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ISSUE 14

AUTO MODELER™ MAGAZINE

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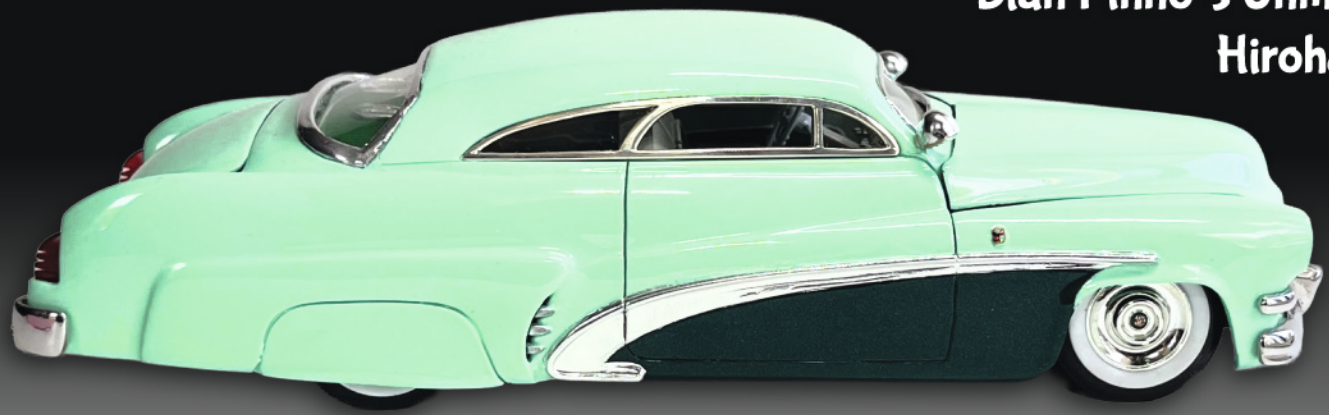
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Claude Thibodeau Builds a SEMA Duster

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History of the Model Car Builders' Museum by Mark S. Gustavson



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Building a Bigger Tent

For this episode of From the Small Desk, we want to shine a light on a group of Modelers who are growing our hobby by bringing the love of building car models to groups of people who don't attend model shows.

Scale Model Car Exhibition Group

Next time you are wandering around FaceBook looking for a new car modeling thrill in Northern Utah, check out Scale Model Car Exhibition Group. This group of dedicated car modelers have a great mission. They are dedicated to expanding our hobby. The team travels to car shows, museums, libraries, art galleries, festivals and other events where they display their models and give modeling seminars to help bring education and awareness to the hobby.

The SMCXG team partners with art communities and galleries, museums, universities, schools, hobby shops, clubs/contests, and 1:1 car shows. All with the intention to delight their audience and grow the model car building community, all at no charge. They fundraise to support their events.

Scale Model Car Exhibition events feature professional displays that feature: Hand built model cars, Art Gallery, Kit and tool displays, Hobby accessories, Live building, Make and Takes, and Public workshops.

This is an open group that welcomes modelers of all ages. Join their FaceBook Group and stop by to see them at a Utah event. https://www.facebook.com/groups/ScaleModelCarExhibition. Credit: Scale Model Car Exhibition Group FaceBook Page.





George Porter, David King, Dick, Engar, Lynn Koberna and Paul Bringhurst seen here are just a small part of the team. Thank you for all you do!

AUTO MODELER MAGAZINE YouTube GUIDE

- Luka Cee Channel - Build ups, Interviews, Unboxing, Club coverage, and more
- Model Car Muse - Build, tools, photography tips. Build coverage. Interviews.
- hpiguys Workshop - Box stock builds and unboxings of upcoming kit releases.
- N.Y.S Modeling - Show Coverage, build ups, Interviews
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- Blue OX Model Shop - Build Reveals, Unboxings, Model Car Commentary
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- Chuck's Hobby Spot- Car Modeling Tips, New Kit Reviews, 3-D print reviews
- Tim Nolan's Ratdaddy Studios - Showrod, Hot Rod, and Rat Fink builds.
- THROTTLE POWER - Show and event coverage. Model and 1:1 cars.
- The Autistic Modeler - Pre-release kits from Round 2 models, Rare and vintage unique kits to build, Tips and tricks.
- Scale Model Outlaw Channel - Build ups, Tips, Product reviews, Show coverage.
- Scale Model Experiment - Model build ups, Tips and Tricks from 20yrs. of modeling.
- Laser Creation World - Modeling with plastic models vehicles, tanks, planes, ships and figures. A great source for inspiration and ideas
- Scale Rodder Collective - For the collector, builder, or just curious - something for everyone.
- Right On Replicas - Great Kit Reviews galore!
- Manny's Scale Modeling - Products reviews, Paint Reviews, Built ups, Stash updates.
- TheModelingHermit - Crafting cars, buildings, and landscapes into scenes with a story that gives them life. It is
- The Arterake. Model cars, How to's and other things model car related. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glm0MB1u3Ks
- Model Car Mania Podcast on Apple - Building and painting car models, current projects, and hobby news.
- SJs Lottery Models - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpmvSAOPGCI31AVhd-oeVXQ Model building. Model car shows. 1:1 Hot Rod shows Hobbies
- Model Building in Retirement - For any model car enthusiast or those wanting to learn this hobby
- A4 Garage https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEvh_cq_mDA This is one of the best hands on building channels. Amazing work.



MODEL CAR COMMUNITY GUIDE

Forums

- Spotlight Hobbies Message board. Old school presentation with lots of conversation and activity. https://board.spotlighthobbies.com/
- Coffin Corner. If you like Showrods, this is for you. https://coffincorner.proboards.com
- Modelers Social Club Forum - Caters to all types of model builder. Check out the model cars page. https://modelerssocialclub.proboards.com/#category-2
- Model Cars magazine - A very active forum dedicated to model car building and discussion.
- Model Car Makers - Formerly the MCM forum with a new look

Facebook Pages

- Auto Modeler Magazine Group - Official. Public
- Luka Cee's Model Car Hobby Headquarters. Public
- Model Building Fanatics. Public
- Tamiya Fujimi Aoshima Model Kit Group. Request to Join
- Luka Cee's NASCAR Modeling Hobby Headquarters. Public
- Wes's Model Car Corner. Request to join
- Scale Survivors - Vintage Built models. Public
- Model Building Fanatics. Private
- Show Rod Model Kits - Public
- Scale Auto Dude - Public
- Hobbydude 007 Scale Models / Mark Batson

Department of Oops

The KAMS coverage in issue #13 should have been credited to new Auto Modeler Magazine team photographer, Ken Sweeny. Be sure to look for Ken at shows in the Kansas area. Welcome aboard Ken!

Do you have a new product that needs to be seen?
Drop us pictures with your story at contributors@automodeler.net

Take Your Build Off-Road

Ready to take your workbench off the beaten path? Iceman Collections' new **Baja Bug** kit brings classic VW attitude and Baja-style fun to your next build. With more than 40 pieces, this full kit gives builders plenty to assemble, detail, and customize into a Baja Bug that's sure to stand out. It's fun, it's different, and it's one you'll want to make room for in the stash. Get ready to kick up some dust! Available exclusively at icemancollections.com."





