the first in a planned series of Superloop vehicles from MBC.

The design cell has now been signed off by TfL, and pre-production samples are expected soon. With just 504 units planned and the Superloop network still making headlines in real life, MBC is expecting strong demand when the model lands in autumn 2025. ■



NEWS

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ARRIVA'S FIRST FACELIFT E400 DRIVES INTO MODEL FORM

BUS fans and collectors have something new to get excited about – Northcord Model Company is gearing up to release the very first production model of the Enviro 400 Classic Facelift.

This eye-catching release depicts Arriva Kent & Surrey's fleet number 6483 (SN15 LNP) in the operator's striking new standard livery, working the popular 700 Bluewater route. Only 504 examples will be produced, each presented in Northcord's bespoke packaging with a numbered certificate – a must-have for

anyone serious about modern fleet models. The facelift design, developed by Northcord, first appeared on pre-production samples of UKBUS 0070, 0071 and 0072. Now, for the first time, it's set to roll out in full production form. The pre-production sample is currently under review by both the MBC team and Arriva, with the green light expected within weeks. Delivery is pencilled in for late Q3 or early Q4 2025 – perfect timing to add something fresh to your display shelves before the year's out. ■



Model Specifications

Vehicle: Enviro 400 Classic Facelift
Operator: Arriva Kent & Surrey
Livery: New Arriva Standard
Route: 700 Bluewater

Fleet Number: 6483
Registration: SN15 LNP
Production Run: 504 units
Extras: Custom box & certificate

NEXT MONTH

NOVEMBER
2025 Issue 336



The Classic Land Rover

Matchbox number 12 is the classic Land Rover. But how many versions of the Land Rover was made?

PLUS...

- Models 'Now and Then'
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VECTIS DINKY AUCTION SMASHES RECORDS

BACK in June, Vectis Auctions held its latest Simply Dinky Auction in Stockton, drawing collectors and bidders from across the globe. The result? An impressive £87,520 total hammer price, underlining just how strong the market for rare and well-preserved examples remains.

The star of the sale was a Dinky Toys 101 “Thunderbirds” Thunderbird 2, which set a new world record for the casting at £2,570. Other standout results included:

- French pre-war 21 Train set with original box – £3,185
- Dinky Toys 175 Hillman Minx Saloon (cream/green) – £1,500+
- Dinky Toys 934 Leyland Octopus Wagon (maroon) – £1,100+
- Dinky Toys 923 Big Bedford Van “Heinz” – £1,050

- Dinky Toys 905 Foden Flat Truck with chains (blue cab/ grey bed) – £1,200+
- A selection of Hawk Harriers, Spitfires, and early commercials all achieving well above estimate.

While the June sale is now behind us, its results offer valuable takeaways for collectors:

- Rarity and condition remain the key drivers of value – boxed, near-mint examples can command huge premiums.
- Pop culture and nostalgia fuel competition – TV and film tie-ins like Thunderbird 2 draw fierce bidding.

For those with similar models tucked away, this auction serves as a timely reminder that values remain strong. For buyers, it’s proof that even in a mature market, exceptional pieces can still set records. ■



What's new...

Our team of experts take a look at this month's model releases, including fine handbuilt replicas, scale construction and the latest in farm models.

SOLIDO'S LATEST BAJA LOOK BEETLE BOUNCES IN WITH COLOUR AND CHARACTER

Solido's fourth version of its Baja style custom Beetle – maybe that should be Bug – bounced in for Summer as the best version yet. Each version in succession has differed not only in its colour scheme but in the variety of accessorisation details added. Common to all have been the obligatory roof rack mountain the bank of auxiliary lighting essential for desert terrain off roading together with the “stinger” exhaust system exiting high above the rocks and dust of floor level. Oh and the CB aerials – remember those? Which kind of dates the look to an era when even cell phones were barely comprehensible let alone the possibility of mini hand held computers doubling up as telephones twenty-first century style.

Like the evergreen Beach Buggy the Baja Bug has been no flash in the pan short term fashion trend. Both have become enduring leisure and sports lifestyle custom themes. So much so that Solido's assigning 1975 and 1976 date tags to its casting that first saw the light of day in production not that long ago is largely incidental because the base model holds good for anything from the start of the seventies right through to today. Enthusiasts of the Baja conversions as keen now they have ever been.

Because though there is an elephant in the room here it needs to be acknowledged that in the eyes of some purist Volkswagen model collectors Solido's hybrid renditioning of the Super Beetle series



ABOVE

The impressive profile of Solido's Beetle displays the full works of the designs.

on which its Baja/All Road models is based is erroneous. Most buyers though will be oblivious to the authenticity transgression and take the models, with a smile, as really fun representations.

So why does this latest version beat the previous three? Well the colour scheme of magenta over turquoise with contrasting white protection bars and wheels is real scale model eye candy. The paintwork has a good gloss on it and looks bright and attractive. Enhancement with the very '80s/'90s style splashed magenta paint job and era reminiscent white wheels is very nicely done. Look closer though because the fine white pin-striping with contrasting black trim accenting all adds up to one good looking Bug exuding Summer fun.

With a visual appeal that is absolutely geared to catching the eye of buyers in mass market outlets this release is no doubt going to be popular. By the same token it delivers a nicely finished, attractive looking, model in an agreeably comfortable price range that is certain to be welcomed by many more serious collectors.. ■

**SOLIDO
VOLKSWAGEN
BEETLE
ALL ROAD - 1976**

SCALE: 1/18
PRICE: tba
REF: S1809604
Miami Green

www.solido.com



LEFT
The rear of the Beetle shows its visible engine and its exhaust.



MATRIX MODELS
1979-85 Jaguar XJ6
Series III 4.2 - Black
PRICE: around £120.00
SCALE: 1/43
REF: MX 41001-283

Great model of this popular Jaguar with excellent detail, down to the thin coachline and the twin filler caps on the rear wings. Tan interior. Also available in Damson Red with Red seats and "Portland Beige" (cream) with Tan seats.

www.matrixscalemodels.com



MATRIX MODELS
1975 Rolls Royce Phantom
VI Landaulette - Blue / White
PRICE: around £130.00
SCALE: 1/43
REF: MX41705-162

Impressive model of this imposing limousine, with the rear open, all the better to show the excellent detail in the rear compartment. Metallic mid-Blue with White roof and Light Grey interior. Also available in Maroon with Black roof and Red seats.

www.matrixscalemodels.com



MATRIX MODELS
1934 Maybach Zeppelin
DS8 4-door Cabriolet by
Spohn – Black / Bronze
PRICE: around £130.00
SCALE: 1/43
REF: MX 41301-011

Great model of this massive pre-war rival to the big Mercedes-Benz in its day. Excellent finish and level of detail, down to the Red coachline and the trim on the wings that echo the grilles on the bonnet. Red interior and Black folded hood. Also available in White and in Maroon.

www.matrixscalemodels.com



MATRIX MODELS
1950-52 Alfa Romeo 6C
2500 Saloon - Black
PRICE: around £120.00
SCALE: 1/43
REF: MX 40102-201

Lovely model of Alfa's early 1950s big saloon, with typically elegant lines for the day. Well-detailed inside and out, with a Beige interior. The Turismo Berlina variant has a four-door body style.

www.matrixscalemodels.com



MATRIX MODELS
1950-52 Alfa Romeo 6C
2500 Saloon - Maroon
PRICE: around £120.00
SCALE: 1/43
REF: MX 40102-202

Maroon version of the stylish Alfa saloon, again with a lovely interior in Beige. One of the last Alfa Romeo models to be built with traditional 'old school' craftsmanship, before the Italian car manufacturer transitioned to more mass-produced vehicles.

www.matrixscalemodels.com



MATRIX MODELS
1950-52 Alfa Romeo 6C
2500 Saloon - Dark Blue.
PRICE: around £120.00
SCALE: 1/43
REF: MX 40102-203

The third version of the attractive Italian sedan, with the Beige interior again, and the same wealth of detail. The Turismo Berlina variant was particularly appreciated for its combination of performance, comfort and classic Italian design.

www.matrixscalemodels.com

MASSEY FERGUSON 510 SHINES IN SCALE

Replicagri launched the Massey Ferguson 510 Combine in 2023 with the release of a special limited edition for the French farm model show. It has followed the French show model with this widely available, general release version.

It's a beautifully engineered, detailed, largely metal model with many working features. This edition has a detachable table and a two-wheel trailer to carry it. The table has detachable crop dividers and the reel height can be set on two rams. Both the reel and feed auger rotate freely and the knife is detailed on the metal table bed. Two pins locate the table on the feed elevator and the elevator support rams are stiff enough to hold the raised table. Painted lights are detailed on the combine front and on the driver's platform the seat, steering wheel and foot pedals. To the right of the driver's seat the hand levers and instrument panel are detailed. The engine cover opens revealing the engine.

Work lights are detailed on the grain tank and the unloading auger swings out into the unloading position. Replicagri supplies a detachable D-sign, required on agricultural machinery in France, that fits on the tank loading auger.

On the right-hand side of the combine the elevators and re-threshing unit are detail while

REPLICAGRI

**Massey Ferguson
510 Combine**

PRICE: £130.00

SCALE: 1/32

REF: REP283

**www.
replicagri.com**



there's the diesel tank on the right-hand side. The rear wheel steer and there's a drawbar for attaching the table trailer. ■



BRITAINS CASE IH MAGNUM 7140 TRACTOR

PRICE: £64.99 **SCALE:** 1/32

REF: 43416

Production limited to 1750 for this well-built tractor with steerable wheels, single wheels and Britains standard rear linkage. Cab has good levels of detailing.

www.bervo.nl



BRITAINS CASE IH MAG NUM 7250 50TH ANNIVERSARY TRACTOR

PRICE: £71.99 **SCALE:** 1/32 **REF:** 43417AN

Sporting anniversary decals and badged as the Magnum 7250 tractor the largely metal model has steerable wheels and working linkage. Only 750 made.

www.bervo.nl



UNIVERSAL HOBBIES FERGUSON TE-20 TRACTOR & FERGUSON POTATO PLANTER

PRICE: £69.00 **SCALE:** 1/32 **REF:** J7127

Individually numbered set, only 1000 made, with detailed Ferguson TE-20 tractor and newly tooled Ferguson chitted potato planter.

www accuratediecast.com



UNIVERSAL HOBBIES RENAULT 936RZ TRACTOR

PRICE: around £83.00 (94.90 euros)
SCALE: 1/32 **REF:** 6769

Special show edition tractor with detachable dual wheels. It has working linkages, front weight, steerable wheels and movable mirrors. Only 3000 made.

www.agri-coll-association.com

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NEW MODELS



TARMAC WORKS

Lexus LS400

Champagne Beige Metallic

SCALE: 1:64 PRICE: £12.99 REF: T64G-082-GO

<https://www.ixomodels.com>

Tarmac Works' 1:64 Lexus LS400 delivers strong detailing and faithfully captures the UCF10's luxury legacy in an impressive scaled model.



MATRIX MODELS

Sunbeam Tiger 260

Wedgewood Blue, 64 – 67

SCALE: 1:18 PRICE: £206.99 REF: CML204-3

<https://cultmodels.com>

This 1:18 Sunbeam Tiger boasts superb detail, from chrome accents to accurate badging, perfectly capturing this Shelby-linked cult classic.



OTTOMOBILE

Renault 12 TS Break

Orange Andalou 318 (1975)

SCALE: 1:18 PRICE: €69.90 REF: OTT 1139

<https://otto-models.com/en>

Ottomobile's replication of Renault's 12 Break is a nostalgic, well-detailed tribute with authentic Phase 1 details, brightwork, and charming period touches.



OXFORD DIECAST

Ford Cortina Mk5

Cardinal Red

SCALE: 1:76 PRICE: £9.95 Ref: 76FC5001

<https://www.oxforddiecast.co.uk/>

This Mk5 is a finely detailed homage to Ford's best-selling saloon, featuring crisp trim work, accurate 1981 registration, and a vivid Cardinal Red finish.



OXFORD DIECAST

Hillman Minx Series IIIA

Caramel/Regency Beige

SCALE: 1:76 PRICE: £9.95 REF: 76HM001

<https://www.oxforddiecast.co.uk>

Oxford Diecast's 1:76 Hillman Minx captures late-50s elegance with two-tone paint, fine chrome, and authentic badging of this classic British saloon.



OXFORD DIECAST

Aston Martin DB6 MkII Volante

Seychelles Blue – King Charles III

SCALE: 1:76 PRICE: £10.45 REF: 76DB6001

<https://www.oxforddiecast.co.uk/>

Modelled on King Charles III's rare DB6 MkII Volante, this 1:76 replica features Seychelles Blue paint, detailed interior, and the monarch's distinctive mascot.



OXFORD DIECAST

Humber Sceptre MK1

Moonstone/Quartz Blue Metallic

SCALE: 1:76 PRICE: £9.95 REF: 76HS001

<https://www.oxforddiecast.co.uk>

The Humber Sceptre Mk1 pairs luxury and sportiness with fine chrome accents, authentic 1963 registration, and celebrates Rootes' stylish range-topper.



SOLIDO

Fiat 131 Abarth 1980

Yellow

SCALE: 1:18 PRICE: £76.99 REF: S1806006

<https://www.solido.co.uk/>

Solido's 1:18 Fiat 131 Abarth captures the rally-bred legend with bold yellow paint, Bertone styling, and fine detailing worthy of this rare homologation special.



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NEW MODELS



HEAVY HAUL REPLICAS
2009 Mack Titan Tri-Axe "Kyle Hemmersbach Trucking"
SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: \$299 REF: HHR135E-1

www.heavyhaulreplicas.com

With its striking Aussie looks, this model packs a punch, with an opening bonnet and tilting bull-bars to opening cabin doors, nothing is left to the imagination.



HEAVY HAUL REPLICAS
2011 Mack Titan Tri-Axe "Thomas F Corbett"
SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: \$289 REF: HHR135H-1

www.heavyhaulreplicas.com

This custom Mack Titan is an exact replica of the full-sized truck, right down to the storage cabinet behind the cabin. Attention to the smallest of details!



HEAVY HAUL REPLICAS
Mack Titan Tri-Axe "Perkins Specialized Transportation"
SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: \$299 REF: HHR135G-1

www.heavyhaulreplicas.com

A heavy haul tractor, fitted with rear ballast box. The model comes with a host of accessories including tow bar, cones, wooden blocking and wheel chocks.



CONRAD
Mack MD Stake Bed Truck
SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: £TBC
REF: 83266/02

www.conrad-modelle.de

An interesting announcement with this stake bed version featuring a tilting bonnet and interior engine detail. It is available with red, black or white cabin.



CONRAD
Mack MD Box Truck
SCALE: 1/50 PRICE: £TBC
REF: 83261/01

www.conrad-modelle.de

The model has been released with a rear box body, complete with chromed edging, red and white striping along the lower edge, and an opening bonnet.



UNIVERSAL HOBBIES
Bobcat D30 NXP Diesel Fork Lift Truck
SCALE: 1/24 PRICE: €34 REF: BC810124

www.bobcat-shop.com

Bobcat has introduced a new range of fork lift trucks which includes this diesel powered 4-wheeler that has an operator station, steering rear axle and forks.



UNIVERSAL HOBBIES
Bobcat B25 NS Electric Fork Lift Truck
SCALE: 1/24 PRICE: €34 REF: BC800124

www.bobcat-shop.com

This electric Bobcat forklift is the ideal solution for lifting and loading operations, with a rear steering axle and front fork carriage which is height adjustable.



UNIVERSAL HOBBIES
Bobcat D70S-9 Diesel Fork Lift Truck
SCALE: 1/24 PRICE: €50
REF: MBC780124

www.bobcat-shop.com

Bigger loads need a heavy handler, so Bobcat have released this model featuring a fully enclosed cabin with replicated interior and steering axle.



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Hanging onto Summer

Stephen Paul Hardy harkens back to summers long past in what, for him, is an exceptional diversion from sharing news of current trends and the latest releases.

So, following on from last month's issue, a customised, lingering, last look back to summer before heading into autumn next month. One that is very much a nostalgia laden retrospective, with the unusual twist from me of being an in-depth review of a now long obsolete diecast, the full appreciation of which comes through its extensive backstory provenance.

A story that entwined several legend threads together and all connected in the glamorised 1960s teenage Californian lifestyle culture of surfing and cars, now often referred to as the [California Myth](#). As far as diecast collecting is concerned, there is also a strong link in one of those threads to many popular diecast collecting themes, including film, TV, and comic-related models through the legendary 'King of Kustoms' George Barris.

BARRIS' MODEL KUSTOMS

Last month, I touched on his work in my coverage of Daroo 1/3 and previously in "Latest masterpieces from AutoCult" (May 2025 issue).

Interestingly, in addition to the massive amount of Barris Kustoms he was responsible for, including many of the best-known TV and film-related 'stars' such as the various Munsters series creations, he was also very much into model cars. His entry into the world of customising started in his childhood, when he crafted balsa wood custom cars and later progressed to modifying plastic kits. This led to his writing on the subject and to Barris Kustoms working with AMT for several years, building full size custom cars from which AMT then modelled polystyrene construction kit releases. At a workshop level, Barris is known to have used 1/25 scale plastic



ABOVE
The rear hinged "suicide" doors of the '32 Ford afford fabulous visual access to the detailed interior...



ABOVE
... Whilst full visual access to the detailed engine set is just classic Show Rod territory in miniature.



COVER STAR

As fate would have it, Capitol sought out a photo of a Deuce Coupe (a 1932 Ford – hence the ‘deuce’) for the cover of the ‘Little Deuce Coupe’ album. In doing so, it sourced an image taken by Petersen Publishing’s photographer Eric Rickman during a photoshoot in March 1961 for Petersen’s ‘Hot Rod’ magazine. Rickman’s photos were featured both in a four-page centre spread article titled “THE FOURTH TIME AROUND” and on the front cover of the magazine’s July 1961 issue, which showcased Clarence ‘Chili’ Catallo’s customised ’32 Ford named ‘Silver Sapphire’.

‘Silver Sapphire’, and its history to that point, had previously been a cover story in the May 1961 issue of ‘Rodding and Res-styling’ magazine.