1/25 Scale Quad Al
Scale Speed Works Resin

This beast was the world's most powerful piston car according to the Guinness book of world records. (The fact that it never moved under its own power did not matter.) Quad Al is now available from Scale Speed Works resins for $60.00 plus shipping. These are print to order, so payment puts you on the print schedule. We received our kit in 4 weeks. There were no communication issues. Once the kit is ready, buyers will receive a tracking number. An examination of the kit showed there would be clean up needed on a couple of the smaller parts. Send your inquiries to: skunkworks4u@live.com



Building A Better Slapper Bar

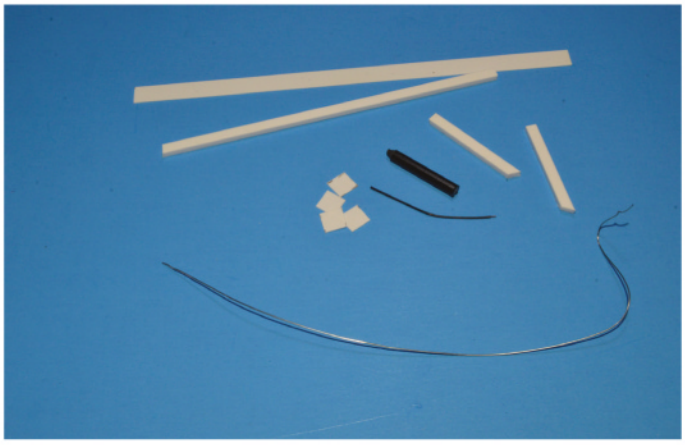
By Dan Himmel

Slapper bars. We've all seen them; They were a staple of the iconic '70s Muscle/Street car look. They're still around today. Often painted yellow, those rectangular tubes attached to the axle and spring, the black rubber biscuit smashing the front of the leaf spring to keep the rear axle from torquing skyward. Lakewood Industries was the name to have, but lots of brands found their way under many a muscle car.

For modelers, slapper bars have been available in several kits and from the aftermarket. So what's the point of scratchbuilding them? Maybe you enjoy the challenge of creating models from raw materials. Maybe, like me, you really don't like cleaning up other people's messes, and would rather just deal with your own. Perhaps you can't really afford to order them elsewhere. Maybe you just don't want to wait! Or, maybe you just want something a little more detailed, a model in itself, perhaps.

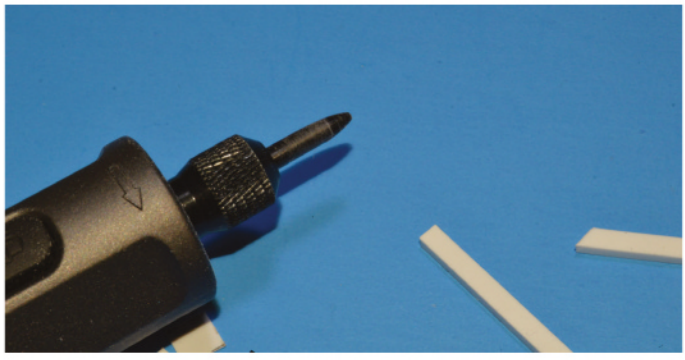
A couple of things worth noting: The slapper bars here are what is called a "Universal" design. GM F and X-bodied cars use a different design, which can easily be found online. You'll need to gather research photos, because while they're plentiful, they aren't ours to publish.

Here, we'll show you how to make a set for yourself. A pair can be built in under an hour, probably with materials you already have on hand. Let's gather some tools and materials, and get rolling!

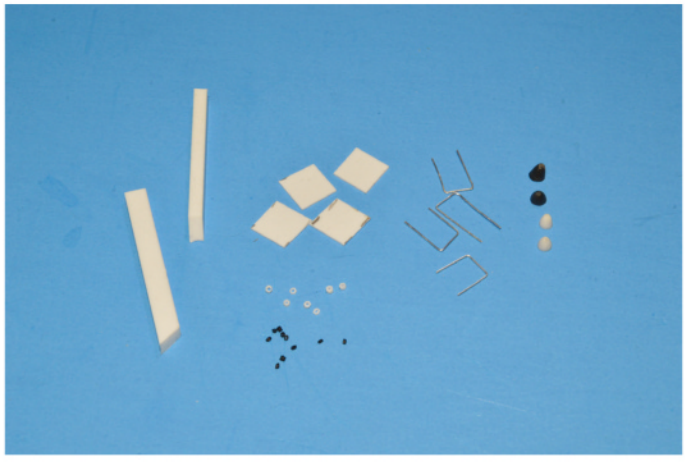


Gather the following materials:

- 080"x.125" styrene strip, to make the bars.
- 015"x.250" strip to make the mounting plates. That's a bit wide, but not so wide as to be a distraction. The actual plates are about 4-1/2" square.
- A short length of .015"-.020" wire is used to form the U-bolts.
- Wire insulation can be used to make the nuts for the U-bolts.
- 080" plastic rod, or suitably-sized sprue is used to make the rubber snubbers.



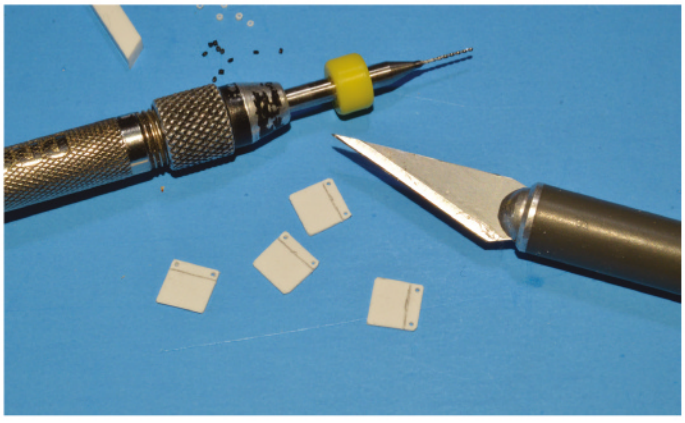
Use a hobby tool to taper the rod/sprue to shape.



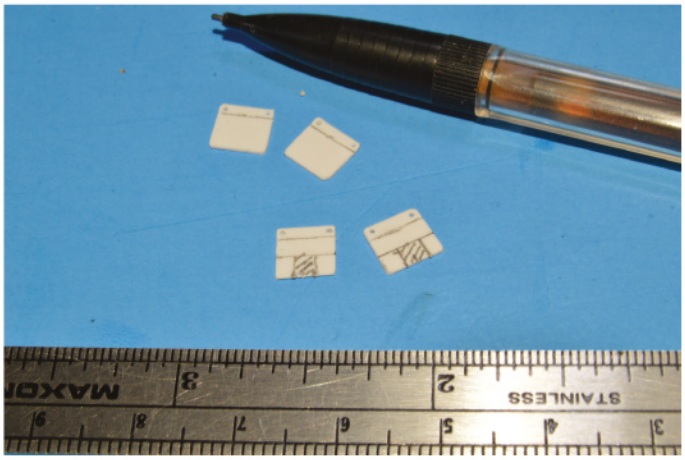
Here are the components, cut to size. Cut the .080" stock to approximately 1.125". The angle is 60 degrees. It's important to remember that the snubber will align with the spring eye. The bars should be cut long enough to accomplish that.
Cut the .015"x.250" strip into 1/4" lengths.
Cut the wire, so that it's long enough to go over the top of the springs, and extend through holes you'll drill through the plates. The wire insulation just needs to be cut short enough to represent nuts. Or...



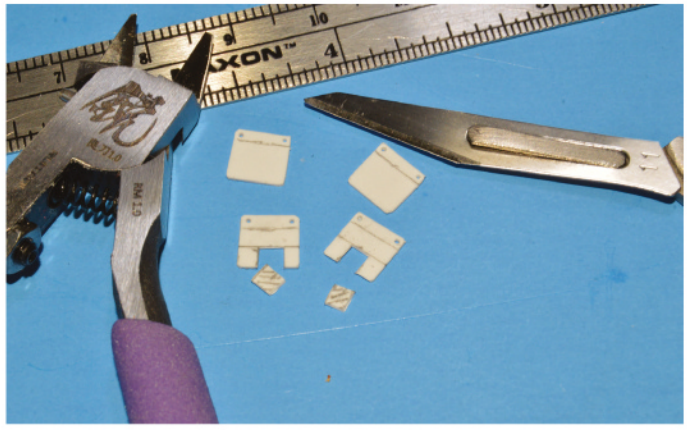
If you have the means—either a lathe, or a tool like this one, you can bore some .030" hex stock, so that it fits over the U-bolts, or, use your favorite aftermarket nuts. You're now ready to build! (*Editor - A carefully placed starter divot made with a sharp #11 blade works too.*)



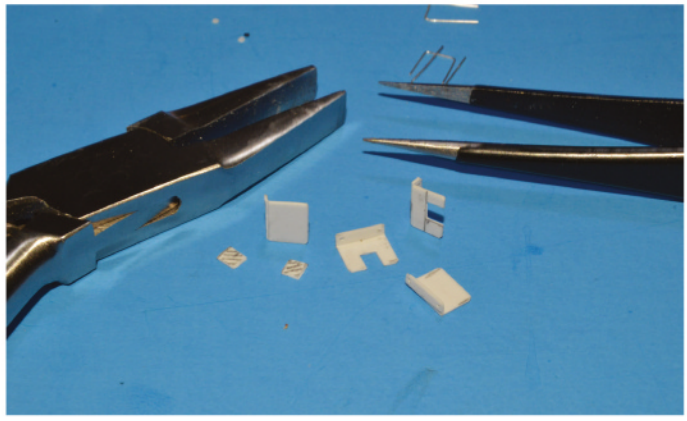
Begin by drilling two holes for the U-bolts in the .250" squares. I like to ease the corners of the plates. I think they look more finished. Now, very lightly scribe a line below the holes, 1/16" from the *edge* of the plate.



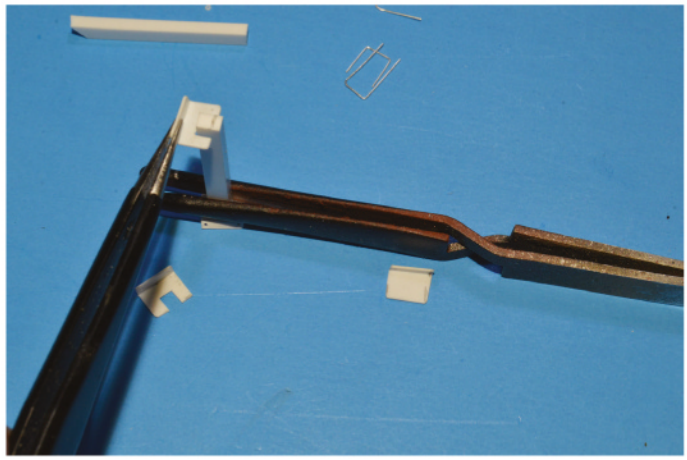
Mark the center of the plates, then make a line 3/32" from the bottom of two of the plates. Now, center the bar on the center-line, and mark each side. You'll have a little box, like the hatched boxes shown here.



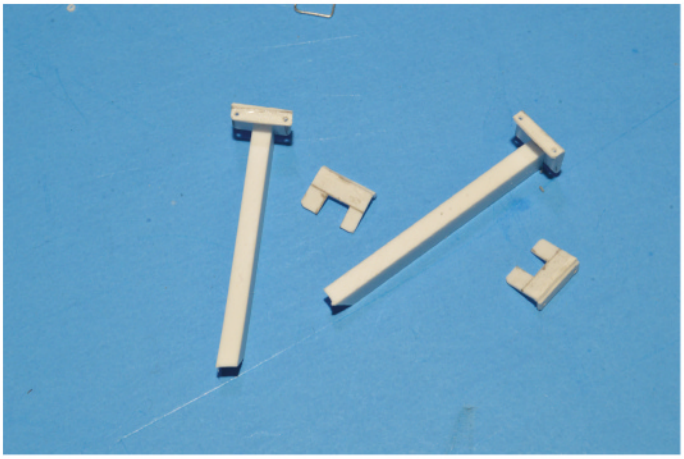
Remove the squares. Single blade cutters and a knife and straightedge make short work of this operation.



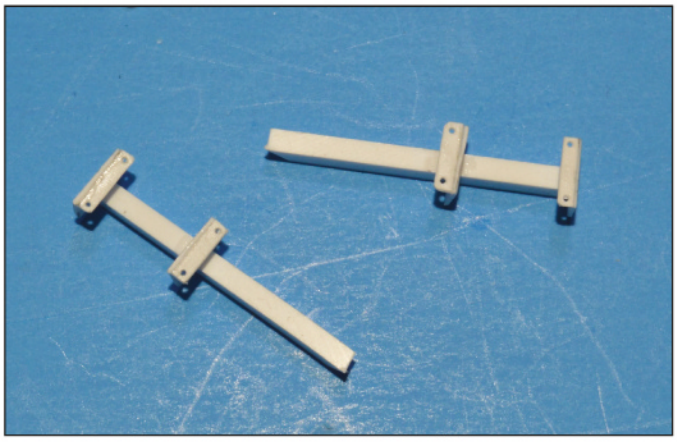
Use something with a smooth, straight jaw to very carefully fold the plates along the score line you made, earlier. Bend it to 90-degrees, then place a little plastic cement along the fold. Once it's set for a while, dab a small bead of superglue on the outside of the fold for extra strength.



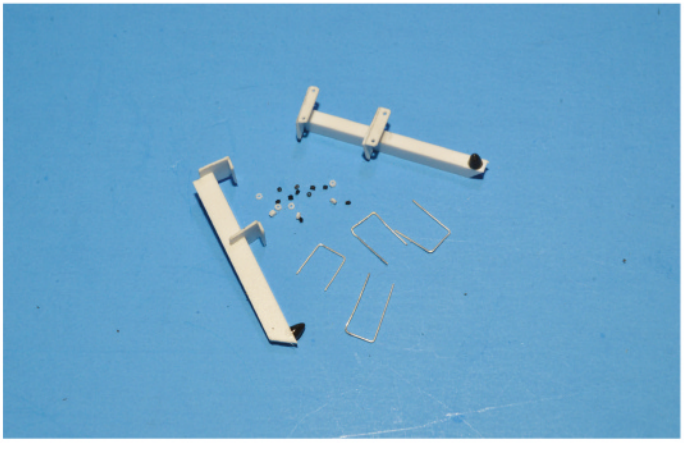
Use one of the notched plates (now brackets!) to mark the rear of the bars. This mark is to locate the rear bracket at the proper elevation.



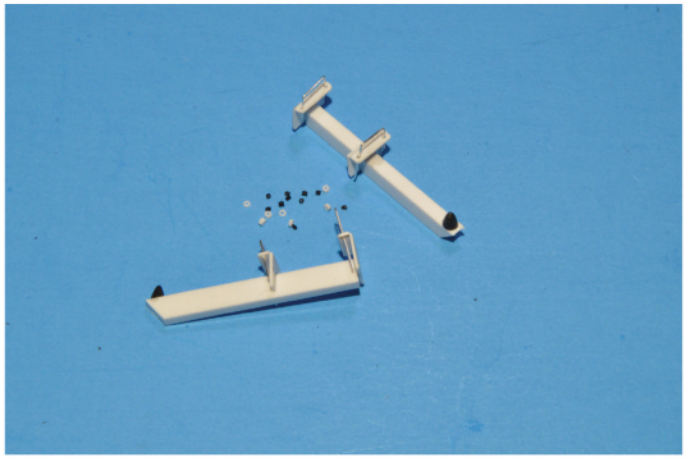
Cement the rear brackets to the bars, using the guide lines.