As the ‘Hot Rod’ magazine article title indicated, the car was, by mid ‘61, in its fourth iteration, and a full blown show car. Its evolution history, further iterations and ultimate restoration in the hands of Clarence Catallo’s son Curt, makes a fascinating read. The pertinent point here though is that fourth iteration had come about through Catallo’s association with George Barris and a substantial amount of reworking in the Barris Kustom City workshop. From its appearance on the cover of the Beach Boys album ‘Silver Sapphire’, it immediately and irreversibly became named ‘Little Deuce Coupe’ by popular association. This despite a further cover feature article on it in the November 1963 issue ‘Hop-Up Magazine’ describing it by its original name.

THE MODEL

Diecast models of vehicles with fascinatingly rich backstories – for example, those of very successful motorsport competitors or historic vehicles of significance – have imparted in them a charisma and attraction over and above the actual quality of the modelling. This I feel is especially true of the Danbury Mint’s 1/24th diecast ‘Little Deuce Coupe.’

I guess that for me, Danbury Mint, like other similar manufacturers, fall into a category outside the mainline scale model manufactures in that I perceived it as a marketer of generally reasonable or high quality limited edition collectible objet d’art ranges with a premium price tag. Moreover, although many of its 1/24 cars were of subjects that attracted me, like the Duesenberg SSJ, there were already plenty of preferred alternative choices available from mainline sources. Exceptions inevitably come if, for various reasons, a subject vehicle has never been covered nor probably, for contractual reasons, never likely to be covered by others.

While the Danbury Mint was founded in 1969, it didn’t begin producing collectible diecast vehicles until the late 1980s, and although currently still in the business of selling lines such as sports collectibles, coins, figurines and jewellery it stopped marketing 1/24 model cars back in early 2014.

It appears that production run statistics of each of its car models is a closely guarded secret – save for



ABOVE
from whichever angle you look at it the modelling in 1/24 of ‘Silver Sapphire’s 56 Oldsmobile...



ABOVE
... V8 engine enhanced with high spec early 60s custom performance components...



ABOVE
... its just totally captivating in its intricacy of fine detail.



ABOVE
Although Barris Kustom City’s rework of ‘Silver Sapphire’ introduced a revised roofline chopped by three inches...



ABOVE
... it retained the complex original rear end styling complete with battery and fuel tank accommodated in the boot for reasons of weight distribution.

ABOVE

"The look" that graced the cover of thousands of copies of HOT ROD magazine in 1961 and the cover of over a million copies of a Beach Boys vinyl album first released in 1963.

promotional models to trial ideas for his full sized custom projects to inform decisions on modifications and paint colours. Now, while plastic kit automobiles are outside the scope of Diecast Collector’s remit, there have also been a substantial number of diecast releases inspired by his work. So much so that models of ‘Barris Kustoms’ make a pretty wide ranging collecting theme – starting, of course, with the Corgi Batmobiles.

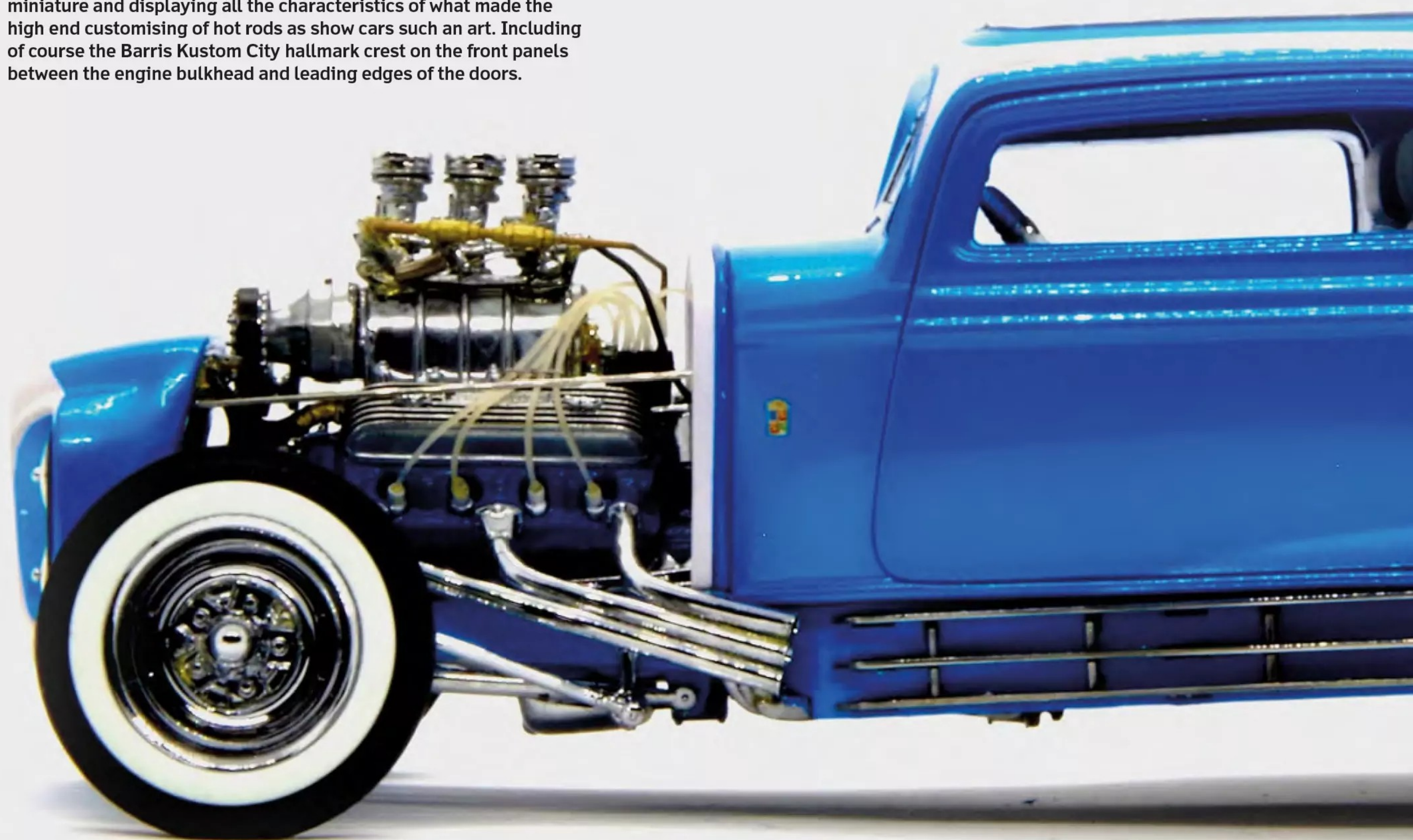
FOR THE RECORD

At a specific point in time, the Barris thread in the California Myth coincided with that of The Beach Boys, a young custom car enthusiast named Clarence “Chili” Catallo, and a photographer named Eric Rickman (also credited as E Rick Mann during his career spanning six decades.)

On 22nd July 1963 EMI’s Capitol label released a 7 inch single by the Beach Boys with ‘Surfer Girl’ as the A side and ‘Little Deuce Coupe’ as the B side. Together the tracks laid a marker down to the dual themes that would carry the group through the sixties with outstanding success. That single was followed by two 12 inch LPs: ‘Surfer Girl’, the group’s third studio album, on 16th September 1963, and their fourth, ‘Little Deuce Coupe’, less than a month later on October 7th 1963.

BELOW

A perfect example of 1960s California Myth culture captured in miniature and displaying all the characteristics of what made the high end customising of hot rods as show cars such an art. Including of course the Barris Kustom City hallmark crest on the front panels between the engine bulkhead and leading edges of the doors.



the very last release of a 1935 Ford DeLuxe three-window coupe production of which was announced as 2,500 pieces. Publicity material declared “The Little Deuce Coupe is available exclusively from the Danbury Mint and will only be produced in the calendar year 2008. After 12/31/08, it will absolutely never be produced again.” Of course, to some degree, words like those are a sales ploy, but as yet, any contractual obligations that may have been made to secure exclusivity appear to have been upheld, as no other model of the car has been introduced to date.

Released as order number 0908-0045, bar code 1908004000018, and as is usual practice with limited edition production runs, each model was numbered. In this case, with a gold coloured sticker “plaque” on the underside of the chassis. The number of examples made is unknown. The publicity leaflet showed model #1, and the highest number I have seen to date on any models offered for resale is #6461. The price on release in the U.S.A. was \$140.00 plus \$7.80. As a benchmark, the Danbury Mint’s retail prices for its die-cast cars rose sharply over the last couple of years of production from around \$150 to about \$250. Several factors have always meant that ‘Little Deuce Coupe’ resale prices have hung at a premium and exacerbated for collectors living outside of the U.S.A. by, amongst other things, fluctuations in the strength of the U.S. dollar against other currencies and the age old thorny issue of shipping costs.

One irrefutable factor reflected in the model’s

popularity (and resale prices), though is its outstanding quality and accuracy of detail.

Clarence Catallo had sold the Silver Sapphire in 1965, but in the 1990s, his son Curt persuaded him to track the car down and get it back in the family (and in whose ownership it now remains). That dream was achieved in 1998, albeit, sadly, with Clarence Catallo passing away that same year, leaving restoration work to Curt and his wife to achieve.

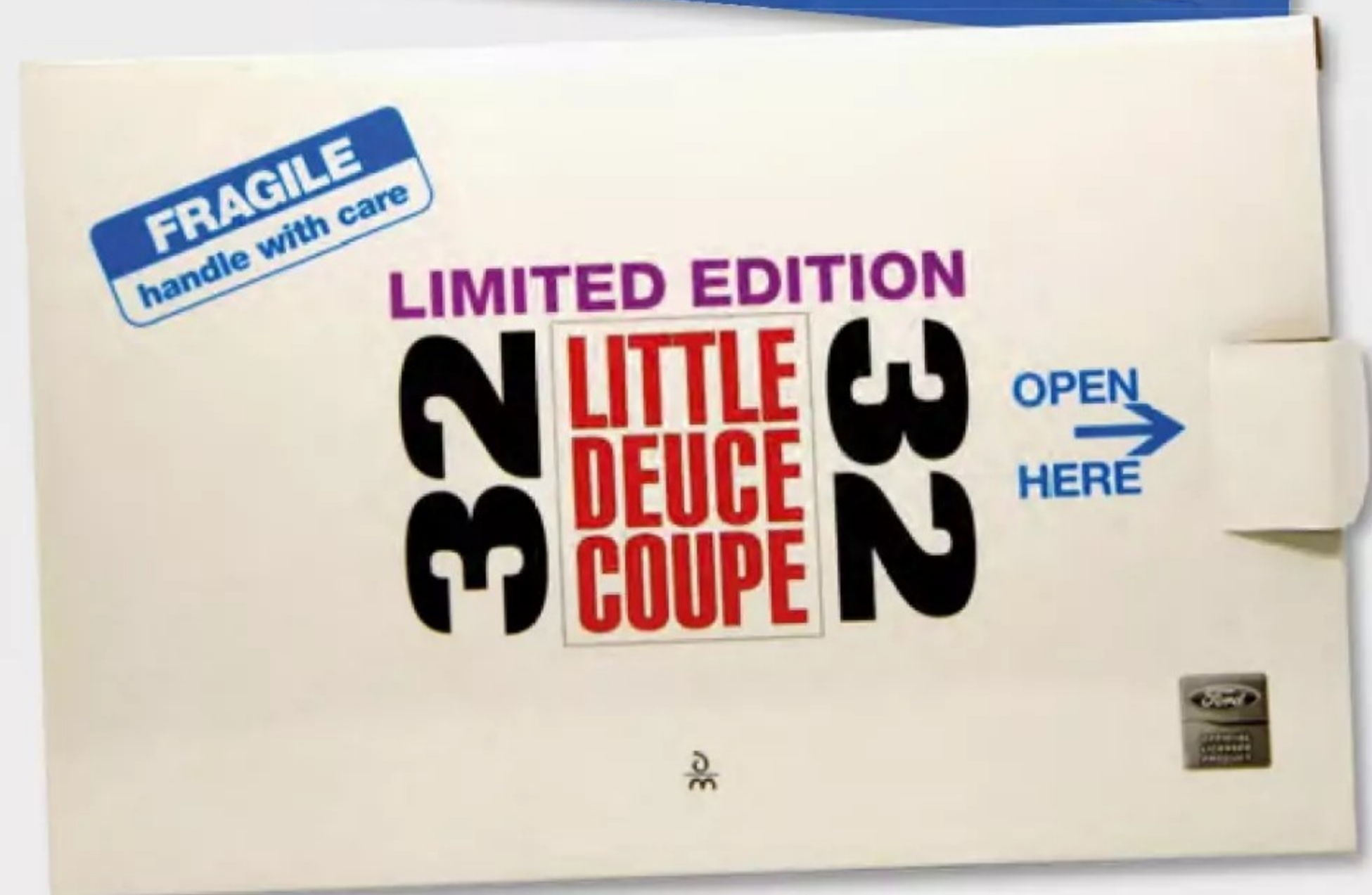
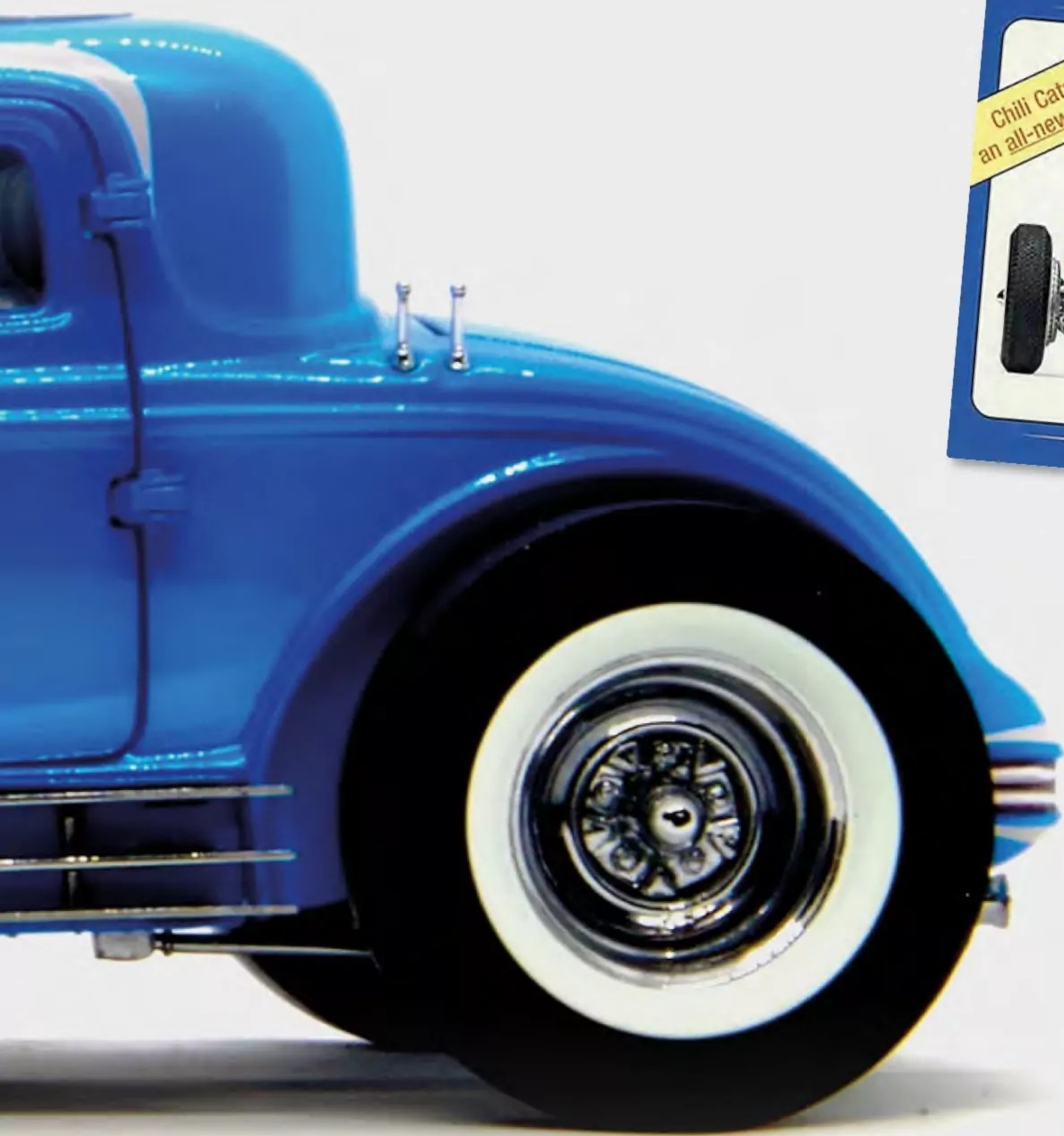
Before looking at the model in detail, I think that it is relevant to pinpoint exactly which stage in the car’s life the Danbury Mint modelled, given that over time it went through several iterations. With the authorisation of Curt Catallo, the Danbury Mint die-cast design team was given unlimited access to photograph and measure every part of the car as it stood in 2008. At that point, it was only substantially restored to its 1961 state but replicated in 1/24 to exactly the specification ‘Silver Sapphire’ existed in at the time of Eric Rickman’s photoshoot for HOT ROD magazine. Or put another way, in the car’s fourth iteration, after having been updated in the Barris Kustom workshop.

So, where shall I start? Unusually, this time with the underside of the chassis because, like so many full sized show cars, it demands to be stood over mirrors. Chassis detailing is just as extensive as the rest of the car, going down as far as individual fuel pipe runs, electrical looms including the battery leads, brake pipes, steering linkages, and intricate suspension

//

A truly fabulous museum quality model that inevitably comes with an earworm soundtrack on continuous loop...

//



components.