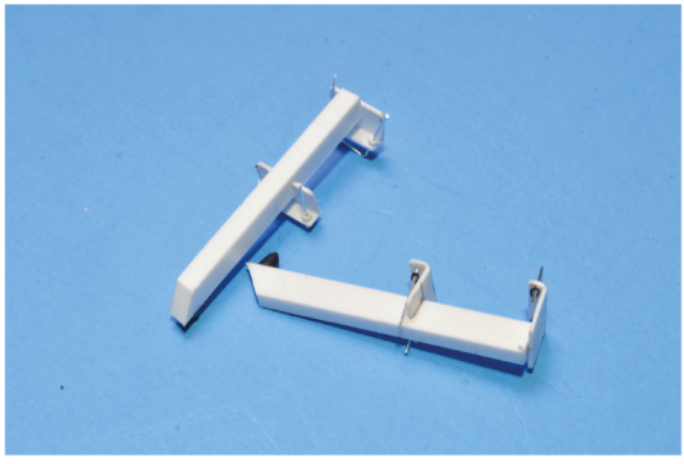
Slip the forward brackets over the bars 11 scale inches forward of the rear brackets. This represents the distance on standard bars. Cement them in place. I used a dab of gel superglue to locate them, then added a bead of UV activated superglue for strength. Now's a grand time to clean these up, and paint them. We won't be doing that here!



Cement the snubbers in place. The snubbers should align with the spring eye.



Bend the wire to align with the holes. At this point, you'll install the slapper bars to the springs. Install them to the spring and axle assembly, prior to installing that to the chassis, for greater ease of assembly. Optionally, you can simply glue the bars to the springs, and fake the mounting hardware. What is modeling, if not an illusion show?



The fully-assembled bars with fasteners in place. I did one of these with bored .030" hex stock nuts, and the other with wire insulation. Most observers won't ever notice that you've used insulation, so hex "nuts" are personal preference. That said, if you're competing, you'll want to use hex fasteners.

Time to drop the clutch and light-em up. ■



MODEL CAR SHOW AND SWAP MEET

November 14, 2026

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

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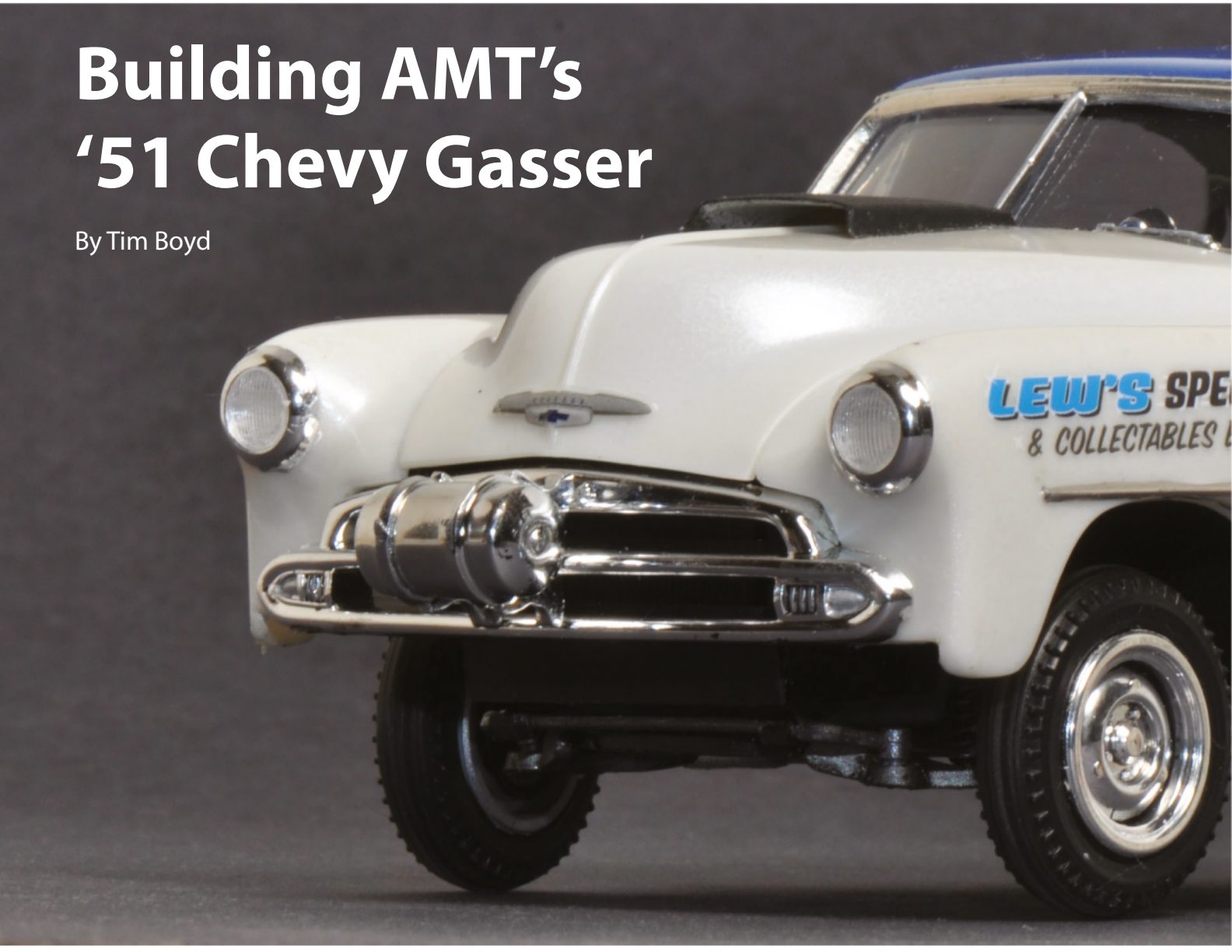
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Scale Auto Builders Association



Building AMT's '51 Chevy Gasser

By Tim Boyd



With its financial footing back on solid ground courtesy of its best-selling Semi-Tractor and Trailer kits, AMT's new leadership laid out a highly ambitious new product plan for the 1975 calendar year. But what would those kits be?

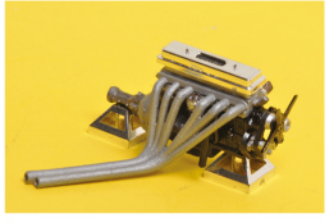
AMT's marketing department had observed a growing number of builder requests for new kits of early 1950s Chevies and Corvettes. So when the 1975 new products announcement broke cover, we found that 1953 and 1955 Corvettes made the grade, along with three new 1951 Chevy kits. This was huge news as AMT had not introduced any new 1950's Chevy tooling over the entire previous decade.

Builders were hoping for a return to AMT's vaunted 1960s 3-in-1 Trophy Series format where each kit contained three building versions. When the time came to open the new boxes, they found less…and more. The less was only two building options in each box, while the more was now three separate body styles inside three kits instead of just one kit and kit body (think AMT's 1955 Nomad). In this case, it was a two-door fastback sedan, a convertible, and the subject of this kit review, the top of the line 1951 Chevy Bel Air hardtop.

The popular belief out here in the kit collector/builder world has often been that the model companies were run by people who don't know cars or modeling. As these new kits debuted, I had just started to do some contract work for AMT, and my experience was completely different. Their Troy Michigan offices and plant were brimming with real car guys and gals, and while they were not infallible (as we shall see in a moment), they were much more tuned into the auto enthusiast world, full size and scale, than any of us suspected.

All you had to do was look at the new box tops. While the fastback and convertible kits included customizing parts clearly influenced by Ray Goulart's timeless custom 1950 Oldsmobile convertible, the new hardtop kit had the vibe (if not the exact details) of Gene Schwarz's E/F Gasser that was a frequent NHRA class champion winner from 1964 onward. Under the hood was the only Fisher OHV conversion to ever make it into a 1/25th scale kit.

OK, so that was then, and today is just over five decades later, plus this Bel Air kit has been reissued at least 17 times over that period. What's the big deal? Well, as they say, timing is everything. Today, street and track driven 1950's era "Gassers" are arguably more popular than ever, and hiding under this kit's dynamic new box art and decal sheet are all the parts for a relatively easy to build, yet little known to the modeling world, 1950s Chevy Gasser!



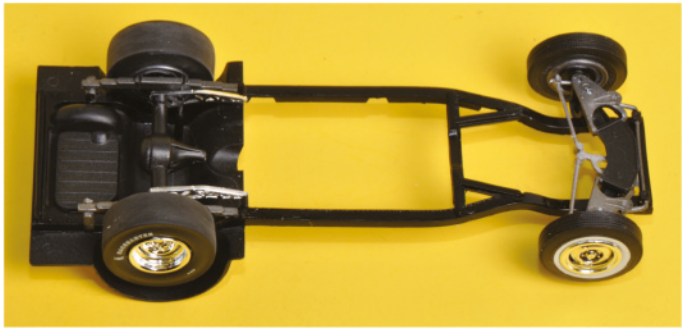


Construction begins with a 22-part Chevy I-six – the most detailed 1/25th scale six cylinder ever at the time the kit was designed (how many kits have ever, even to this day, included the 1950's style road draft tube…well, this one does.). Only the engine's chopped off crankshaft pulley (presumably to clear the front crossmember) warranted realism penalty points. Comprising the rest of the first page is the assembly sequence for the Gasser version engine – including that uber-rare Fisher OHV conversion. Beyond the bespoke two-piece cylinder head and the plated, embossed "Fisher" valve cover, also present is a gnarly six-pipe header, a side-

draft Hilborn fuel injection setup with a separate belt driven fuel pump, and a "dual distributor cap". Of note, modern research at least suggests that this Fisher conversion was designed for the similar, but slightly larger GMC Six, while the similar Chevy six version wore Clifford branding with fuel injectors canting upward at a 45 degree angle. In any case, this Fisher setup is a very cool piece of kit (pun intended!).



Moving on, the interior assembly sheet shows one of AMT's first ever platform-style interiors – where separate, highly detailed door panels are assembled to a floor pan, instrument panel, and rear package shelf. Front and rear seats show the correct Bel Air upholstery pattern, not the lesser series design in AMT's companion fastback and convertible kits. Separately molded pedals and a detailed steering column/shifter complete the showroom style interior. For our Gasser builder, a three-piece roll bar now occupies the open area where the rear seat would otherwise reside, and a large, plated floor shift and boot, tachometer, and three-bar Moon style steering wheel and column are added.



The chassis and suspension assemblies occupy three separate presentations of the assembly guide which is illustrated in the classic 1960's AMT style. A mostly stand-alone frame (only the floorboard over the rear axle and trunk floor is molded with the frame) provides the basis for a 7-piece front suspension that includes a separate anti-sway bar. Out back, the rear leaf springs, axle, and shocks reside. Other features include a single exhaust tube/muffler, front and rear splash pans, and the distinctive early 1950's Chevy tubular air ducts that reside in the engine compartment built from left and right inner fender pieces. For the Gasser version, separate front kingpins and rear shackles deliver the appropriate raised ride height (not all Gassers had tube front suspension), along with plated traction bars, drag-specific shocks, and a dual coil for the firewall.

A modestly detailed exterior offers three choices for the rear fender openings – skirted, stock non-skirted, and instructions to cut out clearance for the Gasser drag slicks. Unfortunately, the overly thick molded rear roof and c-pillar depth leave the rear backlight in an unrealistic, sunken location, the only real drawback of this kit. Non-plated steelie type wheels with Chevy hubcaps, plated Keystone Kustomags, and the original kit release's plated shallow and reversed wheels are the choices.



Level up to "Gasser Plus" using simple parts swapping

With just a little extra building time, you can take the AMT 1951 Chevy Bel Air assembled with the Gasser build option, do some simple additions and changes, and deliver a more convincing and creative result. Let's call it the "AMT '51 Bel Air Gasser Plus". Here's how you can do it.



1. Given the cost of new model kits these days, we'll limit our parts swapping to just two other kits, both

from Round 2 and both reissues of AMT kits originally tooled in the 1960s. These are the AMT Edsel Funny Car (AMT132, issued in 2026), and the AMT 1949 Ford "Gas Man "(AMT1022/12, issued in 2016).



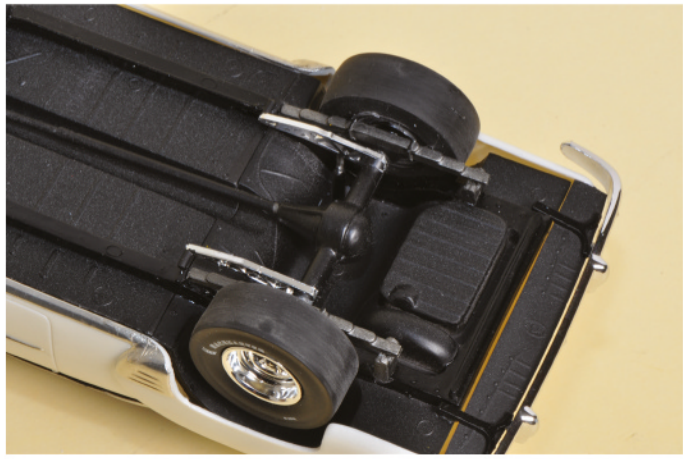
2. You can easily add further Gasser flavor to your Bel Air model with some simple parts swapping – such as front tires, Moon fuel tank, traction bars, parachute, and wheelie bars from the AMT Edsel Funny Car, plus decals and hood scoop from the AMT 1949 Ford Coupe "Gas Man".



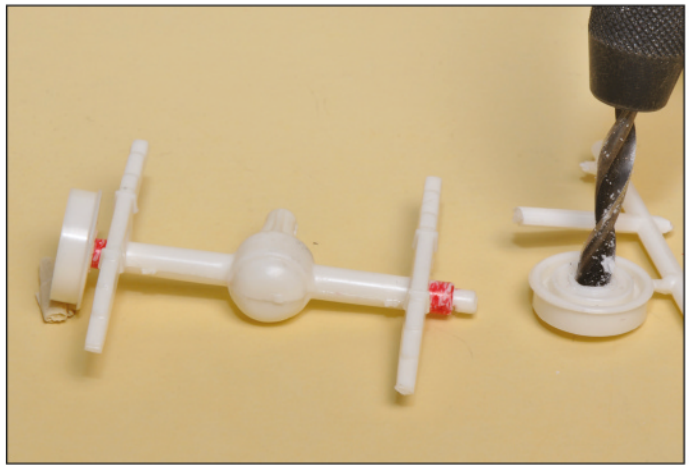
3. Next, let's lighten up that front end to represent reduced 1/1 scale vehicle weight and to deliver improved rearward weight transfer and traction. Start by discarding the Bel Air kit's front bumper and side shields during kit assembly. (Some racers go a step further and remove the grille bars themselves, but we'll keep our upgrade project relatively simple for now.)



4. Mount the "Moon" style fuel tank from the Edsel Funny Car kit directly to the kit's upper and lower grille bars, using Five Minute Epoxy (so you don't have to scrape the plating off the grille for proper adhesion). The hood scoop comes from the AMT 1949 Ford kit; the only modification here is to file a very small "V" shaped indention in the base of the scoop at the rear so it fits flush to the Bel Air hood.



5. While the Bel Air kit already comes with a slightly raised ride height rear suspension, relatively compact traction bars and narrow hollow rear slicks, let's employ a more aggressive setup using the wider slicks and traction bars from the AMT Edsel funny car.