Moving onto the main bodywork, 'Silver Sapphire's body shell started out originally as a straightforward use of a 1932 body sectioned and channelled 6 inches over the original '32 frame. For its fourth iteration, undertaken in the Barris Kustom workshop in 1960, as illustrated in the July 1961 issue of HOT ROD, the roof had been chopped by three inches and the doors shortened, until the bottoms were in the same relative position as originally. The paintwork was redone in brilliant Pearl Oriental Blue, with pearl white scallops, and Barris crest shields were applied to the front side panels. All of this is captured beautifully on the model, as is the white padded, tufted, and buttoned top and matching interior upholstery that included the door panelling. Delicately hinged "suicide" doors open to give a wonderful view of all the interior detailing, including the eye-catching steering wheel from a '59 Lincoln Continental atop a '34 Ford steering column, all sat behind an authentically bottom-opening windscreen. Not surprisingly, the dashboard with its instrumentation is also carefully captured in great detail.

At the back, the boot lid opens to reveal the repositioned fuel tank and battery. The chrome wheels themselves are similarly superb miniature captures of yet another masterpiece of customising that went into the Barris update. Amazingly, the fronts were Chrysler Imperial centers on reversed Mercury rims, backed by obsolete production

Kinmont disc brakes, all set to a 1937 Ford tubular axle, while the rears were Oldsmobile centers grafted to Lincoln rims.

Moving to the front end, the twin headlight arrangement set in a fibreglass front panel was a hallmark of the car held over from its earlier days, modelled in superb detail. Behind it sits the car's awesome engine and the high point of the modelling detail. That power-plant was a 1956 Oldsmobile V8 of 344 cubic inches. It had Chrysler intake and GMC exhaust valves actuated by a Clay Smith cam and Iskenderian cam kit. Jahns supplied blower-type pistons with Grant rings, while the 6-71 blower and installation kit were provided by Cragar. Ignition, distributor and flywheel/clutch units were all stock Oldsmobile items. Now, all that which is visible on the engine as installed is modelled in museum-quality fine detail, right down to the fuel lines, plug leads, and more, all sat in front of the chromed bulkhead wall.

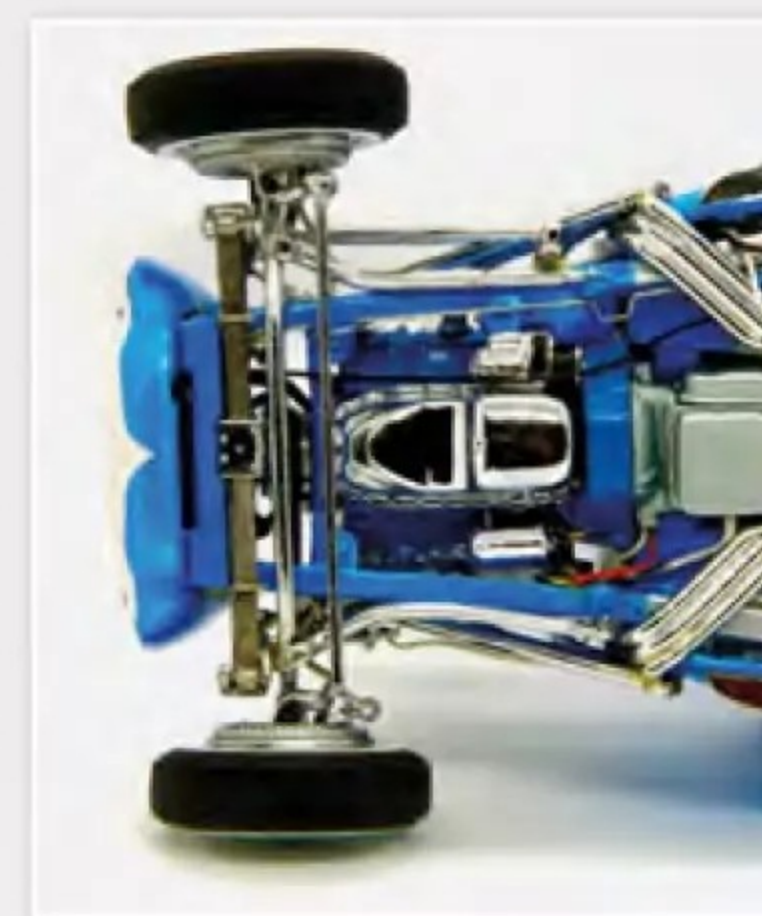
Following the engine detailing down towards the front suspension reveals the flexible brake pipe hoses that move with the repositionable front wheels themselves, set with intricate suspension and brake detailing.

A truly fabulous museum quality model that inevitably comes with an earworm soundtrack on continuous loop.

"Well, I'm not braggin' babe, so don't put me down. But I've got the best set of model wheels in town..." ■

ABOVE

The Danbury Mint advertising and packaging graphics that drew on the style of the Beach Boys album cover causing Clarence "Chilli" Catallo's



ABOVE

The complete chassis is as fully detailed as the rest of this charismatic scale model including particularly



ABOVE

... and flexible brake pipe hoses.



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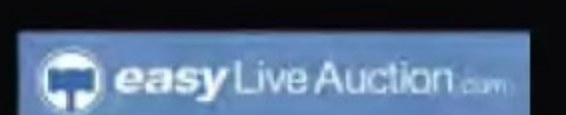
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Photos: João Carlos Oliveira



Long time collectors of 1:43 scale models of legendary Le Mans 24h endurance race know how long it took to get good replicas of the winning car, after the race ended. This was in the, not so distant, past and if you wanted to collect more than the winning car it would take even more time to gather a decent collection of the main cars that disputed the latest race. Things changed considerably when Minichamps got an interest in the subject and started to launch diecasts of some of the cars entered each season. You would get very good reproductions of the winning team's cars and maybe one or two more. Those were (and still are) excellent scale models, some of the last ones the German company launched were perfectly made. Many times they produced special packages for car dealers of the winning brand to sell and that would accelerate the process of putting the models out for sale at regular scale models shops. Still, around a year or so would pass between the victory at Le Mans and the first scale model to hit the shelves.

FASTER, NOW

Those of us who follow this collecting theme know that model manufacturer Spark and its affiliates changed the scene completely. From their first models launched in 2000, Spark dedicated a great part of their scale model production to replicas of cars that raced in Le Mans. They started by modelling back of the grid cars, those that no other model maker had already produced. Even if Spark's catalogue now spreads to many areas of interest in Motorsport and not only, ultimately the company aims at reproducing all the cars that ever entered the Le Mans 24h Race. Mission: Impossible? Just give them time...

Hypercars are here!

Francisco Mota leads us through the Hypercars that disputed the 2024 Le Mans

Time is something the model maker does not waste. Only one year after the 2024 Le Mans race, they have already launched not only the winning car, but all the leading class models, the Hypercars. This is quite an achievement, considering in last year's race there were nine different car shapes, plus a second livery for one of the BMWs, two more liveries for Porsche and three for Cadillac. Considering most of the teams had entered two of three cars, this makes a lot of different models to launch in about a year. Plus all the other LMP2 and GT3 cars that we'll have a look at in Part 2 of this article.

HYPERCARS

The leading class of cars at Le Mans and the World Endurance Championship (WEC), of which the French race is the most important leg, is the Hypercars. These are prototypes made for this type of racing only, they cost several millions to design, built and run. That's why only works teams, of privateer teams very close to the manufacturers, are able to

ABOVE

From left to right: Porsche 963 #6, Ferrari 499 #50 and Toyota GR010 Hybrid #7. The winning Ferrari is by Look Smart and the others by Spark.

// Model manufacturer Spark and its affiliates changed the scene completely. //



LEFT Cadillac V-Series.R #2 finished 7th and looks great as a high quality 1:43 scale model.



ABOVE From left, three different liveries for the Porsche 963. The first is the works team, the other two are privateer's.

front: the medium blue in the pictures, yellow and red. The rest of the livery was the same at the rear, black with the stripes in the colours of the Cadillac emblem. The car has some original features like front vertical headlights and a pair of winglets at both front corners. There are aerials on the roof and air scoops to feed the engine on top. Wheels are multispoke and disc brakes with calipers can be seen behind. Front windshield and side windows allow for a good vision of the small cockpit. The livery makes this prototype look very long, a typical feature of classic Le Mans cars.

A FEW PRIVATEERS

Porsche had high expectations for the 2024 Le Mans race and the 963 model that had more than one year of racing. They were not good enough to beat the winners, but were good at selling cars to privateer teams. Three types of liveries entered the race: the works white with red stripes; the F.A.T sponsored white and the golden Hertz sponsored. The shape is the same in the three cars, one that is reminiscent of Porsche's streetcar, mainly



1: Double colour smartly done in the Cadillac.

2: Perfectly rendered double exhaust pipes, plus heat shields in the works Porsche.

3: Porsche 963 features headlamps with four elements, just like the company's road cars.

BELOW Lamborghini SC63 #63 is probably the Le Mans Hypercar that looks closer to brand's streetcars, and the better for that.



enter these cars in Le Mans and the WEC. The IMSA championship in the USA also runs these type of cars. Without going into much detail, we can say there is a degree of freedom in terms of types of engines. From simple atmospheric units with rear wheel drive to part-time all-wheel drive hybrids we can find very different power units. In terms of chassis, there's also the chance for each manufacturer to build his own, or teams can buy chassis from approved suppliers. In the end, a complex system of equivalencies, called the BoP (Balance of Performance) is capable of building a level playing field, so any car can win, at least in theory.

THE SCALE MODELS

Hypercars are very complex machines, even if you limit your attention at skin deep, as you do with 1:43 scale models. The shapes, developed in wind tunnels and with Computer Fluid Dynamics software, are intricate, joining rounded surfaces with flat parts, the entire body covered with big and small wings. These are difficult cars to replicate at 1:43 scale. Spark has an enormous experience in this field, so they can deliver high quality products that deserve to be enjoyed closely. A magnifying glass can be of great help to catch the smaller details.

The first model we're looking at is the Cadillac V-Series.R with race number 2. This was the car raced by Lynn/Bamber/Palou and finished seventh overall. All three Cadillacs had a different colour at the



the electric Taycan. Race car number 6 was driven by Rstre/Lotterer/Vanthoor and finished fourth. The shape is very “clean” meaning that there aren’t extra winglets around the body, except the four longitudinal on the roof. There’s a Pitot tube in the same region and very interesting side pods. One can look at them and imagine the air path around the prototype’s shapes. Car number 99 was driven by Jani/Andlauer/Tincknell and finished second to last. It features a very basic livery, inspired in an old one used by a 956 Porsche in the 1980s. White, fluo green and FAT sponsor. The white base colour allows for a better view of all the black air scoops, like the mandatory one over each wheel. Finally, the Porsche 963 with race number 38 is the gold ad white, Hertz sponsored machine that looks the best of the three. It was driven by Ilot/Nato/Stevens and finished in ninth place overall.

For the next pair we joined the two Italian prototypes that entered the 2024 Le Mans 24h edition. On the green corner, we have Lamborghini SC63 with race number 63. On the red corner, we have Ferrari 499P with race number 50.

ITALIANS AND FRENCH

Probably the prettiest car on the grid and the one with front styling closer to the brand’s streetcars (the same in the rear) the green Lamborghini looks astonishing with its body painted green and unpainted carbon fiber. The mandatory vertical fin behind the cockpit has a slightly different shape relative to the other cars and the rear wing features four small vertical winglets. The roof has a chromed finish to lower the cockpit temperature. Even the wheel design is inspired by the brand’s street cars. The car was driven by Bortolotti/Kvyat/Mortara and finished tenth.

The red and yellow car with race number 50 is obviously the 2024 Le Mans 24h winner, driven by Fuoco/Molina/Nielson. It features a number of special features not seen in the other cars. The front splitter looks more dramatic and complex, side pods are cleaner and simpler on the outside and the rear wing supports are tilted, as is the mandatory vertical

fin on the engine cover. The rear wing itself looks different with the lower plane placed in a higher position than in other cars. Inside the cockpit one can see most of the details like race steering wheel, racing seat with safety belts and many others. From the rear we can see the underfloor and its rounded shape. This model is sold under the brand Look Smart.

For the next pair we have the French cars that race last year at Le Mans. The white and green is the Peugeot 9X8 Evo with race number 93, raced by Jensen/Müller/Vergne and finished twelfth. The blue car is the Alpine A424 with race number 36, driven by Lapierre/Schumacher/Vaxiviere that did not finish. The Peugeot is a very interesting car in model terms, because it has some exclusive details. Starting with the front end that replicates the typical front grille in Peugeot’s street cars, with the same shield in the middle and the three vertical stripes in each corner. These are also replicated in the rear with red LEDs. The vertical fin over the engine is much lower than in other cars and the rear wing placed lower. Even the side mirrors are placed lower, in the “shadow” of the front wheel arches to benefit aerodynamics. There are a pair of winglets painted green on the front. Side-by-side, the Alpine looks much more of a conventional prototype. It looks like the livery makes most of the car’s looks. For instance, the black inferior front end and the shape of the headlamps gives it a snake stance. Sidepods shape is clean and the same can be said about the rear, with a simple rear wing. It also features chromed roof.

BIG GUYS

For the last pair we have the Toyota GR010 Hybrid with race number 7, driven by Kobayashi/Molina/Nielsen, that finished second place. And the BMW M Hybrid V8 with race number 15, that was driven by Marciello/Vanthoor/Wittmann and did not finish.

Painted black, makes the Toyota details more difficult to see, but there are a few, like air scoop on the driver’s window, red painted winglets at each front corner, a little old style headlamp covers and uniquely designed wheel rims. The Pitot tube is

ABOVE
The Italian Hypercars at Le Mans had different result. The red Ferrari 499P #50 was the winner, the green Lamborghini SC63 finished in 10th position.



ABOVE
Ferrari's rear wing has a different shape to all the others, with three air scoops.

//

A magnifying glass can be of great help to catch the smaller details.

//



ABOVE
The French contingent with the white and green Peugeot 9X8 Evo and the blue and white Alpine A424. The first finished 11th, the other did not finish.



LEFT
Lots of small details make modern Le Mans hypercars very complex machines. In a high quality 1/43 scale model they look superb.

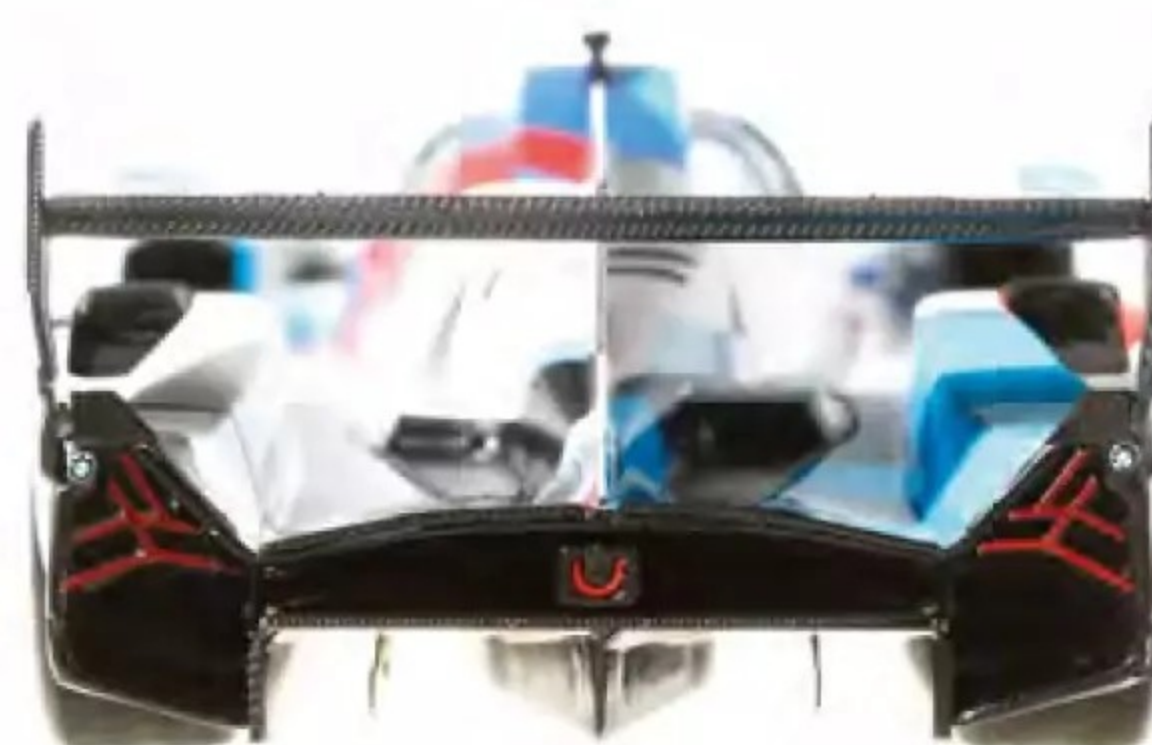


BELOW LEFT
The black car is the Toyota GR010 Hybrid that finished 2nd. The multicolour prototype next to it is the BMW M Hybrid V8 that did not finish.

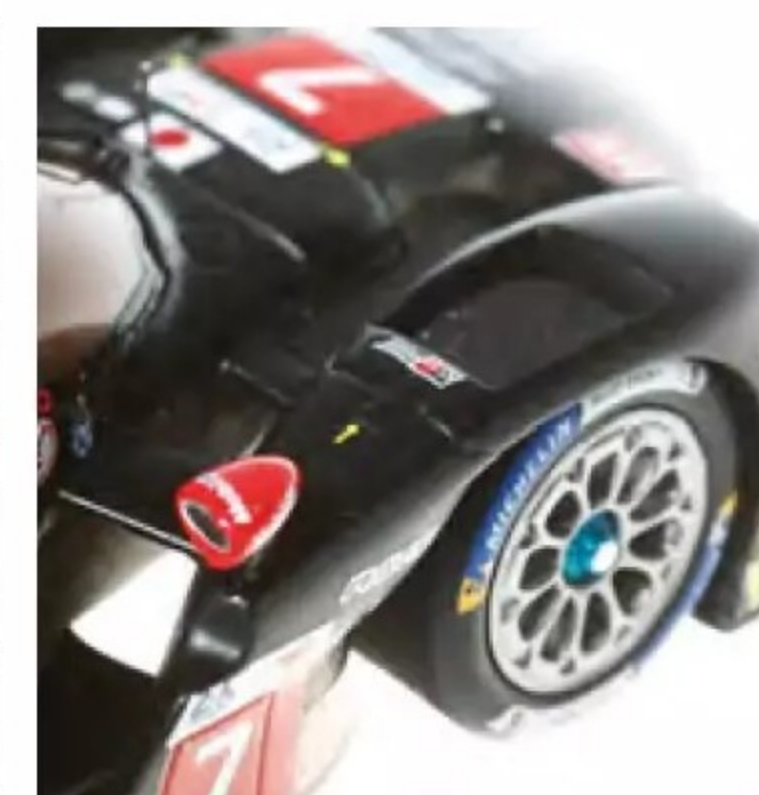
placed in front of the windshield and the roof also receives chromed foil to protect the driver from excess heat inside the cockpit. The sidepods are very small and from the rear we can see the floor of the car has five vertical walls.

From Germany comes the BMW prototype, painted in a new variation of the traditional BMW racing colours. The typical front grille also features in the Le Mans car and the headlights are at each corner, made by LEDs. It looks very menacing with a huge vertical fin behind the cockpit, an air scoop on the roof and simple side pods. There's an interesting double "y" shape tail lights. And that's it. The most attentive of you will notice there's a car missing from the Hypercar class, the Isotta Fraschini. Until these pages went to press, there was no news about it.

We've highlighted only some of the most obvious details in each scale model. However there are much



more to enjoy before parking the new models on the shelf dedicated to Le Mans 2024. If you are a true collector, I'm sure you will not skip this phase, the most pleasant of all. After spending the sums Spark asks for each of this excellent models, we should take the most out of them, and not just add a few more to the collection. Next month we'll take a look at the GT3 class cars that raced at 2024 Le Mans 24h. Do not miss it. ■



ABOVE
Unique shape for Toyota's wheel rims with an aerodynamic function.

LEFT
BMW's rear view show a lot of details very well reproduced.



The name Jensen usually conjures up the Stylish Interceptor of the 1970s, or perhaps the fast and practical Jensen Healey.

In the 1:43 field, Dinky Toys and Corgi Juniors brought the FF to our homes, Spot-On delivered their 541, and the white metal model creators brought us many more of Jensen's lovely cars.

The story of the company is much longer than that snapshot in time, and very much wider too.

Alan and Richard Jensen built their first Austin Seven special in 1927, and as a result, the Standard Motor Company was so impressed that they asked the two brothers to undertake a similar job on a Standard Nine.

For the next thirty years Alan and Richard managed their own company which bore their name through some revolutionary designs of trucks, coaches, and cars.

They introduced fibreglass as a material for body construction, built the world's fastest 4 seat saloon car, and were the first to introduce 4 wheel drive, and disc brakes on all 4 wheels.

If that wasn't enough to whet one's appetite, when you explore the reference books, there is a wealth of fascinating vehicles and prototypes of all shapes and sizes that shine out.

A model line up model range of Jensen prototypes and commissions for other companies is very soon possible.

To begin with a commercial commission, we will find a recurring theme of contracts for Austin throughout. Here's one of the first, the Austin K8 3-way van converted to pick up. This close association came about partly as Richard Jensen had been an apprentice at Wolseley, and after Leonard

THE OTHER VEHICLES THAT JENSEN BUILT

David Wright delves into the history of the Jensen brothers and their role within the diecast community.

Lord, chairman of Austin, arrangements were made to use Jensen for short contracts.

Austin's managers agreed an initial contract of 24 pickup bodies on the 25cwt chassis of the Austin K8. This order was followed in 1949 with two more contracts for a further 150, which were costed by Jensen at £75 per body!

Photos that survive show the pickups had canvas tilts. This was a small contract, which paved the way for many more lucrative ones enabling Jensen to rise to the forefront of body building. Perhaps surprisingly, the only adaptable 1/43rd model is a kit from Classic Commercials, a range of resin kits for the model railway enthusiast. A good set of mouldings made it easy to cut down into a pick-up. A suitable spare wheel, seats, and planking completes the job, as well as home-made wheel spats for the rear.

In terms of models of the width and length of Jensen's commissions, it becomes serious in 1950, with a very specialist car maker, Lea Francis. This post

BELOW

The front of the Austin K8 3-way Van, one of the first of their Austin contracts.



ABOVE

The Austin K8 3-way van, the pick up truck back of the model.

1



1: The Lea Francis Woodie model in 1950. .

2: Austin A40 Sports Lans.

3: Austin Atlantic.



ABOVE
Austin 7 Atlantic jensen by
Illustra.

2



3



ABOVE
Austin A40 Devon.



ABOVE
The back of the Austin A40
Devon.



ABOVE
541 Drophead.

war era was one of strict regulation on petrol and materials for production, hence timber bodied cars, or shooting brakes as they were then known, offered a way of keeping costs down. Whilst there were a few specialist coach builders around then, it appears that Jensen built at least 2 wood-bodied estates for Lea Francis, neither of which are known to survive. Our woody in miniature is of course the Lansdowne LDM21, and whether its body is intended to be a Jensen one or production Lea Francis, who knows! It is however, a very nice model of a rare car.

Next in time is the better known Austin A40 Sports, which was essentially an Austin Devon with an aluminium body made by Jensen. 4,242 bodies were produced by Jensen for Austin and the contract gave Jensen valuable experience in volume production. Production started in 1950, but by January 1953, Jensen were gearing up for the biggest contract they would handle – the Austin Healey.

Lansdowne's very acceptable rendering of the A40 sports is in typical white with red upholstery, and this can equally feature in a model line-up of Jensen or Austin!

The Austin A90 Atlantic was launched at Earls Court in 1948 in convertible form, achieving an impressive list of record-breaking runs at Indianapolis in 1949, which were intended to herald it as a hot number for the American market. However, sales never really took off, and in an effort to turn this

around, Leonard Lord of Austin dispatched one of the earlier convertibles to Jensen, seeking modifications, to make the front less controversial. This was achieved by the use of an Austin A70 bonnet and a nose panel from an A40 sports. This gave the car a family resemblance to the original Jensen Interceptor, but Lord didn't like it, and now its survival is a matter of conjecture. It is thought that it was destroyed in a fire at the Austin works.

To achieve a model of this car, a tatty Dinky with a sound body was butchered at the front, by drilling out the front end and fitting a spotlight. Front wings were built up, and headlights repositioned accordingly. Minimarque obliged with a beautiful rendition of this rare prototype in white metal. Seen here in metallic green.

After the A40 sports contract, Jensen began building a small number of tilt-bodies for Austin onto the Austin A40 pick up chassis. It is thought that the 130 recorded vehicles made by Jensen represented a small consignment for a particular order, as more than 61,000 in all were made, the rest by Austin.

The Matchbox Dinky Collection Austin A40 van lends itself to chopping here, and with a suitable rear cab wall in place, all that is needed is a tin tilt to complete the picture!

Come 1953, Austin was well underway with their Counties range of cars, and the A70 Hereford was the flagship and biggest of the set. Austin had

already made a woodie countryman version as a luxurious utility vehicle for use on farm and countryside. In addition, Jensen was asked to produce a prototype all steel version, and strangely in left hand drive. Why this was not put into production is not clear, but may have been either on cost grounds, or by then Jensen had their hands full with the contract to build Austin Healey 100s. The 1-off prototype is not believed to have survived, but Pete Kenna of Kenna models was persuaded by the author to add this beauty to his range of Austin County models. The conversion of the saloon pattern to estate was achieved, and a colourful set of three is shown here. Due to personal ill-health at the time this was on sale, the author is still seeking an example of this model.

Now this record is intended to be mostly about the lesser-known vehicles that Jensen made, other than their own, but here's a Jensen that I couldn't ignore! When Jensen introduced their 541 sports model in 1955, of the 4 prototypes, two were delivered to Abbotts of Farnham for developing a drophead. These used the existing fibreglass front end, but an entirely different rear section which was rather less in keeping with the rest of the car. Production was not pursued, but one of these cars is known to exist in New Zealand.

The Spot-On 541 is a ready test-bed to experiment with re-shaping and chopping a roof off, so I set to work! A very difficult shape to replicate I found, but here you see my finished article.

During the late 1950s, Jensen had achieved a very full order book from Austin with the Austin Healey 100, and 100/6, and to diversify a little, Jensen were happy to take on the production of an Austin A95 countryman estate. The initial order was for 2500 bodies, but in total 2,430 were made. For export purposes, some of these bodies were badged as Morris Marshal Travellers, a marque individual to Australia. It now seems that very few have survived, and most live in Australia or New Zealand.

Toy manufacturer, Budgie took the trouble to make an excellent model of this smart and streamlined estate car, but as a toy, it appeared in single colour schemes of either green or orange. Here you see a repainted one in the typical Austin scheme.

To accompany the Budgie, here you see an attempt by the author to create one from a Dinky 176 Austin A105, and certainly Dinky provided the correct colour scheme on these saloons. Cutting off the back end was easy, but assembling a Plasticard estate rear, with the correct curves, was visibly impossible! Here is my attempt, and I hope those readers who regularly chop will sympathise, or indeed send in a picture of a far better effort!

The JenTug range of light trucks, firstly powered by a Ford petrol engine, and then by an electric motor under the Hindle-Smart name, are now well known thanks to both the Classix range, and of course Dinky Toys. Dinky Toy 421 is shown here in its original form, with battery box slung beneath the cab, whilst the British Railways Jen Tug by Classix does not have this feature, being petrol driven.

In 1951, Austin became involved in developing a prototype of the Austin Champ. They built a total of 12,000 for the British Army, and records show



1

1: The A70 Hereford Countryman.



2

2: The A70 Hereford Countryman shown in colour.



3

3: The A70 Hereford Countryman in a blue paint job.



ABOVE Benbro and Dinky conversion - Austin 95 estate.



ABOVE Austin A90 Westminster Estate.



ABOVE Classic JenTug.



ABOVE Dinky Hindle Smart.

that Jensen were involved in a small way, perhaps overseeing the four-wheel drive development. 5 bodies are recorded as having been built by Jensen, and these may well have been for a particular customer. By the end of the 1950s, it appears that Jensen had got a name for producing sports cars and dropheads, and they were commissioned by Austin in 1958 to produce a convertible on an Austin A40 Farina chassis. A saloon body was sent over to West Bromwich from Longbridge in October 1958, and by 1959, one such drophead body was built, and another subsequently by Vanden Plas. This latter version had a sliding roof. Neither of these went into production. The Jensen prototype has not been heard of since 1962, but at least here is an easy conversion in miniature! A Spot-On A40 has been used to create the desired result, and careful removal of the roof section, plus the fabrication of a folded hood, and low and behold, an acceptable drophead.

When Austin decided to enter the 4-wheel drive

market again, it was with the Austin Gypsy, which was a cheaper and less complex vehicle than the Champ, and more comfortably appointed and to ride in than the Land Rover.

Jensen records are not clear at the time, but it is safe to say that there were many contracts from Austin to build tens or hundreds of Gypsies, between 1959 and 1961, first to construct bodies at West Bromwich, and then final assembly to take place at the BMC plant at Longbridge. About 21,000 Gypsies were made in total, and are now regarded as collectors' items. Only one model of the Austin Gypsy is known to exist, and that is the neat hardtop made LDM40, by Lansdowne.

Not to be in any way waiting for business to come their way, by 1959 Jensen had negotiated a contract with Volvo to build a sports car designed between Italy and Sweden, known as the Volvo Sport, or P1800.

As the Swedish plant was fully occupied already, Pressed Steel's plant at Linwood, Scotland was commissioned to build the body shells, and Jensen would undertake final assembly and finishing. This link was to prove a weak one, production targets slipped, and quality suffered. There was much wrangling between the three parties involved, to the point when in May 1962, Jensen sought damages from Volvo for the contract being shortened. As we know, the Volvo P1800 is well modelled by both Dinky Toys, Corgi Toys, Spot-On, together with more recently Minichamps, and Robeddie in white metal.

As if to fill a gap created at the end of the Volvo contract, Jensen were asked to become involved in the development of a car to satisfy the requirements of the Californian Rootes customers, to be born from the Sunbeam Alpine. Carroll Shelby achieved the shoe-horning of a Ford V8 into an Alpine, and as Rootes did not have the production line capacity, Jensen were commissioned to produce this conversion. The ex-Volvo assembly line was converted for use, and 300 engines per month were shipped to West Bromwich, with Pressed Steel bodies delivered for assembly, painting, trimming and badging as Tigers. 6551 Tigers duly came off the Jensen production line, the majority of which were left hand drive.

For miniatures of this little "Thunderbolt", as it was known, we have to turn to the white metal example made by Enco, and the dark blue example made by Lansdowne Models.

Which brings us to the piece de resistance, that Austin Healey contract. 13 special test cars known by Austin Healey as BN1 models, were built by Jensen between 1953 and 1956, and were driven in a variety of races and endurance events by well-known drivers. Jensen continued to be involved in the modification of these cars to Le Mans specification, or 100M, followed by the 100S, of which just 53 were made all by Jensen. These cars are enormously prized now. Two prototype coupés followed, and then in 1955, the first large Healey contract commenced at their new premises in Kelvin Way, West Bromwich, which amounted to 4,604 100 BN2 Healey 100 bodies. 7,053 100/6 models were then built at Longbridge, with the larger 2.6 litre engine, followed with at least



LEFT:
Austin Champs.



ABOVE
The diecast A40.



ABOVE
The real full-sized A40.



ABOVE
Austin Gypsy by Lansdowne.



ABOVE
SP Range Rover.

two thirds going to the USA. Production shifted to Abingdon's MG works in 1957, where another 4,241 rolled off the line, to make way for another Austin contract. By 1959, production of the then new 3000 MkI began at West Bromwich, from where the bodies were delivered to Abingdon for engines and transmissions to be installed. A wide range of modifications to the body were made by Jensen for the launch of the 3000 MkII, to cater for the luxury end of the market, and by now the car was a fully-fledged convertible with wind up windows. After 6113 of these were delivered, the last incarnation was the 3000 MkIII, of which 1390 only appeared, with interior modifications all made by Jensen specialists.

Some may take the view that the Austin Healey in all its variations has been somewhat over-modelled, as it seems to appear in every new range.

Through the 1970s Jensen mostly concentrated on development and production of their own brand, namely the CV8, Interceptor, FF, and Jensen-Healey. However, Jensen Special Products were involved in the preparation of a small number of stretched Range Rover with 3 axles, for the Swiss Army. The nearest we can get to this one is the Matchbox 6 wheeled Range Rover, depicting a conversion by Carmichael to a fire tender.

Nowadays, sadly our model manufacturers do not model concept cars much, so the efforts Jensen put in to produce some interesting one-off cars that were very still-born have not been perpetuated in miniature. More recently one or two have found the 1:43rd light of day, and this may be the subject of a future article.

However, perhaps this insight into the wide diversification that took Jensen into many contracts, large and small, throws some light on what was going on in West Bromwich through the 1940s, 50s, and 60s in particular.

A true set of opportunists, in the end Jensen fell fowl of the financial markets, and the high risk executive field they were making cars for brought about their demise. Let's thank our model car makers for giving us such a rich range of models with which to create histories such as you see here, together with the raw material to adapt and create where none exist. ■

Acknowledgements

To Richard Calver for his wonderful book, and help in providing some of the original pictures. To the BMIHT for their original photographs of some Austins and Jensens. To Pete Kenna for accepting my suggestion to create a model of the A70 Countryman with such good grace – it's a beautiful model of a truly rare car!



Consul Chronicles: Completing the Corgi 50th Anniversary Story

David Lynn looks at the limited edition Corgi Chrome Ford BATCC from 2010.

My article on Corgi's 50th Anniversary range of Ford Consuls issued from 2006 to recreate their first diecast release had an unexpected sequel after publication (DC October 2017). The owner of the featured BATCC edition was so chuffed to see the pictures of his example in print that he generously offered it to me at a rather more affordable price than its original figure. So I can now finish the story by fully describing and illustrating this elusive version, and adding some accurate information about how it was produced to resolve previous speculations.

To briefly recap, the Boston Area Toy Collectors Club (BATCC) held their 10th Annual National Collectible Toy Event on 24 September 2010 and commissioned a commemorative model through a collaboration arranged by the Corgi Collector Club (CCC) with *Code3Models* of Swansea (although it probably meets the usual definition for a Code 2 model). A batch of 100 chrome-plated BATCC

Consuls was produced from remnant stocks of the chromed CCC members exclusive CC01105 issued in 2006, and BATCC set the cost for non-members at \$150, so it is very unlikely that that more than a handful ever reached a wider audience, let alone returned to this side of the Atlantic.

The BATCC model is almost an exact duplicate of CC01105 onto which three additional vinyl labels have been applied. Each side has a large red/yellow/white label reading "10th ANNUAL COLLECTIBLE TOY EVENT SEPT 24th 2010" across the doors and onto the rear wing; these are very precisely placed to line up with the forward edge of the front door and have neat cut-outs around the cast-in front and rear door handles. The roof has a large logo with a red outer circle containing black script for "Boston Area Toy Collectors Club" and enclosing small depictions of an indeterminate 1970s stock car and a superhero in a grey costume with red cap, hat and boots; a jagged white triangle leads back from the roundel towards the rear in a quasi-

ABOVE
The limited edition model from Boston Area Toy Collectors Club and the Corgi Collector Club.