6. To get the wider slicks to fit inside the rear fenders, I shaved the inside thickness of the rear fenders, but here I went a step further. By enlarging the mounting holes on the Bel Air kit inner rear wheels with a drill as seen here, this allows the tire/wheel assembly to slip inward (onto the red tinted area) on the rear axle for added clearance with the body. (Alternatively, you can radius the rear fenders as shown in the kit instructions.)



7. Here's the result. We used the Bel Air kit plated rear open reverse wheels and inner wheels (from the previous step) with the slightly wider hollow rear slicks from the Edsel Funny Car kit. The new traction bars, again from the Edsel kit, fit without further modifications and are typical of the components seen on 1/1 scale drag Gassers in the mid to late 1960's.



8. To further accentuate the "Gasser Plus" theme, let's add the parachute (with release line) and the mid-1960's style solid rear wheelie bars from the Edsel Funny Car kit. You could go a step further by adding the parachute anchor straps that run to the underbody frame on some 1/1 scale drag racers.



9. Stop here if you want a Street-style Gasser theme build, representative of the some of the cars you'll see tooling around your regional GoodGuys event each summer. But how about adding a bit more flavor to our Gasser Plus project?



10. I found decals that would work in the AMT 1949 Ford Gas Man kit. Again, they are used straight from the box, except that you'll need to cut the "Fast Cats" and "Racing" decals into two separate pieces to clear the bodyside molding on each side. Use the suggestions shown here, or similar ideas, to give your AMT '51 Gasser model a "Plus" theme of your own.

There are some compromises as is typical of AMT kits from this era. Parts fit is not all that precise, and the engraving is not all that crisp, either, But for a relatively easy way to deliver a typical mid-class Gasser replica with a design that works both back in the day and in today's vintage racing events, this is a kit you just might want to check out. ■



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Story told by Stan Pinho
Photos by Ken Sakai

An Unmatchable Hirohata Merc Replica

The Hirohata Merc is widely considered the most famous custom Merc of all time. This iconic car was built in the Barris Brothers' shop during their lead sled heyday and it graced a multitude of magazine covers before it was sold, repainted and languished on a used car lot where it was recognized and stored, unseen for decades. In the '90s, Rod and Custom editor Pat Gahnal found and facilitated the restoration by owner Jim McNeil.

Take Me on a Sea Cruise

Stan Pinho has been building models since he was eight years old. Stan's dad was an excellent model builder and always encouraged him to build models. He would always say (it's only plastic) you can do anything with it. Stan always remembered those words.

35 Years ago, when Stan decided to build a model of the famed Hirohata Merc, he knew that there would be some extensive modifications and fabrication needed because there are no '51 Merc model kits. He started off with an AMT 1949 Mercury kit, but Stan didn't really know how far he was going with this build. Turns out, he went to ends that no one else has ever reached. Read on.

Using a stack of reference photos, Stan started at the rear by extending the rear fenders with layers of sheet plastic. To cap those off, he formed the tail light housings from brass rod. The rear fender lips were cut open and formed to match the real car. The skirts were made from sheet plastic and a lip was made from brass rod on the bottom. The corners of the skirts were made to taper out to a point and flush fitted exactly like the one to one car.

The front fender body line was sloped down and the step down on the door was filled with plastic. The section between the rear part of the door and front of the quarter panel was cut out and filled to follow the new body line.

The next task would be to create the whole front of the car. The front part of the hood was shaped with more sheet plastic then brass rod was used for the top lip that runs down to the front and underneath the hood. The headlight buckets were extended with sheet plastic and the headlights were then frenched into the buckets.

Next would be that beautiful chopped roof line that George and Sam did back in the fifties. The roof was first cut completely off. The A pillars were cut and the B pillars were taken out. The rear window was cut out and went into the scrap box. A new rear window was formed from sheet plastic to resemble the '51 rear window that is the stock height and leaned forward. The trunk and hood got hinged.

The Buick side trim was then made as well as the three spears that come out of the rear fender opening. Stan also

made the small Barris crest on the sides of the front fenders. When it was time to create the famous curved side window frames, they were first made from sheet plastic and the '51 bumpers were too. Those get an update later, years later.

After that was completed the model sat as life took over for the next twenty years. One day Stan ran into his friend Greg who is heavily into model building. They talked about models for a while and he invited Stan to a model club meeting. The meeting went great and motivated Stan to get back into the project that had been stuck in a box for years. After twenty years of waiting, the Hirohata project saw daylight once again.

Aint Nuthin' Like the Real Thing, Baby

Stan started by massaging the body with automotive body filler to get all the lines to where he was satisfied. When the body was primed and ready for paint, Stan felt that no matter what shade of green he would paint the car it would never really match the real Hirohata Merc. For years he only saw photos of the car in magazines where color can vary. Why not go to the source? Stan got in touch with Hershel (Junior) Conway, the original painter of the Hirohata Merc back in 1953, Junior also repainted Merc for the restoration in the '90s. Stan explained his project and how he wanted the correct paint color to match the real Hirohata Merc. Taking the final risk, Stan asked if there was any paint left over from the restoration that he could get to paint his replica. Nope. Junior had a different plan. He gave Stan the phone number of Jim McNeil, the owner and restorer of the actual Hirohata Merc! Stan immediately called Jim and told him all about the project. He asked Jim if he had any of the paint left from the restoration, Jim said he does have the special mixed paint that PPG made to replicate the original sea foam green. Eureka!

Stan sent pictures of the primered model to Jim and soon received an invite to Jim's home in Orange California where the Hirohata Merc was parked in his garage. Stan was ecstatic! He would be able to see the Hirohata Merc in person and meet Jim McNeil.

When he got to Jim's house, just a few weeks later, Jim and his wife Sue welcomed him like they were friends for years. Stan brought the model to show Jim what had been done so far. Jim and Sue were impressed at all the work that already went into the model. Then Jim said, "Stan, this is your day." He invited Stan to sit in *the* car, and take photos. Jim answered all the questions that Stan could think of. It was an honor!

Jim had the paint in his garage on a shelf. Stan had brought his own two small bottles for the paint (Of course). As Jim brought the cans down and poured the sea foam green into the first bottle, Stan was in awe realizing he would have the exact paint that is on the real Hirohata Merc on his model. Jim then got the dark green and poured that in the second bottle. This paint would be the ultimate touch to bring the model together.

Being right there in person with the car, Stan saw things that he never could see in all the magazines. Jim added so much more about the car Stan never knew about. As the day came to an end, Stan thanked Jim and Sue for their awesome hospitality and the once in a lifetime opportunity they gave him.

At the End of the Rainbow.

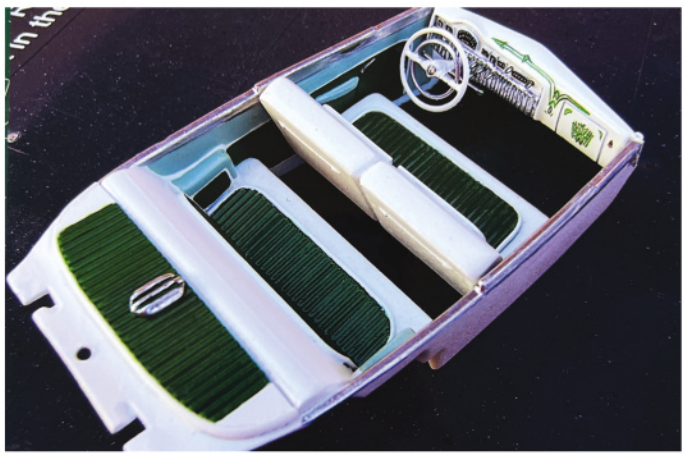
When Stan got back to Honolulu he started on the interior. The first thing he did was convert the '49 dash into a '51 dash with sheet plastic and brass. Thanks to all the new photos Stan came back with, he could now get the details as accurate as possible. He also made the pixie glass green and white knobs on the dash to match the real car. The rear speaker grill on the package tray was also made thanks to





the up close photos. The seats and pleats were made using sheet plastic and brass rod. The striping on the dash was done to match the original Von Dutch stripping as well.