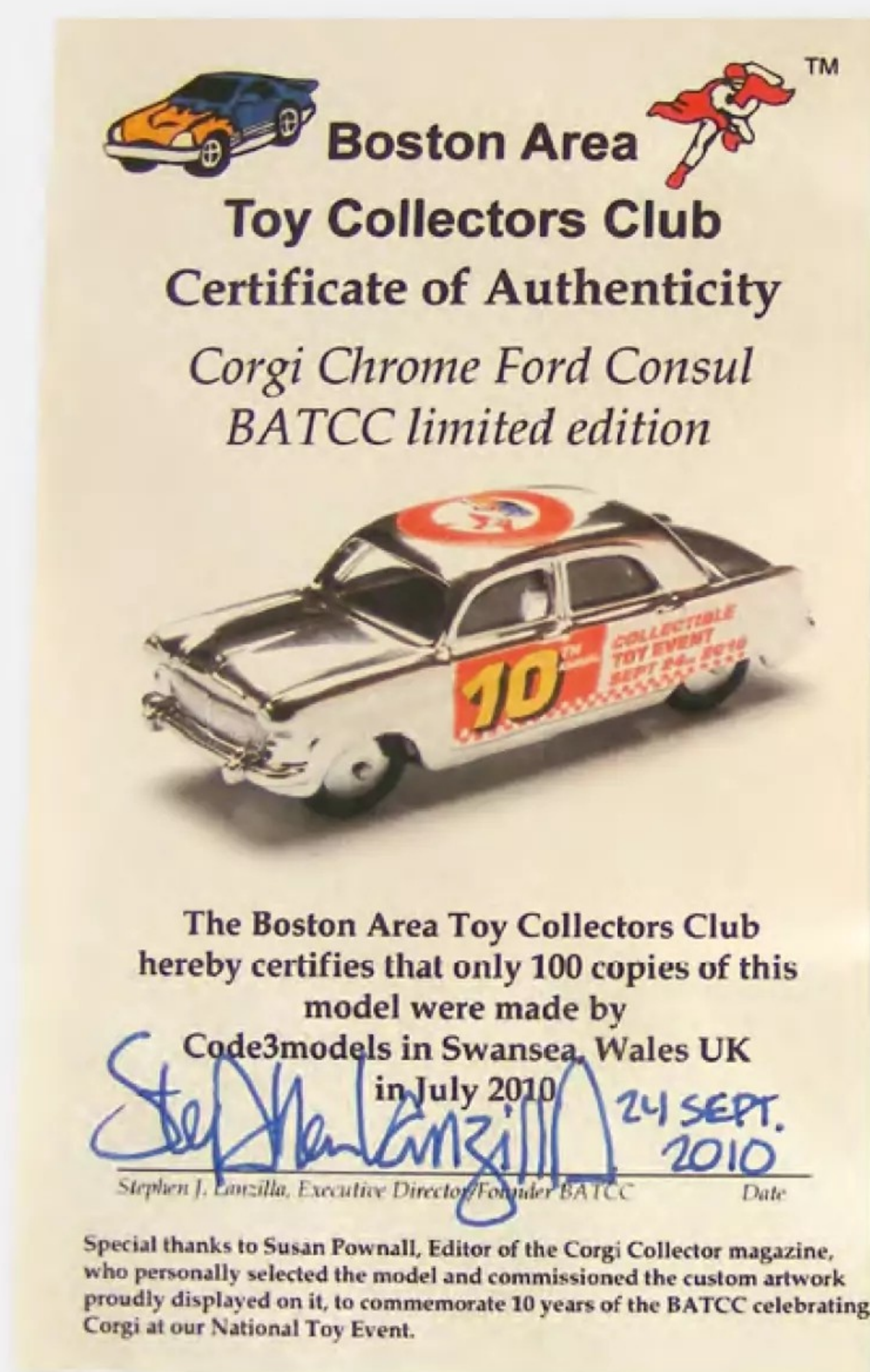


LEFT:
What the collector found
when they bought the
model.

//

The BATCC
model is
almost
an exact
duplicate of
CC01105 onto
which three
additional
vinyl labels
have been
applied.

//



LEFT
The Certificate you got
alongside the model to
show authenticity of the
car.





ABOVE
The very first Consul preview model from Corgi.



ABOVE
The #001 preview model logo.

flame effect. The only intrinsic difference is that the BATCC model does not have the *50 CORGI ANNIVERSARY* bonnet logo found on CC01105.

The BATCC packaging of a lift-off box with a vacuum-formed inner tray and clear cover is exactly the same as used for CC01105, with stickers added to the box ends to repeat the round BATCC logo, an additional plaque for *code3models.com*, and all CC01105 number panels are blacked out. The lid for CC01105 had a card insert describing Corgi's original Consul range in 1956 which is now omitted, but everything else is unchanged, including the model drawings with the bonnet logo, the information panel on the box base with a copyright date of 2006 and no mention of BATCC, and the plain white outer carton with a CC01105 ink stamp. There is a new unnumbered paper BATCC certificate signed and dated by club president, Stephen J Lanzilla, which states that "*only 100 copies of this model were made by Code3models in Swansea in July 2010*" and acknowledges the assistance of Susan Pownall of the CCC for selecting the model and commissioning the artwork.

Until now, my speculations whether the BATCC edition could have originated as a left-over batch of CC01105s had hit one unresolved obstacle in that the bonnet logo which is often described as an etching somehow had to be made to vanish. However Tony Graham at *Code3Models* confirmed that the

logo was nothing more than an easily-removed surface print, and that this was a straightforward makeover of CC01105s supplied by Susan Pownall and achieved by a simple process of adding the BATCC labels and covering over some of the previous box identifiers.

My phone call to Tony also revealed that *Code3Models* had created the rehash of the green Consul AN01104 into the July-December 2009 Preview edition, again by designing and applying labels to a batch of leftovers supplied by Corgi; however these and the various other Preview editions (DC November 2016) never carried any indication of outside involvement. The conversation then took a surprise twist when he said he was sure he'd seen a box somewhere and would go and look; he returned with the news that he'd eventually found it and it contained Preview model #001. So this can now be shown in what may well be its first ever public appearance – some Corgi publicity photos exist of later Preview series #001 models but not as far as I know of Consul #001 – along with what may be a unique photo of five Preview Consuls together, resulting from my possibly unhealthy search over the years for ever lower numbered examples.

Huge thanks are due to Jim Livermore again for enabling me to fulfil my Consul odyssey and to Tony Graham for his definitive information and ability to retrieve dusty cartons from the back of cupboards. ■



LEFT:
The original model
alongside the limited
edition model.

//

Until now, my
speculations
whether the
BATCC edition
could hve
originated
as a left-
over batch
of CC01105s
had hit one
unresolved
obstacle...

//



1 & 2:
Close ups of the BATCC
limited edition Corgi.



3 & 4:
The original Consul model,
unknown year of origin.



ABOVE
Boston Area Toy
Collectors Club badge

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AA28404 - English Electric
Lightning F.6, No.5 Squadron
RAF, Leconfield 1973.....£170.99



1:12 Scale Triumph Scrambler Due Summer 2026



CC08403 - James Bond Triumph
Scrambler 1200XE (Norway) No
Time To Die.....£80.99

Star Trek Klingon Bird of Prey Due November



CC96612 - Star Trek Klingon Bird
of Prey (HMS Bounty) Star Trek IV
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1:43 Scale MG - Due 2026



VA09307 - MG ZT+ Monogram
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1

Now here I am sharing my hobby of collecting die-cast model cars. The passion of motoring that was engraved into my soul when I was a child which has now become an addiction. This is the one thing that always keeps me excited. I would also like to honour the versatility of my passion as a motoring enthusiast, journalist & motorsport marshal as well as playing a prominent role in my professional career. I call it a passion unlimited.

In early 80s, I got hold of my first matchbox die-cast model car back in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia (where I was born). This was introduced by my father Waheed Akhtar, a motor engineer specializing in Land Rover, Opel & Chevrolet back in the 70s & 80s. As a child, these 1/64 scale die-cast cars inspired me, as much as I start getting them, some were broken into pieces to see what's inside. I remember playing with these models on my father's 1976 Chevrolet Malibu Classic inside & out and sometime lost them minutes after getting one. Back in the days, Matchbox & Corgi models were 'Made in England', with much better build quality. That's why these models are still many collector's favourite. I have a huge collection of those 80s Matchbox 1/64 scale models, some of them are still in Mint condition. Corgi, Bburago & Tonka joined the line later on.

I have more than 2000 die-cast models collected over the course of 40 years. My

1. An amazing Audi R8 on the Pit-lane at YAS Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi, UAE

2. Bugatti Veyron during UAE National Day Air Show at Abu Dhabi Corniche, UAE

3. Land Rover Defender during the desert sunset at Al Wathba Hill, Abu Dhabi, UAE

The Inside of My Motoring Passion

Adil Waheed takes us through his extensive collection of diecast model cars.

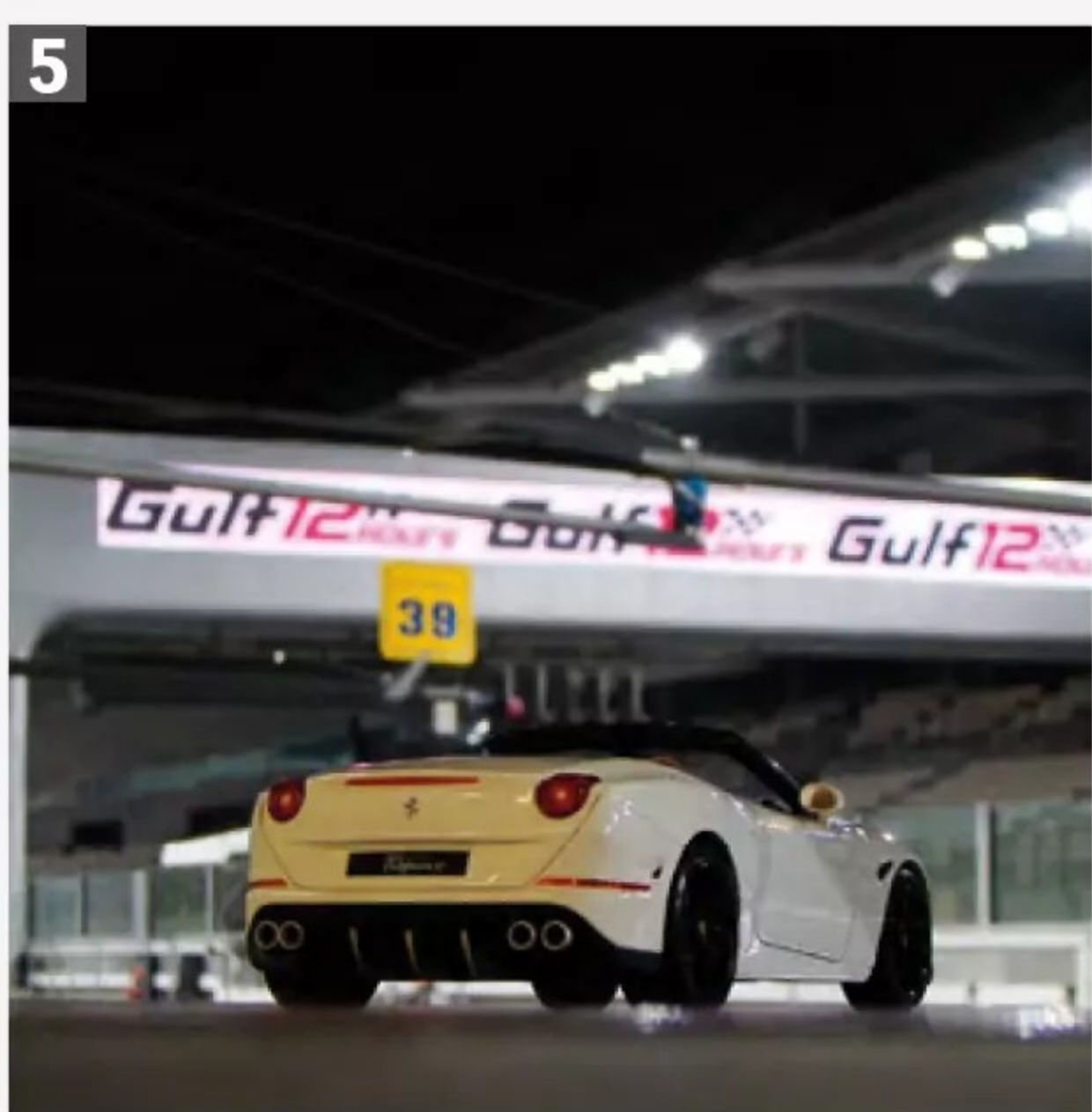
collection spans over five countries, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates, New Zealand & now in the UK. In Pakistan, it is quite difficult to find these die-cast models due to their limited availability & high price. A generous addition into my collection has been made by my elder brother Eng. Omer Naveed (Saudi, UAE & NZ) who also has a deep interest in motoring. A large part of my collection is maintained at my home town in the city of Sialkot, Pakistan. A great deal of models were collected in (Abu Dhabi) UAE when I was residing there for almost ten years.

My particular interest is in 1/18 & 1/24 scale die-cast models collection. The 1/18 collection includes many Classic German, British & especially American Muscle cars

like Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Porsche, Jaguar, Aston Martin, Cadillac, Chrysler, Ford & Chevrolet respectively. Talking about the sports & exotic cars, no collection is complete without Ferrari models. I have a comprehensive collection of Ferrari classic & new models as well as Lamborghini, Bugatti & Pugani.

The 1/24 scale collection has a much wider spectrum with almost complete history line-up of Lamborghini, Chevrolet Corvette, Dodge Viper & Ford Mustang. The verities of other models include Porsche, McLaren, Audi, VW, FIAT, Lotus, Maserati, Chevrolet, Hummer amongst other. This also includes but not limited to a wide range of other various scale models of numerous brands like Kyosho, NOREV, Minichamps, Masito, Tomica, Jada Toys,





4. Ferrari F50 in front of YAS Hotel at YAS Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi, UAE

5. Ferrari California T on the Pit-lane during Gulf 12 Hours Race at YAS Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi, UAE

6. Pugani Huayra on the Grid before the race start at YAS Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi, UAE (Photo Ranked 21st on www.photocrowd.com 'Toys' contest)

7. Dodge Viper cleaned & polished by a professional at a car plant paint shop, UK

8. BMW M5 out in the hot desert evening in Abu Dhabi, UAE

Welly & Kinsmart etc. I do have some motorbikes 1/18 scale models of Harley Davidson, Kawasaki & Honda.

Apart from Bburago Ferrari 1/18 scale models like the 1962 250 GTO, 1987 F40 & Hot Wheels 1997 Enzo, some of my other personal favourites are, the 1968 Vanguards Ford Anglia (1/43), 1984 Corgi Jaguar XJ12C (1/36) & 1969 Corgi Ferrari Daytona (1/36). I also have some other unique models in my collection like the NZG 1/55 scale Grove TM-1500 & RT-760 cranes (W. Germany), Corgi 1/50 scale 1113 Hyster Challenger 800 (G. Britain) & a rare ROS 1/32 scale FIATAGRI 110-90 Tractor (Italy). LEGO is also a part of my collection with those vintage 80s cars & especially the Galaxy Explorer Space sets.

AN INVESTMENT INTO MY PERSONAL HOBBY BANK

When I look at my collection, every model reminds me of its unique tale, how I managed to find it. This passion sometimes involves a handsome amount of cash which I consider as an investment into my personal hobby bank. But the biggest

problem is to manage the space to keep such a huge collection.

Another exciting thing about my die-cast collection is that it gave me a chance to enhance my photography skills in a very different way. That's when I took couple of models to YAS Marina Circuit (host of motorsport events & activities including Formula1 season finale Grand Prix in Abu Dhabi, UAE), and photographed them inside garages, on the pit-lane & on the race track. Furthermore, I have photographed them throughout the Abu Dhabi city as well. Some of the photographs are included in this article with their description. I have also participated in many International Photography Competitions with these die-cast model photographs.

I am also a collector of automobile literature. I have a massive library of more than 3000 brochures, magazines & books from late 70s to date. Some of the special brochures are McLaren Mercedes SLR, Bugatti Chiron, W Motors Lykan Hypersport & Fenyr Supersport, Vulcano Titanium, Fioravanti F100r concept, Pininfarina Bathista, OWL Spark, Koenigsegg Agera R, Lexus LFA, Maybach Exelero, Devel Sixteen & 90s Acura Personal Study Guides amongst

many others. The most comprehensive collection of brochures include, Mercedes-Benz starting from 70s, BMW, Mini, Audi, Porsche, Rolls-Royce, Bentley, Jaguar, Land Rover, Toyota, Nissan, Mazda, Honda, Chevrolet, GMC, Cadillac, Ford from 80s to date, combined from Japanese, American, British and Middle East markets. Moreover, I have made an online facebook forum called 'Automobile Brochures Collector's Forum' (ABCF) for collectors from around the world to share/sell their collection at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Autobcf>.

The collection of motoring magazines starts in early 80s with Modern Motor, Wheels, auto motor und sport & Car magazine. There is a huge collection of American Magazines like Car & Driver, Motor Trend & Road & Track from 80s to date. Back in the 80s & 90s, I use to buy a lot of these magazines from Anarkali Bazar old book stalls in Lahore, Pakistan (which are no longer there anymore). Others include Daimler-Chrysler High Tech



Reports, the BMW/AM/Bentley/Project-the McLaren magazine and many more.

Few books that I would like to mention here are the classic 'History of the Motor Car' by Marco Meatteucci (a gift from my uncle in the UK when I was a teenager in Pakistan), Encyclopedia of American Cars 65 years of Automotive History, Ferrari an Italian legend & a collection of Formula 1 Year Books from 90s & noughties. I even collected automotive stamps sets as well.

Talking about my versatility, I regularly participated in countless motoring events, festivals & exhibitions all across the UAE during the last one decade. I was Involved as a Media Partner for events like Gulf Car Festival, Big Boys Toys & Urban Buildz Car Shows. I also participated in various Driving Experience & Track Days on YAS Marina Circuit & Dubai Autodrome, UAE. Also got media accreditation of almost all major events like Dubai International Motor Show, Automechanika, Custom Show Emirates & Red Bull Air Race World Championship (Abu Dhabi for



9. Lamborghini Murcielago at Abu Dhabi Corniche, UAE

10. A collection of various Lamborghini Models

11. McLaren P1 on an actual McLaren sports car at YAS Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi, UAE

12. Herbie during VW Beetle YAS FUN CUP at YAS Marina Circuit, Abu Dhabi, UAE

six consecutive years) as well as motor sport racing events for on track & pit-lane photography. This gave me a rare chance to meet many famous motoring personalities and Formula-1 team drivers & members. Entire work will be showcased soon on my website: www.awmotorworld.com, same title to be used for all social media platforms. In 2016, six of my motoring photographs were published in 'Arab Tuning Magazine', issue 17.

Now in the UK, the passion continues with the coverage of motoring events like London Consours, Concours of Elegance, British Motor Show, Classic Motor Show amongst others. Also meeting renowned people from the UK motoring industry like Vicki Butler Henderson, Shahzad Sheikh & more.

One of the most exciting thing about my motoring journey is to volunteer as a Motorsport Marshal (involved for more than ten years now). I am a member of Emirates Motorsport Organization (EMSO), Motorsport UK & British Motorsport Marshal Club (BMMC). I have participated 2018 & 2020 Formula-1 Abu

Dhabi Grand Prix as a Specialist Pit-lane Marshal at YAS Marina Circuit & as a Welfare Marshal for 2024 British Formula-1 Grand Prix at Silverstone. I used to marshal regularly during the entire racing season on pit-lane in the UAE, which include major racing events like The FIA World Rallycross Championship, Dubai 24 Hours, Gulf 12 Hours, Ferrari Corse Clienti, Asian Le Mans Series, Lamborghini Super Trofeo, Pirelli Tyre Testing & Formula 3 Asian Championship to name a few.

In addition to that, my motoring passion even dominates my professional career as well. Currently, I enjoy working as an End of Line (EOL) QA inspector for an automobile manufacturing plant here in the UK. This is a great opportunity for me to further enhance and flourish my abilities & knowledge.

On a final note, none of above would ever happened if I haven't got that inspiration from those childhood die-cast models. It has transformed me into a motoring manic. Now based in the UK, I continue my passion in much better way due to its rich motoring history & culture. And for die-cast models, now I can collect more & complete what was left un-finished. My goal is to combine my entire collection at one location in order to exhibit them properly. Besides other things in life, my motoring passion will definitely expand every year. ■



Ford Sierra Rouse

Steve Coles continues his series comparing vintage models with their present day counterparts.

When Ford bravely replaced the evergreen Cortina with the radical, 'jellymould' Sierra hatchback they were keen to promote their new car with promotional 'launch' toys. They managed to get Britain's two big toy car makers, in the shape of Matchbox and Corgi, on board with this to produce these special models. Matchbox released large and small scale high performance XR4i models while Corgi's take on the replacement for the Cortina took the shape of the 5 door hatchback in top of the range 2.3 Ghia trim, complete with the correct triple vent wheel trims on the larger scale version. The Corgi was released in Autumn 1982 to coincide with the launch of the real car, with the initial colour being metallic gold with brown bumpers and sold in unique Sierra branded boxes.

My example here of Corgi's 1:36 Sierra, numbered C299, dates from 1986 and is finished in the light blue livery of Andy Rouse's ICS sponsored entry in the 1985 British Saloon Car Championship. By 1985, Andy was already a prolific touring car driver, having won the British Saloon Car Championship 3 times, with 1985 being his fourth and last Touring Car title. After taking over Pete Hall's Alfa Romeo GTV6 part way through 1983, he struck up a deal with Pete's Industrial Control Services plc company to be his title sponsor the following year; an arrangement that would last 11 years!

Even at a quick glance, the first thing that strikes you about this Corgi toy is that, despite its age, the tampo printing really is excellent. Not only is the white print over blue paint good, the whole livery uses multiple colours and, although along the sides some of the logos are broken by the opening doors,

ABOVE
Both cars share the multi-coloured sponsors logos.

RIGHT
The metallic blue paintwork and superb spoked wheels make this a most attractive model.



Even at a quick glance, the first thing that strikes you about this Corgi toy is that, despite its age, the tampo printing really is excellent.

they are still clear. The tri-coloured 'Shell Oils' logos that are across the bonnet as well as along the sides below the doors are particularly impressive. Andy Rouse's name appears just under the rear side windows, which is brilliantly printed, considering the unusual angles around the top edge of the door just below the window. It's just a pity it should be under the front side windows. There is even a black 'Industrial Control Services' windscreen shade band applied as a separate sticker.

The opening doors come complete with door mirrors and the opening tailgate even features small 'Sierra 2.3 Ghia' badging that uses the correct Ford font. Rather unusually, this larger scale model does not include clear headlamps; instead making do with textured silver plastic set behind the headlight opening. It does however have clear red plastic rear lights which really set off the rear of the model. Overall, the casting is excellent with a high level of cast in details and a good range of features to increase

1: Although finished in similar shades of blue, the Vanguards model is metallic when viewed close up.

2: The profile of the early 5 door Sierra has been well captured. The multi-coloured logos are crisp and accurate.

3: The rather plain rear of the 'toy' version is nicely finished by the clear red rear lights.

4: The roof and bonnet logos could almost be from the same print, despite the size differences.



ABOVE Andy Rouse at the wheel of his winning Sierra



ABOVE Corgi's 1:36 Sierra came as a 2.3 Ghia, complete with accurate wheel trims.



ABOVE This was one of a number of racing liveries applied to it with a generous helping of both artistic



ABOVE The older, larger Corgi shows just how good their printing was back in 1986.



its play value. My gripe with this car is that Andy Rouse never raced a 5 door 2.3 Ghia Sierra; he used the unique 3 door XR4Ti bodyshell. In fact, Corgi around this time produced a number of race and rally liveries on their Sierra Ghia hatchback that should be seen on a 3 door Sierra RS Cosworth.

The up to date model is also from Corgi, and uses the same Vanguards XR4i casting we looked at in the third 'Then and Now'. This one, VA12202, was released in 2015 and looks superb! Ford never sold the Sierra in America but their US luxury brand, Mercury, did import the XR4i for a brief period. They fitted it with a 2.3 turbo engine, hence the 'T' in the name of this version; XR4Ti. The livery is well finished and accurate, bar the omission of the white across the front panel. It also shows just how well Corgi did with the livery of their original 1:36 toy version! This model has the correct stripped out racing interior complete with a pair of bucket seats and roll cage. Why it has two seats is a mystery; as saloon car racers only have a single seat for the driver as opposed to a rally car that would have two bucket seats. This model also has a set of excellent large



spoked alloy wheels and even the tiny 'Dunlop' logos over the headlights.

Ask me which is most accurate; and there's no competition. Ask me which is best; that's harder to answer. I like the level of detail in the casting of the 5 door Ghia and the accuracy of the livery considering it is from 1986 but on balance, for me, the Vanguards wins this one. ■



A touch of class - the Rolls-Royce

Paul Brent Adams looks at the best of British Rolls-Royce and their release into the Matchbox range.

From the 1950s, up until the 1980s, there always seemed to be a Rolls-Royce in the Matchbox range. Usually a large, stately limousine, but sometimes a convertible.

The first model to hold the No.44 spot in the Matchbox Series was a Silver Cloud, followed by the very similar Phantom V. Typical of the late 1950s and early 1960s, the second model was not only larger than its predecessor, but much more detailed, and working features were also beginning to appear.

THE REAL CAR

Rolls-Royce introduced the original Silver Cloud in 1955, with a 6-cylinder engine. The Silver Cloud II followed in 1959, with an 8-cylinder engine. The Silver Cloud III arrived in 1962, with a revised front end. The even more imposing Phantom V was much larger, but generally similar in appearance to the Silver Cloud. It was introduced in 1959, and also had an 8-cylinder engine.

THE MODELS

The number 44 spot in the 1-75 Series went to the Silver Cloud in 1958. The model clearly being based on the original version of the car. It was replaced as No.44 by the Phantom V in 1964; which

would be replaced in 1967 by a GMC Refrigerator Truck. Matchbox would produce another Silver Cloud model in 1985, but with a different catalogue number.

1958 44A SILVER CLOUD

Main recognition points: no windows; no interior; two windows per side; short rear doors; bumpers were part of the baseplate; exposed axles; no working features.

Tall vertical radiator grille, with Rolls-Royce emblem at the top; single round headlights; front and rear bumper over-riders; very small textured grilles just behind the front over-riders; indicator lights atop the front mudguards; high waistline along the sides; boot faired in to the main bodywork; rear number plate on the boot lid.

Originally fitted with metal wheels, then grey or silver plastic. The first model to be given a metallic paint finish, in blue. Painted silver trim front and rear, although this was reduced on later models; with red rear lights.

The black-painted baseplate has ROLLS-ROYCE (with hyphen) - SILVER CLOUD - MADE IN ENGLAND - BY LESNEY in four lines; with No.44 just behind the rear bumper. There are two rivets holding the baseplate in position.

ABOVE
The 1958 Silver Cloud, 1964 Phantom V, and 1985 Silver Cloud II.



LEFT The increase in the size of Matchbox models over the years is shown here, from 1958, 1964, and 1985, along with the increasing use of plastic.

From the 1950s, up until the 1980s, there always seemed to be a Rolls-Royce in the Matchbox range. Usually a large, stately limousine, but sometimes convertibles.



1: The two Silver Cloud models have single headlights, while the Phantom V has twin highlights and a wider grille.

2: At the rear, there are differences in the rear number plate sizes and positions and tail lights.

3: Except for plastic wheels, the 44a Silver Cloud is all-metal without windows and interiors.

4: The original model had exposed axles and a hyphen in Rolls-Royce. Black metal baseplate.

1964 44B PHANTOM V

Main recognition points: clear plastic windows; moulded plastic interior (variously described as cream or ivory); three windows per side; wide rear doors; bumpers were now part of the upper body; enclosed axles; opening boot with plastic interior; suspension.

The grille was broader – square rather than vertical, still with the Rolls-Royce emblem; twin headlights; no bumper over-riders; the grilles below the headlights are no longer textured; indicator lights now set lower on the front mudguards; lower, more sweeping waistline; the boot is now less integrated in to the main bodywork; boot handle on the opening boot lid; the plastic interior of the boot is part of the main interior moulding; rear number plate below the



ABOVE The Phantom V had an opening boot lid, although it did not open very far.



boot lid – this being the only model with a readable number – 1287 PU. Wheels were grey, silver, or black plastic. The model was painted either light metallic mauve, or silver grey. Only the early models had silver trim, which was later dropped.

The baseplate is again painted black. ROLLS ROYCE (without a hyphen) – PHANTOM V – MADE IN ENGLAND – BY LESNEY, in four lines. No.44 again appears behind the rear axle. Just one rivet this time, at the front.

1985 MB31 SILVER CLOUD II

The second Matchbox Silver Cloud was one of two models released in 1985 to tie-in with the latest James Bond film, A View To A Kill. It initially appeared in a special James Bond box. From 1986 it came in a normal Matchbox window box.

This model is considerably larger than the 1958 version. It has clear windows, a plastic interior, Superfast wheels, and bumpers that are part of the chromed plastic base. There is basic underside detail, but no working features.

The model is described on the base simply as a Silver Cloud, but the boxes refer to the model as a Silver Cloud II. It seems to be common for Matchbox vehicles to carry one name on the box (or card), and a slightly different name on the model itself – I have noticed this with a number of models.

There is no longer any mention of Lesney on the underside. Just MATCHBOX – ROLLS-ROYCE (the hyphen is back) – SILVER CLOUD – © 1985 – MADE IN ENGLAND (later MACAU) – and MATCHBOX INT’L LTD, in six lines; with 1:69 at the rear. ■



ABOVE
In 1985, Matchbox made a second attempt at the Silver Cloud. Much larger than the original.

LEFT
The chrome bumpers are showing a little wear, and exposing the yellow plastic under the chrome plating.

BELOW
By 1985, Lesney no longer existed, and the underside only carries the names Matchbox and Matchbox International.

Matchbox No.44 Rolls-Royce

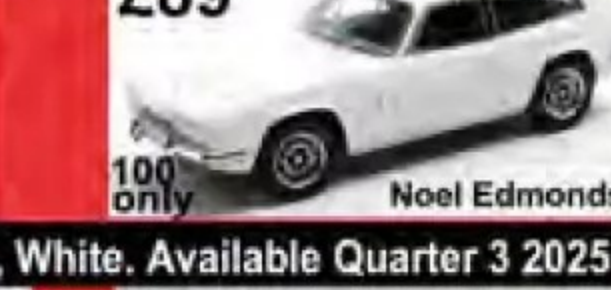
No.44a Silver Cloud & No.44b Phantom V Silver Cloud II

Year	1958	1964	1985
Length	67 mm	71 mm	77 mm
Width	24 mm	26 mm	29 mm
Height	20 mm	22 mm	23 mm
Weight	24 g	30 g	38 g

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No.
75

Superfast 1969-1982

Charting the evolution of the Matchbox Superfast range during the Lesney years.

DODGE CRANE TRUCK

Production: 1970-72

Catalogue: 1970-72

Box Styles: G

Keeping its yellow body from its regular wheels days, Dodge Crane Truck sneaked a further three years in the catalogue in this guise.

Still without a cab interior, the only real variation was that some models were produced with a more orange hook, but that's it.

With its rotating crane jib, it certainly gave good play value, but was eventually replaced by another commercial vehicle for 1973.

FREEWAY GAS TANKER

Production: 1973-81

Catalogue: 1973-81

Box Styles: I, L

This was another futuristic-looking commercial vehicle to enter the range, this time an articulated tanker. However, to make it fit a standard Matchbox packaging, the angular cab was very narrow, and the single-axle trailer needed to be quite short and stubby.

Despite this, it was an extremely popular model,

//

Still without a cab interior, the only real variation was that some models were produced with a more orange hook, but that's it.

//

appearing in the range for nine years and having one of the largest numbers of different liveries and variations.

The first versions had a red-orange cab with a black base and grille, while the trailer had a white upper and red plastic lower. Glazing was usually purple-tinted, but red and amber have been found. Red and white Freeway Gas Tankers normally had Burmah labels, but could also be fitted with Castrol or Chevron stickers.

Later the livery was changed to Shell, with either a yellow or white cab, plus white upper and yellow lower on the trailer. The livery was changed again a few years later, with different versions for different markets.

Freeway Gas Tanker also featured in the Two-Pack range in two different types. In 1977, it was painted olive drab and teamed with radar truck Badger as a Military Two Pack. This version normally had 'High Octane' labels, but could also be found with French or Canadian flag stickers.

Later, the trailer section of the tanker was mated to a drawbar hitch and called Freeway Gas Trailer. This model was only available as part of a Two Pack set, TP-17 Tanker & Trailer, and was coupled to a modified Freeway Gas Tanker fitted with a tow hook. These sets could be found with Burmah, Chevron and, latterly, Shell liveries.

4X4 OPEN BACK TRUCK

Production: 1982

Catalogue: 1982

Box Styles: L

4x4 Open Back Truck was a much modified version of 1981's short-lived Camper. It had a heavily altered chassis, with huge axle boxes that enabled large off-road wheels to be fitted, and a combination roll bar and roof spoiler in black plastic. An extra off-road tyre was loaded in the pick-up bed. The truck was painted a deep yellow shade with black and orange racing decals. ■



A-Z of diecast

This month, **Alwyn Brice** is involved with the letter S.

Scamold was a corruption of the above two words; and if you like your collections to be finite and conclusive, then this long-gone manufacturer might be right up your street.

With a range that encompassed 1930s racing cars, to wit the E.R.A., Maserati and Alta marques, it's a short and sweet collection for anyone interested. Moreover, these miniatures, which date from before WWII, are extremely well made and benefit from a lot of thought and engineering.

C. P. Tappenden, G. J. D. Tilley, M. S. Sutcliffe and A. L. Sutcliffe started this venture at Brooklands, in Surrey, where they had access to the real cars they desired to model; later, the company relocated to Malvern in Worcestershire.

The range of cars were available in silver, white, black, pale green, dark green, pale blue, blue, red or yellow – quite a palette, one feels, for the time. These, were not, however, cheap playthings for the masses, for as mentioned, the degree of intricacy and detail all came at a price.

Running on brass (yes, brass!) hubs that were fitted with rubber tyres, each car could be had with a propulsion system, if it was required. This was, naturally, a more expensive option at the toyshop. Here, a miniature crank handle attached to a spring and rod assembly located on to meshing crown and pinion cogs at the rear axle: it was a simple but neat arrangement with which to furnish the motive power.

But there was more. The lucky owner could opt for a simple suspension set-up or could install a fully sprung system for ultimate realism. At the time, this was quite remarkable.

In 1940, Motor Sport magazine waxed lyrical over the quality of these diecasts, and fully anticipated the production of other cars, each based on a real-life example. Sadly, it appears that this hope came to naught. The company, after a hiatus occasioned by

ABOVE
Classic Ferrari 250 LM by Revell is let down by crude wire wheels and rather unsightly bodywork gaps – but these models were never intended to be expensive replicas.



ABOVE
Safe within a monogrammed plastic case, the Safrir 1901 Delahaye

BELOW
Underside view reveals suspension and power of the Scale Models' Alta



WWII, lasted until the early 1950s, I believe; years later, however, in the 1990s, someone recast the trio in white metal.

FRENCH CHIC

French manufacturers sometimes seem to dominate these pages, so it's no surprise that yet another maker appears here. Safrir (an acronym of Société Anonyme de Fabrication d'Injection et de Recherches) came about in 1960, growing out of an earlier manufacturing enterprise under the name of Jadali. Jacques-Henri Gouttman was the chap responsible for the burgeoning company and he decided to focus on France's pioneering age of motoring, thus bringing to market models dating from 1892 to 1906. Unashamedly patriotic, subject matter was largely French (for that read Peugeot, Citroen, Delahaye, Unic and Renault), although he also included the odd interloper from outside la patrie.

Whilst perhaps not to everyone's taste, these 1/43 scale models did at least benefit from good detailing and one or two innovations, such as the spoked wheels, which were cleverly formed through



TOP LEFT
Sporty little number from Safir: this Renault Corse dates from 1902

TOP RIGHT
ERA from Scale Models with some non-Scamold accessories

RIGHT
Safir's Matra V12, catching up with automotive developments

FAR RIGHT
This Skybirds Renault tank was actually bought in from Johillco (and is out of scale)



ABOVE
Skybirds howitzer and searchlight. Note the thin wire that elevates the barrel on the former



ABOVE
Maserati from Scamold in typical racing red

delicate etching on circles of clear plastic. Some sharing of parts occurred in the manufacturing process, so those seeking true authenticity might be disappointed. Earlier output was diecast, which suits us here, whilst later offerings relied more on plastic for the models' composition. The plastic models went on to embrace more contemporary road and track vehicles, with one or two lovely Le Mans models appearing in the line-up.