Next, the trunk needed to be replicated using those priceless photos. Everything in the trunk is scratch built. The first thing that was built was the floor, sides and rear of the trunk. The gas and oil cans were made as well as the box that they sit in. They were then painted to match the original ones in the real car. Next was the floor mat with the piping that wraps around it. The upholstery with









pleats was also made in the rear part of the trunk. The gas filler with the breather line was scratch built.

The Cadillac motor was also replicated in detail with its triple carburetors, chrome spark plug covers and sea foam green block. Two chrome horns were also placed in front of the radiator. Stan also made the same type of battery from plastic to replicate the real one.

After the body was painted and the model was being assembled Stan, being a jeweler and a hand engraver, decided to take the project another step further. He made the bumpers, the fluted grill, the side marker light bars and the window frames all from 925 sterling silver. He then polished them to a brilliant shine before rhodium plating them. The final touch was painting the Barris crest on the side of the front fenders and replacing the license plates.

This Hirohata Merc replica is Stan's great journey that spanned decades and oceans and we thank him for sharing it with us.

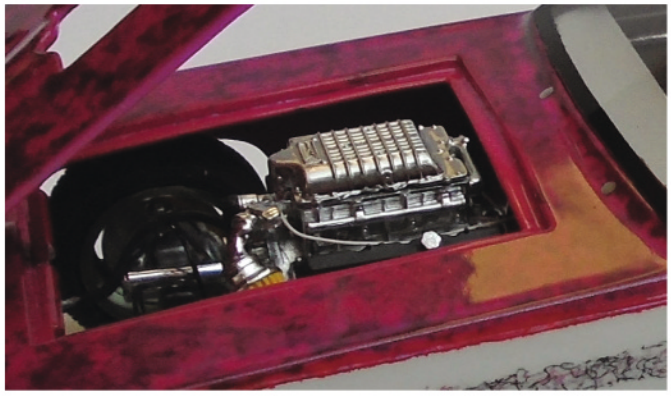
The finale.

In 2022, the McNeil Family put the Hirohata Merc up for auction. The price paid by the Galpin Collection after fees was $2,145,000. ■



BUILDING A FANTASY SEMA SHOWSTOPPER

By Claude Thibodeau





In early November of each year, thousands invade the Las Vegas Convention Center, to witness what the performance aftermarket industry declares to be new trends. To lure customers into their booths, manufacturers showcase the most extravagant vehicles they can find. Think old show cars of the 60's, vintage race cars, 100 point muscle-car restorations, or… fresh creations from the foremost car builders of the nation.

The Pro-Touring movement of late, centers mostly around icons of the 1960 to 1975 period. SEMA spectators have been exposed to countless Camaros, Mustangs, 'Cudas, et al. So, how to distinguish your next oeuvre d'art from the crowd? Think of a 70's car that everybody knows but is rarely viewed as "magazine cover material".

DUSTER! That humble Plymouth Valiant "performance variant", a low-cost sports roof two door unibody chariot, with hopefully, the optional 340 V8! MOPAR sold them all over the place, and it presents an opportunity to create a different showstopper. Time for the revenge of the underdog!

How about a sculpted stock body to make it longer, lower, with a killer stance and numerous styling tricks? Drop a Hell Cat powerplant in the engine bay, plus modern suspensions and a Recaro appointed custom interior.
You are thinking "too much work"… But wait: If we choose the donor kits wisely and throw in a modicum of scratch-built and aftermarket components, our project will become a totally unique "magazine cover car".

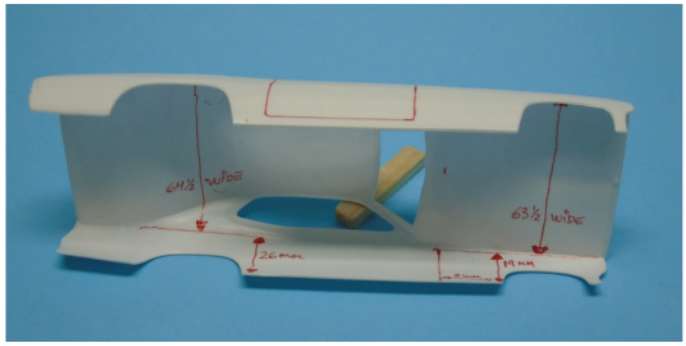
Time to bring the unexpected to the SEMA Show!



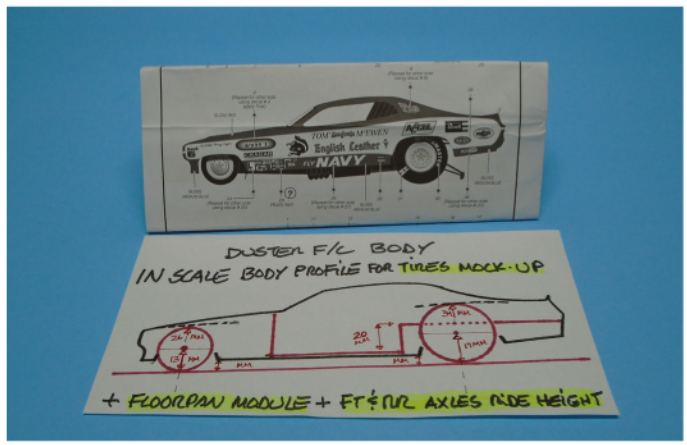
(1) Revell's second generation Tom McEwen Duster funny car (**kit 4289**) is a perfect foundation for our project. The desirable restyling of the body is already done: longer wheelbase (front wheel openings moved forward - à la BMW), enlarged rear wheel openings for monster 24" wheels, longer hood, lowered roof with raked windshield, enhanced sculpting of the slimmed body sides, plus smoothed front and back panels providing opportunity for innovative grille, headlights and taillights designs (a stock AMT Duster body - kit 1118M/12- at top is visibly squarish in comparison). Bonus: there are no hood/doors/trunk cut lines molded on: We will locate them as we see fit (see approximative red lines). We will also remove the rear window filler panel, to be replaced with transparent styrene.



(2) Throw in a Kugel style IFS and a fuel cell found in AMT's Phantom Vickie (**kit 30089**), plus some locally sourced 3D printed Dodge HellCat engine, tranny and Recaro seats. A parts box MOPAR differential and battery + rolling stock from an unknown diecast (rear – 34 mm OD) and similar Revell' Vette 'Agin (front – 26 mm OD- **kit 85-2536**) will do. The bottom of a Walmart toothpicks bottle(!) provides the rear wheel tubs material, plus various Evergreen plastic extrusions that will be referenced along the way.

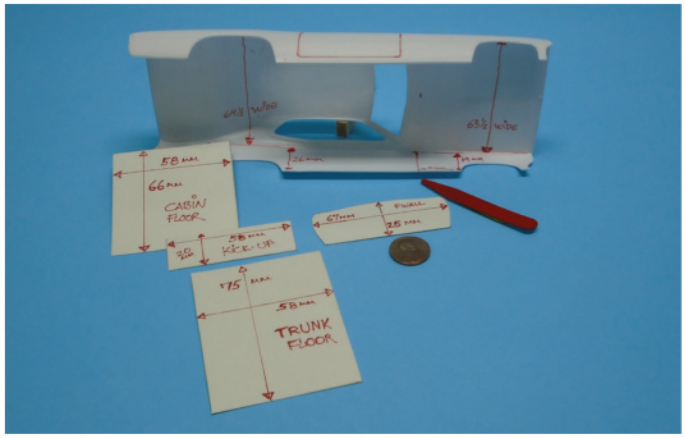


(3) I measured some hard points of the body, such as maximum inner width inside the fenders at the front and rear wheel openings, available vertical clearance for tires front and back (in red). Those will dictate the geometry of the front and rear suspensions. The assembled powertrain will determine the dimensions of the front frame rails and IFS sub-assembly (more on that later). For more precision, note that all my measurements are in MILLIMITERS. However, the Evergreen and Plastruct scratch-built supplies will be identified as on their respective labels.