With the acquisition of some moulds in the 1970s or 1980s came versions from Hong Kong, which are marked as such.

For today's collector, these early Safir models have a certain naiveté about them that renders them attractive; and the bonus is that they are inexpensive enough, should the collecting bug bite.

REACH FOR THE SKY

Without a shadow of a doubt, the formation of Skybirds and all that appertained to the model range was a stroke of genius. In fact, it was several strokes, coupled with a decent helping of that old standby, that of being in the right place at the right time.

James Hay Stevens was the name behind the idea, himself a keen modeller, who began making wooden kits of aircraft in his late teens. Alfred James Holladay, an enterprising toy wholesaler, faced with the outbreak of war in 1939 and import restrictions, was looking for home-grown merchandise. The Skybirds line of model planes fitted the bill, being both innovative and versatile. Stevens needed an outlet, while Holladay needed shop stock. It was a marriage made in heaven...

From the bare kits there grew publications as well as the Skybird League; and as the years passed, so Stevens came up with more and more designs, as

well as introducing diecast vehicles into the mix. He was an enterprising fellow, continually chasing up aircraft companies for data and information, such was his fixation with accuracy and getting things just right.

Today, the Skybird models may appear crude and lacking in detail, yet eight decades back, with everything in short supply, especially raw materials, the emergence of such a range was little short of miraculous.

The diecast models break down into two sorts: those bought in, and those that were made in house. Taylor & Barrett, along with Johillco, supplied the earlier models (such as the Air Mail Van, the Renault tank and the Ambulance) but Skybirds' own production included a Scammell troop truck, a Lanchester Armoured Car, two different refuellers and a towable anti-aircraft gun. Other diecast ordnance was manufactured; as were everything a small boy might require to build up an aerodrome. Thus you could buy a base, add tinplate buildings, radio masts, petrol pumps and sundry other airfield equipment.

Production continued throughout WWII but Alfred Holladay wound up the company in 1945; it was relaunched by James Stevens and two employees shortly afterwards but within a year had been sold to another party, who didn't continue the lines.

Amazingly, Skybirds models are still to be found today; while most of the aircraft have been assembled, unmade kits still turn up from time to time, much to collectors' delight. As for the diecast models, these can be tracked down fairly easily; and there's even an enterprising soul out there reproducing Stevens' models, along with an array of others 'that might have been.' ■

TOP VINTAGE MODEL

DTCA Chairman, **Michael Driver**, picks another vintage favourite from Dinky...

On various occasions many years ago, I would pass a railway goods yard in Sheffield. Here I would stop and watch goods being loaded and unloaded by cranes including mobile cranes. The mobile cranes took items and moved to put them on wagons or lorries ready for despatch. If like me you had an O gauge Hornby railway you needed a mobile crane. The Dinky Toys mobile crane was a welcome essential and of course other toy manufacturers provided you with appropriate crane models.

The Dinky Supertoys Coles Mobile Crane appeared in December 1949 as number 571 and is seen in the Meccano Magazine of that month. The advert says 'this fine model of a mobile crane has hoisting, jib-raising and slewing movements.' Price 9/11 each. It is reviewed in the Meccano Magazine of January 1950 saying 'the Coles Mobile Crane, Dinky Supertoys No. 571, a remarkable model that will be received with delight by every enthusiast' and it continues 'To complete the picture there is a miniature "driver" seated in the cab, while at the front of the super-structure is a representation of the radiator grille.' It also says 'the miniature reproduces the characteristic movements of the crane in a remarkable manner'.

The crane body is finished in yellow and the chassis in black with yellow wheels and Supertoy tyres. The radiator panel on the front is in black and there are two spot lamps in silver. There is the driver and the body can be rotated full circle and the handles on the sides operate raising and lowering the tinplate jib with its the lifting hook. The hook is in black with a rotating wire hook. Above these handles and cast into the body are 'Raise Jib' and 'Raise Hook'



1949 Coles Mobile Crane

instructions. To replace either of the operating cords the front of the body can be opened at the front to gain access to the handle shafts. The model came in a blue card lift off lid box with internal packing pieces.

In 1954, it alongside other Dinky Supertoys was re-numbered to 971 and now came in a blue and white striped card lift of lid box. The model is lighter yellow and has yellow plastic wheels with grey Supertoy tyres and a silver jib, silver plastic handle rollers, a diecast cast hook and a plastic driver. On the rear of the crane body is the transfer for 'Coles' in black lettering plus black and white warning stripes below. It was deleted in 1966

The Dinky Supertoys model is based on the Coles Ulysses 3-ton Mobile Yard crane of 1949. The company was founded in London

ABOVE Dinky Supertoys Coles Mobile Cranes the first model no. 571 and a later one no.971 with plastic wheels and 'COLES' transfer on the back.

BELOW LEFT Dinky Supertoys Coles Mobile Crane *Meccano Magazine* Advert December 1949.

in 1879 by Henry James Coles who had started out in a sawmill manufacturing factory. The first cranes were steam powered and later came the mobile cranes with diesel or petrol engines and the chassis can be driven forwards and backwards. These mobile cranes were based on a 4-wheel yard crane as used for aircraft support work by the RAF during the war. ■

The Dinky Toys Collectors' Association

The Dinky Toys military models are very collectable including the later issues. They often feature in the DTCA Journal with illustrations. You can find out more or join by visiting the website www.dtcawebsite.com.

KRJ VINTAGE TOY FAIRS

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ebays

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▲ **Item:** Rare GT Spirit Aston Martin GT744 V580 X-Pack Blue 1:18 scale
Condition: In excellent condition with the original box. No obvious scratches or damage.
Sold for: £123 (22 bids)



▲ **Item:** 1:18 Land Rover Defender 90 2020
Condition: Excellent condition, with the original box, no damages to it, with original shine still present.
Sold for: £155.29 (14 bids)



▲ **Item:** 1:43 scale diecast model Rally Car
Condition: Great condition, no scratches or damages to the model, comes with the case and card cover.
Sold for: £3,933.68 (1 bid)



▲ **Item:** 1:18 scale Minichamps 1930 Bentley Blower
Condition: excellent condition with great box.
Sold for: £187.88 (1 bid)



▲ **Item:** Kyosho 1:18 Ferrari F40 Red Re-release
Condition: Brand New, excellent condition, does not come with a box.
Sold for: £271.12 (12 bids)



▲ **Item:** Minichamps 1:18 scale McLaren F1 Team Lando Norris Miami 2024
Condition: New, original box, pristine condition.
Sold for: £175.19 (14 bids)



▲ **Item:** Jaguar E-type Heavy Model Car
Condition: great condition, a few scratches to the paint, no box, no bad damages.
Sold for: £285



▲ **Item:** Fast & the Furious 1:18 scale Toyota Supra
Condition: great condition, wear and tear on original box, but model itself in great condition.
Sold for: £278.19 (6 bids)



▲ **Item:** 1:18 scale Pagani Zonda HP Barchetta Blue carbon.
Condition: mint condition, no box.
Sold for: £312.72 (18 bids)

SALE RESULTS

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■ **Dinky, a boxed Pre-War 60r Empire Flying Boat Lettering G-A DUV.** Although not checked for completeness conditions generally appear Good in a generally Fair box. **Sold for £70, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **WSI Models 1:50 Scale No.9387 DAF XF95 SC 4x2 with Stone Trailer "Henken".** although unchecked for completeness, condition appears to be Excellent, within Good box. **Sold for £80, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **CMR (Classic Model Replicars), a boxed 1:18 Scale Commer TS3 Truck Team Transporter.** "Ecurie Ecosse" 1959 Blue Metallic. Near Mint in a generally Good Plus to Excellent box with internal polystyrene. **Sold for £220, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **Conrad No.103401 Mercedes Benz 1955 Racing Car Transporter with Car.** dark blue, plated metal ramp with correct issue "Brumm" silver Mercedes Car, Good Plus. **Sold for £50, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **Corgi Major 1139, Chipperfields Menagerie, boxed.** Although unchecked for completeness condition generally appears to be Fair to Good in a Fair box. **Sold for £80, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **Danbury Mint, James Bond "007" 1:24 Scale Aston Martin DB5 Special Gold Plated Issue with Chrome Trim.** Excellent in a Good Plus rigid Perspex Display Case with Plinth. **Sold for £160, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **Welly & Ford Motoring Company, a boxed Limited Edition 1969 Trans Am Ford Mustang.** Although unchecked for completeness condition appears Excellent within Good to Excellent box. **Sold for £80, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **Corgi, a boxed 405 Bedford "Utilecon" A.F.S. Tender.** Although unchecked for completeness condition appears Good to Good Plus within Good box. **Sold for £45, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **Corgi, 1:18 Scale Limited Edition Pre-Production Raw Metal Casting DC Comics 1940 Batmobile Roadster.** Near Mint in a generally Good to Good Plus box, outer slip case and internal packaging. **Sold for £120, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **AutoArt (Millennium), a boxed 1:18 Scale Lamborghini Miura SV.** Condition generally appears to be Excellent in a Good box & Good inner packaging. **Sold for £120, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **CMC M-191, 1:18 Scale, Jaguar C-Type (1952-1953), boxed.** Although unchecked for completeness condition generally appears to be Excellent in a Good presentation box & Good outer sleeve. **Sold for £200, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **Corgi Diecast Model Truck Issue comprising No. CC12002 MAN King Trailer in Cadzow Displays livery.** without any obvious sign of fault, in original box. **Sold for £80, M & M Specialist Auctioneers, July.**



■ **Corgi 1/50 diecast model truck issue comprising No. CC12403 Volvo FH Ballasted Tractor x 2, Fertiliser load, in the livery of Heanor Haulage.** Excellent, with original box. **Sold for £100, M & M Specialist Auctioneers, July.**



■ **Corgi diecast model truck issue comprising No. CC12003 MAN Low Loader in the livery of Nederhoff.** Looks to be excellent, in original box. **Sold for £65, M & M Specialist Auctioneers, July.**



■ **Corgi 1/50 diecast model truck comprising Heavy Haulage issue CC15501 Volvo F12 Axle King Trailer.** and Load in the livery of Pickfords. No obvious signs of notable faults in original box. **Sold for £70, M & M Specialist Auctioneers, July.**



■ **Corgi 1/50 diecast model truck issue comprising Heavy Haulage Set No. CC13213 Allelys.** Looks to be mostly without obvious sign of notable (damage) faults. **Sold for £60, M & M Specialist Auctioneers, July.**



■ **Corgi - A boxed Porsche Carrera 6 in the rarer blue and white finish # 330.** The model appears Near Mint with a few small marks in a Fair box with some storage wear. **Sold for £40, British Toy Auctions, July.**



■ **Corgi - A boxed Morris Mini Cooper Competition number 7 # 227.** The model appears Near Mint with a couple of tiny marks. The box has general wear. **Sold for £60, British Toy Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox - Commercial Vehicles Major Pack Gift Set G-9 with BP Petrol Tanker.** M1, Bedford TK tractor & York trailer # M2, Ruston Bucyrus Excavator Excavator. **Sold for £140, British Toy Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox - A boxed Matchbox Regular Wheels 28c Jaguar Mk.X.** A boxed Matchbox price sticker to one side, and some general wear. **Sold for £30, British Toy Auctions, July.**



■ **Dinky - A boxed Gabriel Model T Ford car # 109.** The model appears Near Mint with only minor marks, the box is Fair, the inner tray is still present. **Sold for £30, British Toy Auctions, July.**



■ **A Dinky pre-war diecast No.30a Chrysler Airflow Saloon.** Tyres are cracked. Signs of wear including chips to the blue paint on the hubs and turquoise body. **Sold for £320, Mendip Auction Rooms, July.**



■ **A Dinky Toys pre-war diecast No.25d Petrol Tank Wagon.** With 'Redline-Clico' livery, blue body, black chassis and smooth hubs with white tyres. **Sold for £80, Mendip Auction Rooms, July.**



■ **A Dinky Toys pre-war No.24c Town Sedan.** Blue body black (replacement) chassis, Tootsietoy style hubs with white tyres. **Sold for £50, Mendip Auction Rooms, July.**



■ **A Dinky Toys diecast Foden Flat Truck With Chains.** No.905. having a red cab, chassis and Supertoy hubs with black tyres, grey back, silver trim, in the original box. **Sold for £65, Mendip Auction Rooms, July.**



■ **A Corgi Toys diecast model No.448 B.M.C. Mini Police Van with Tracker Dog.** Having a blue body, red interior, aerial, silver hubs, policeman and dog, in the original box. **Sold for £65, Mendip Auction Rooms, July.**



■ **Matchbox Regular Wheels 75a Ford Thunderbird.** Standard Code 8 Excellent, a few small paint chips in Excellent type D2 box printed by Pembroke Abbey. **Sold for £80, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **Corgi 64 Working Conveyor On Forward Control Jeep.** Excellent, with figure and sacks, box Good. **Sold for £70, Tennants Auctioneers, July.**



■ **Dinky 944 Leyland Shell-BP Tanker.** Excellent, box Good-Excellent. **Sold for £90, Tennants Auctioneers, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 3c Porsche 911/930 Turbo FACTORY COLOUR TRIAL MODEL.** dark olive green body, clear windows, tan interior, graphite grey base, overall Excellent unboxed. Does have paint loss to edge of left hand rear wheel arch. **Sold for £280, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 3c Porsche 911/930 Turbo.** metallic silver body, clear windows, tan interior, 5-arch wheels, 2-line English/French text to striker side panel. **Sold for £80, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 4d '57 Chevy Factory Pre-Production Colour Trial.** metallic silver-blue body. Good Unboxed with considerable chrome loss to plated parts & MISSING REAR WHEELS. **Sold for £160, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 4d '57 Chevy FACTORY WHEEL TRIAL.** red body with black & white "Cherry Bomb" side tampo print, overall Near Mint with some slight chrome loss. **Sold for £110, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 20b Range Rover Police Patrol Twin Pack Issue.** Near Mint with a couple of minor marks to edge of labels, in Good Plus "New" Type J Box. **Sold for £90, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 20b Range Rover Police Patrol MADE IN HUNGARY ISSUE.** metallic silver body with blue "Securite-Rallye Paris-Dakar 83" side tampo print. **Sold for £100, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 27b Lamborghini Countach.** In good Plus to Excellent with some tiny chips to base, in Good creased "New" Type I Box. **Sold for £150, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 8b Ford Mustang Wild Cat Dragster.** orange body (darker shade). Excellent Plus (chip to corner of front bumper, glue just starting to show. **Sold for £70, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 20b Range Rover Police Patrol FACTORY COLOUR TRIAL MODEL.** 017" hood & roof tampo print, clear frosted w Box. triking factory colour trial!. **Sold for £320, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 20b Range Rover Police Patrol.** metallic pearl blue body with black "Securite-Rallye Paris-Dakar 83" side tampo print. Plus Type J Box. **Sold for £100, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 39b Rolls Royce Silver Shadow.** metallic pearl dark red body. Near Mint with minor factory assembly mark, in Near Mint "New" Type K Box. **Sold for £110, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 20b Range Rover Police Patrol.** white body with small lettered orange stripe "Police" labels,. Good Plus with some wear to labels. **Sold for £50, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 20b Range Rover Police Patrol.** white body with yellow stripe Police Shield label to left hand side, "Superfast" label to right hand side. **Sold for £140, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 20b Range Rover Police Patrol.** red body with black & white "Securite-Rallye Paris-Dakar 83" side tampo print, - Mint in Good Factory Sealed Blister Pack. **Sold for £110, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 39b Rolls Royce Silver Shadow.** Gloss black body, clear windows, light grey interior. Near Mint in Near Mint "New" Type K Box. **Sold for £200, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 20b Range Rover Police Patrol.** Clear frosted windows, orange spinner & roof light, bare metal base. Near Mint with usual minor "pitting" to plated body, in Excellent Plus "New" Type J Box. **Sold for £200, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 20b Range Rover Police Patrol MADE IN HUNGARY ISSUE.** Gloss black body with gold "Securite-Rallye Paris-Dakar 83" side tampo print, in Good Plus Type J Box. **Sold for £120, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 25a Ford Cortina MADE IN BULGARIA ISSUE.** metallic red body, clear windows, dark yellow interior, matt black base, dot-dash wheels - overall Mint in Good Plus, "New" Type G box. **Sold for £100, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 45b BMW CSL GERMAN POLICE CAR "POLIZEI".** Overall Excellent (does have a few tiny chips, tampo print flaws), in Good Plus "New" Type J Box. **Sold for £100, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast Aircraft Transporter FACTORY MODEL MAKERS PERSPEX PRE-PRODUCTION PROTOTYPE MODEL.** DESIGN PROPOSAL - yellow body with clear windows, light grey aircraft transport cradle, black front bumper, telephone dial wheels, complete with blue Jet Fighter (unfortunately missing 1 of it's detachable wings) - Near Mint to Mint unboxed. **Sold for £280, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **A Dinky Toys 952 Vega Major Luxury Coach.** Pale grey with maroon side flashes, cream interior, silver trim and cast hubs, boxed. **Sold for £55, Ewbank's July.**



■ **The Professionals ; Corgi 1:43 scale, die-cast limited edition model of Bodie's Mk 2 Capri 3.0 Ghia (silver) from 'Professionalmania'.** designed by Tony Buller to celebrate The Professionals 50th anniversary in 2027, boxed. **Sold for £50, Ewbank's, July**



■ **The Professionals ; Corgi 1:43 scale, die-cast limited edition model of Bodie's Mk 2 Capri 3.0 Ghia (gold) from 'Professionalmania'.** designed by Tony Buller to celebrate The Professionals 50th anniversary in 2027, boxed. **Sold for £70, Ewbank's, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 55d Ford Cortina.** metallic green body, clear windows, red interior, bare metal base with "gunmetal" effect, dot-dash wheels - Excellent with some felt tip writing to roof, believed to have been applied by the factory during the final trial run process, although we have no provenance for this, in Good to Good Plus stained "New" Type K Box. **Sold for £150, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **A Matchbox die-cast model ; Y-27 1922 Foden 'C' type Steam Wagon and Trailer.** for Frasers Home Furnishers of Ipswich, boxed and a matching, modern enamelled tin sign advertising the same company, 28cm x 18cm. **Sold for £25, Ewbank's, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast MB66 Rolls Royce Silver Spirit FACTORY MODEL.** MAKERS RESIN PRE-PRODUCTION PROTOTYPE MODEL, chrome telephone dial wheels - Near Mint unboxed. **Sold for £140, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast MB68 Chevrolet Camaro IROC-Z FACTORY MODEL.** MAKERS RESIN PRE-PRODUCTION PROTOTYPE MODEL chrome telephone dial wheels - Excellent Plus unboxed. **Sold for £120, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast MB15 Peugeot 205 Turbo 16 Rally Car FACTORY MODEL .** MAKERS RESIN PRE-PRODUCTION PROTOTYPE MODEL - white body with trial decals, black painted windows, - Good . **Sold for £110, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 45b BMW 3.0 CSL MADE IN HUNGARY ISSUE.** red body with blue & white BMW hood tampo print, clear windows, lemon yellow interior, matt black base, telephone dial wheels -Near Mint in "New" Type J Box with 2-line English/ French text to striker side panel. **Sold for £150, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 34c Chevy Pro-Stocker FACTORY PRE-PRODUCTION COLOUR TRIAL.** green body with "LIBBY'S UM BONGO" RACING NUMBER 34 TRIAL DECALS- Near Mint. **Sold for £220, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast MB67 Ikarus Coach FACTORY MODEL MAKERS PERSPEX PRE-PRODUCTION PROTOTYPE MODEL.** metallic lime green body, clear windows, good with some paint loss. **Sold for £120, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast MB67 Ikarus Coach FACTORY MODEL MAKERS PERSPEX PRE-PRODUCTION PROTOTYPE MODEL.** metallic lime green body, clear windows, dot-dash wheels - Good with some paint loss. **Sold for £120, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast UNRELEASED Mercedes 300 TE Estate Car FACTORY MODEL MAKERS PERSPEX PRE-PRODUCTION PROTOTYPE MODEL.** All over metallic silver-blue, telephone dial wheels - Excellent with some rub marks to leading edge of roof. **Sold for £240, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 22c Blaze Buster Fire Engine FACTORY COLOUR TRIAL.** dark olive green & brown camouflage body with trial "USA Thunderbolt" decals, black plastic ladder, dark amber windows, graphite grey painted interior & Lesney England base, 5-spoke wheels - Near Mint unboxed. **Sold for £380, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast MB2 Pontiac Fiero FACTORY MODEL MAKERS RESIN PRE-PRODUCTION PROTOTYPE MODEL.** FULLY DECORATED THIS IS THE ACTUAL MODEL USED FOR STUDIO PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE 1985 POCKET CATALOGUE - Excellent Plus unboxed. **Sold for £110, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast MB67 Ikarus Coach FACTORY PRE-PRODUCTION COLOUR TRIAL "COBTRACABTO"**. white body & red roof WITH TRIAL DECALS (not tampo printed), windows have slight smoke grey tint, pale grey interior, black plastic screw-fit Macau base, dot-dash wheels - Near Mint to Mint. **Sold for £80, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **Matchbox Superfast 72e Dodge Commando Delivery Truck FACTORY PRE-PRODUCTION COLOUR TRIAL.** "FOAM UNIT No.10". WITH TRIAL DECALS (not tampo printed), red windows, red plastic Macau base with factory pressed rivet, narrow profile 5-arch wheels - Near Mint. **Sold for £80, Oberon Auctions, July.**



■ **First Gear Construction Pioneers 1:25 scale Allis-Chalmers HD-41 Bulldozer with Blade & Ripper.** although unchecked for completeness, condition appears to be Excellent, within Fair to Good box (some marks, dents and small holes). **Sold for £320, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **First Gear U.S. Army 1:25 scale International 433 Dual Engine Pay Scraper.** although unchecked for completeness, condition appears to be Excellent to Near Mint, within Good box. **Sold for £90, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **NZG 1:50 scale No.466 NZG Caterpillar 797 Off-Highway Truck (New Version).** although unchecked for completeness, condition appears to be Good Plus to Excellent, within Good inner polystyrene packing with Fair card outer sleeve. **Sold for £200, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **NZG 1:50 scale No.357 Demag H485S Hydraulic Excavator,** with figure, conditions generally appears to be Good to Good Plus, within Good inner polystyrene packaging, with Good outer sleeve. **Sold for £150, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **Spec Cast 1:16 scale International Harvester TD-14 (M-3) Crawler Tractor w/Blade "U.S. Army".** condition appears Near Mint, within Good polystyrene inner packaging and Good Plus outer box. Engine covers and crank handle accessories are within top of inner packaging. **Sold for £70, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **Conrad 1:50 scale No.209/70 Liebherr LTM 1300/1 Mobile Crane.** although unchecked for completeness, condition appears to be Excellent to Near Mint, within Good polystyrene inner packing with Good outer sleeve. **Sold for £150, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **Conrad 1:40 scale No.2411 Terex TS-14B Scraper.** condition appears to be Good Plus, within Good Plus box. **Sold for £100, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **Exoto 43 1:43 scale No.EXO00017 1966 Cobra/Bartoletti II Race Car Transporter.** although unchecked for completeness, condition appears to be Good (top rail has become detached in places, otherwise condition would be Excellent to Near Mint), within Good Plus box. **Sold for £200, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **Sun Star The Platinum Collection, 1:18 Scale, 1956 Mercury Montclair Hard Top Police Car.** boxed small front logo has been broken off but is present. Although unchecked for completeness condition generally appears to be Excellent in a Good box. **Sold for £30, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **Kyosho "James Bond" BMW Z8 (1/18th scale) taken from the film "The World Is Not Enough".** finished in silver/grey, black, chrome trim with various working features plus detachable hood - overall condition is generally including box. **Sold for £60, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **Tekno UK Collectors Club No.34 1:50 Scale 9981J Scania R580 "Kevin Guy",** Limited Edition 96/150, with accessories, although unchecked for completeness, conditions generally appear to be Poor to Fair. Drivers cabinet has detached to rig, exhaust, and front bumper and grille has become detached. **Sold for £90, Vectis Auctions, July.**



■ **Tekno The British Collection No.67 1:50 Scale ERF EC10 H527 with Curtain Side Trailer "Tango",** with accessories, although unchecked for completeness, condition generally appear to be Fair due to cab being broken from the rig, within Good to Good Plus (slightly faded) window display box. **Sold for £30, Vectis Auctions, July.**



WONDER WOMAN'S INVISIBLE PLANE

Mike Pigott looks at the Hot Wheels model of the Amazing Amazon's invisible aircraft... or does he? Is it a model, or isn't it? A clever gimmick or a rip off? You decide!

As we have often seen in the pages of Diecast Collector, there have been a lot of superhero models over the years. Most of these have been based on Batman, mainly because he has driven a wide selection of Batmobiles and other vehicles, and these have featured prominently in films, TV shows and comic books. Other heroes have not been as well-suited to diecast vehicles, mainly because they did not use them, or even need them – many heroes could fly or run at high speeds. This has not meant that there haven't been various model vehicles based on them – Superman, Spider-Man, Captain America and The Incredible Hulk have been

ABOVE:
First and second
types of packaging.

well represented in diecast ranges over the years.

One character who has been under-represented in the diecast toy arena, despite having a unique mode of transport, is Wonder Woman. Created in 1942, she remains the most recognisable superheroine, and is one of DC Comics' iconic 'big three' heroes alongside Superman and Batman. However, she has rarely featured in diecast ranges. This may be because female characters did not sell well when the target market consisted of mainly young boys. However, her main mode of transport may also have been a problem, as she rode in an Invisible Plane!

Wonder Woman's Invisible Plane was first seen in her debut appearance in 1942, and was a product



LEFT:
2010 blister pack
with loop to 'hold'
model in place.

BELOWLEFT:
2017 Club Model
showing the
'outline' of the jet.

of advanced Amazon technology from her home on Paradise Island. Initially it was a weird version of a 1940s fighter plane, but in later years it was updated into a modern fighter jet. The plane was used extensively in the comics until the 1980s, but dropped when Wonder Woman's origin was rebooted in 1987. It was later revived in a different form. The Invisible Plane is widely associated with Wonder Woman, as it was used frequently in her 1970s TV show, and in several TV cartoons such as **Super Friends** and **Justice League**.

MODELS

There have been very few Wonder Woman models produced. Corgi Juniors made a rather unappealing model of her driving a beach buggy type vehicle in the 1970s, and various manufacturers released model cars with Wonder Woman graphics. The only attempt at doing the Invisible Plane was a fast-food toy from the 1990s that had a clear plastic plane with a Wonder Woman figure seated inside. More recently, Hot Wheels produced a model of the fighter jet she used in the film **Wonder Woman: 1984**.

HOT WHEELS

For several years now, Hot Wheels has produced an exclusive character model for the San Diego Comic Con, the world's largest entertainment convention. In 2010, one of the Hot Wheels designers came up with a model concept meant as a practical joke: an invisible model of Wonder Woman's Invisible Jet! This was done by producing mock-up packaging with a vac-formed tray showing the outline of jet inside it, mounted on a special backing card. It was posted on the Hot Wheels website as a joke, but so many people thought the idea was 'cool', that Hot Wheels decided to put the 'invisible' model into production as a limited exclusive for the 2010 SDCC.

INVISIBLE JET

The first version was mounted on a typical blue Hot Wheels backing card, with a Wonder Woman logo and an illustration of her standing aboard her plane. Inside the blister card, there was a transparent vac-formed tray insert with an indentation of the shape of a jet. There was a clear plastic strip looped around

where the fuselage should be, to give the illusion that something was being held in place. Underneath the clear tray, and not immediately obvious, was a flat metal weight covered with a paper label that matched the backing card. This metal strip gave the blister card some heft, so it felt like something was contained inside. The metal plate was also packed slightly loose, so it gave a convincing rattle when shaken.

2017 COLLECTOR EDITION

In 2017 the concept was revived as an exclusive offer through the Hot Wheels Collector Club, possibly to tie in with the new **Wonder Woman** movie. It was now packaged on the current style die-cut blister card. This featured a new drawing of Wonder Woman and her Invisible Jet, with a 1940s style logo, on a red and light blue background. The blister pack was now done a different way, with a two-piece insert, showing the upper and lower outlines of the jet. This time the tail was moulded into the blister pack bubble, giving an almost 3D effect. The metal weight was covered by a blue label with a 'WW' logo on the top.

SO, IS IT A MODEL?

So, the question is: does this count as a model, or have collectors been conned into buying an empty packet? Technically, it's both... there is no model, but it's not exactly an empty pack. Personally, I like these items and don't feel like I've been ripped off. They are good examples of a clever optical illusion, and are very attractively packaged. I showed them to a number of friends and colleagues, and it often took a few moments for them to get the joke; they could feel something in there and hear it rattling, but could not see anything. For collectors of DC Comics merchandise, these could make an interesting addition to their collections...just as long as they don't try to open the packs! ■

// One character who has been under-represented in the diecast toy arena... is Wonder Woman. Created in 1942, she remains the most recognisable superheroine, and is one of DC Comics iconic 'big three' heroes alongside Superman and Batman.



TOYFAIR TIMES

FAIRS

6 SEPTEMBER

- **Brecon**, Jackson & Jackson Events, 07967 681080

7 SEPTEMBER

- **Spalding**, J & J Fairs, 01522 880383
- **Malvern**, Bulldog Fairs, 07379 578083

9 SEPTEMBER

- **Hook**, Steve Clements Fairs, 01380 725322/07732 330305

14 SEPTEMBER

- **Rayleigh**, KRJ Vintage Toy Fairs, 07977 646386/07889 901729
- **Ashington**, David Parsons, 07742 609865
- **Walsall Wood**, Transtar Promotions, 01922 643385
- **Rainton**, Jim Corr, 07504 035955

16 SEPTEMBER

- **Wootton Bassett**, Steve Clements Fairs, 01380 725322/07732 330305

20 SEPTEMBER

- **Exeter Matford**, Bulldog Fairs, 07379 578083

21 SEPTEMBER

- **Potters Bar**, Joe Lock, 07866 641215
- **Kidderminster**, Tony Oakes, 01270 652773/07825 631323
- **Worthing**, David Parsons, 07742 609865

27 SEPTEMBER

- **Brentwood**, J & J Fairs, 01522 880383

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- **Ludlow**, Tony Oakes, 01270 652773/07825 631323

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- **Bromley**, KRJ Vintage Toy Fairs, 07977 646386/07889 901729
- **Glasgow**, Jim Corr, 07504 035955

4 OCTOBER

- **Maidstone**, Mike Spencer, 01622 298159/01732 840787

5 OCTOBER

- **Needham Market**, Stowmarket Railway Club, 01379 668657
- **Gateshead**, Jim Corr, 07504 035955

AUCTIONS

6 SEPTEMBER

- **Kings Langley**, Excalibur Auctions, 02036 330913

11 SEPTEMBER

- **Sheffield**, Sheffield Auction Gallery, 0114 2816161

15 SEPTEMBER

- **Rayleigh**, Stacey's Auctioneers & Valuers, 01268 777122

16 SEPTEMBER

- **Newbury**, Special Auction Services, 01635 580595

17 SEPTEMBER

- **Bourne**, Golding, Young & Mawer, 01778 422686
- **Warwick**, Warwick & Warwick, 01926 499031

21 SEPTEMBER

- **Deeside**, UK Toy & Model Auctions, 01270 652773

24-25 SEPTEMBER

- **Ashford**, C & T Auctions, 01233 510050

3-4 OCTOBER

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TOY TALES

Ed Karswell ponders the wonderful world of model collecting.

When finding toys was a treasure hunt

Nowadays, what with eBay and our 'click and collect', Amazon next day delivery, it's easy to forget that at one time things weren't so readily available. In many instances they weren't available at all. I can well remember a boy bringing a HotWheels car into school and all of us wondering what it was and where we could get them.

Compared with today, the media was far more limited so if you didn't see something advertised on TV or in the press you had little idea of its existence, unless of course as above, you had a chance encounter.

First-hand exposure to toys would of course be those in the nearest town or city. Our market town had all the main outlets of the time; Woolworths with its oddball imports, the old-fashioned charm of the Co-op and Footman's which stocked some interesting 'Specials' on occasion. Of course, there were the few independent retailers who offered an eclectic, if often incomplete, range of toys.

Also very popular at the time were mail order catalogues that allowed payment by instalments, thus spreading the cost. My mother and I would pour over these catalogues trying to make out what was being offered via the postage stamp sized pictures and sparse descriptions. Added to this, my parents would sometimes substitute things (and not always for economic reasons) purely out of convenience. For example, if I picked out a Matchbox gift set, they might later spot a similar copy and think no one, least of all me, would notice the difference. As my mate Steve recounted "If there is one life lesson in humility it is opening what you believe to be the holy grail only to find it's a cheap knock off from Hong Kong".

So then, just what were all these great toys we missed out on? Well, I managed to get my hands on a Marx Johnny West Chief Cherokee. This famous range of Wild West archetypes was notable for its well modelled figures and copious accessories. I successfully put in a



request for a tepee to go with him and later a horse. I never saw any more of the range in the store, which today would probably be shut down on the grounds of a diversity deficit. I still have the Chief Cherokee who is one of the few survivors from my childhood toys.

Micronauts, the time travellers from Airfix, were widely advertised at the time and I went looking for them but to no avail. So, when I was offered one for swaps, I gladly handed over some Action Man rifles to one of my mates. He had probably visited some out-of-town toy mecca near Great Yarmouth to acquire it, so it was quite a score. It was also about the same scale as the later Star Wars figures and though it pains me to say, better articulated and modelled.

Matchbox must have had almost total agency in our area as apart from a weak showing of Corgi Juniors, that seemed to be it. At least that's what I thought until strolling through the Co-op's seemingly forgotten toy department where I stumbled upon a French outpost. They were Majorettes of course, each sold inside a plastic case that doubled for a garage. Exotic? Well, you didn't find Citroen DS ambulances every day, that's for sure. As for HotWheels, there was still no sign.

Logistics, as far as toys were concerned was another 1970s bug bear. Whereas shopping for my kids involves just sitting at a computer

scrolling through a warehouse inventory, back then we may have had to travel from one end of town and back again in the hope of finding what we wanted. It made the catalogues available in store look like not much more than government propaganda. This seemingly haphazard style of retailing did throw up some occasional jewels. One Christmas I managed to bag both the Denys Fisher Muton and Cyborg dolls from a bargain basket for £1.50 each. Likewise, an Action Man scale motorbike and sidecar by Cherilea was seized on in a discount store. That was a lot of play value for the money.

So much for the good old days, parents today don't know how good they've got it. A bit of internet surfing whilst watching Strictly and a couple of days later the Christmas list gets delivered on the doorstep in plain boxes. No tears and no freezing cold feet, no agony of indecision... I don't know how they manage it!

Speaking of pain, I couldn't sign off without mentioning Palitoy's famous talking Dalek. As I may have mentioned before (no, really?) the local shop had in fact held a full consignment of them only to run out just before Christmas. That was all I had wanted... one talking Dalek.

I won't mention it again and yes, I'm still having therapy for it, thanks for asking! ■



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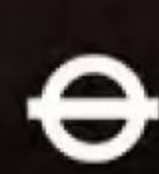
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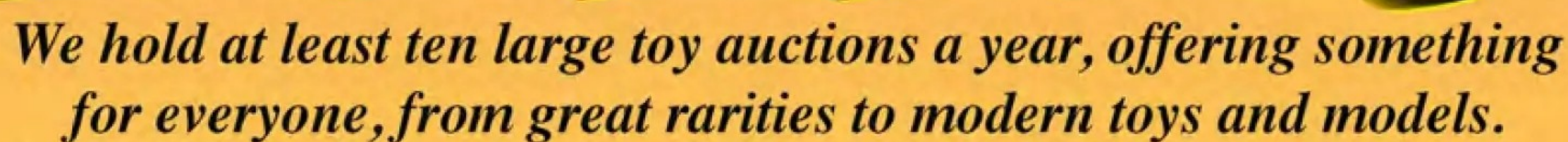
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