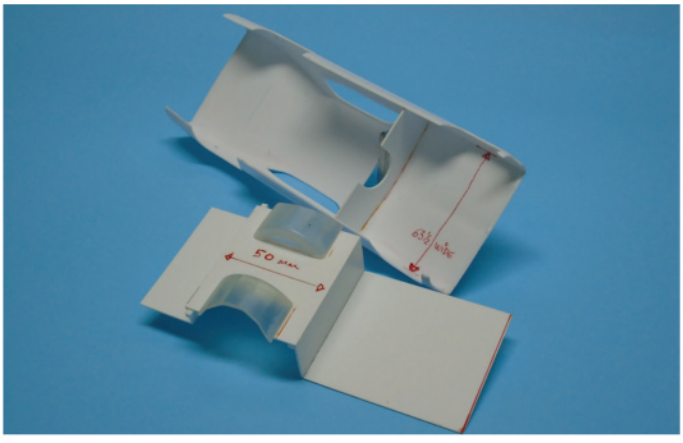


(4) The Duster instructions provide a side view of the car that I outlined on tracing paper. Photocopied with an 18% enlargement to match the actual funny-car body, it allows me to trace (in red) the projected front and rear tires, firewall, floor pan, kick-up and initial trunk floor. The center point of each wheel dictates the precise elevation of the front & rear spindles/axle in relation to the floor pan. We can appreciate how low and rakish the car will look. Note that such a low stance will require that the tranny & drive shaft sit ABOVE the solid floor pan (!) inside the central tunnel/console. More on that later…

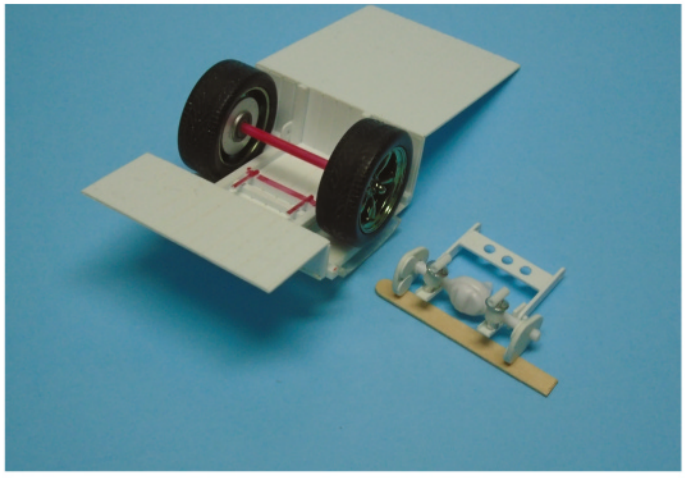
(5) Your writer favors the "modular" building approach. I breakdown the project into distinct subassemblies for more precision, flexibility for minute details, and ease of paint and final assembly. The modules are: (A) main body with firewall, radiator panel, hinges for hood and trunk lid, (B) floor pan with cabin floor, rear kick-up, trunk floor, rear tubs and rear suspension, (C) front subframe/engine cradle



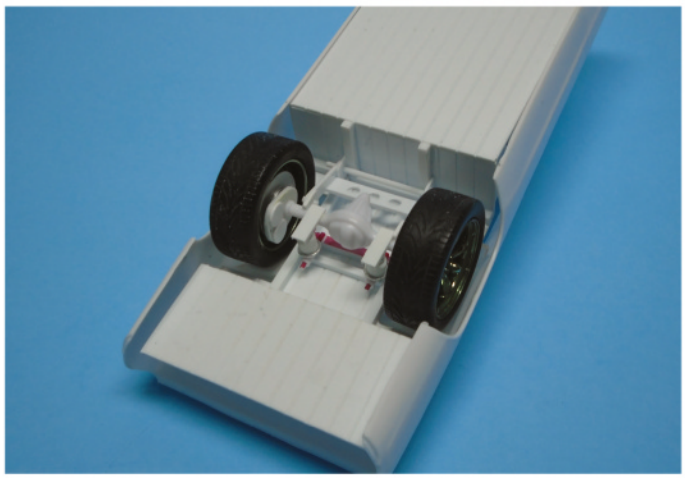
with IFS and powertrain, and (D) cabin interior module. The cornerstone is a sturdy firewall, precision cut from .040 flat sheet plastic (measurements in red). It will be glued 21 millimetres behind the front wheel opening cut line (in red) and its lower edge will be located .040 above the lower body sill. Keep your cardboard pattern handy: we duplicate it again in .040 flat plastic (Evergreen's 9040), to be later positioned on the forward-facing side of the first unit to mount the front subframe module. A penny traces our cut-out for the transmission tunnel. Additional cardboard patterns (measurements in red) are for tracing the basic cabin floor, kick-up, and trunk floor that will be located as shown in our technical drawing. I used .040 styrene sheet and chose Evergreen's 4188 (grooved) for styling effect.



(6) See the tight fit of the glued firewall (with tunnel opening), and the assembled central module + the rear tubs (cut from the bottom of the styrene toothpicks bottle seen in photo (2), split in the middle, and positioned in accordance with the measurements verified in our technical drawing (photo 4). Test the module inside the body: it should extend .040 forward of the firewall (red line) and fit flush against the lower body sills. The rear tubs sit below the rear window and are contoured to fit the shape of the inner quarter panels. Testing showed I needed to lower the trunk floor to be deep enough to contain the fuel cell, battery and air-ride system. A 10mm drop vertical panel is located 50mm behind the cabin floor kick-up.

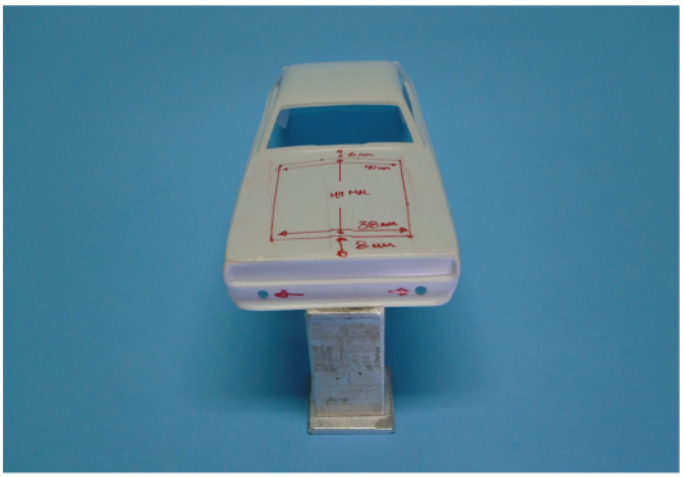


(7) Now mock-up the rear wheels / axle combo. A sprue section (in red) indicates the axle centerline must be positioned 12 mm from the rear floor. This dictates the length of my scratch-built air shocks (10mm long) anchoring the differential to the transversal frame member (in red) to attain the desired low stance. I added those frame members (Evergreen 175- .100 x .100) to reinforce the rear floor section. The H-Arm system to anchor the rear axle was fabricated of Evergreen 147 -.040 X .156 and 149 - .040 X .250 . This clever design (seen upside down) allows the differential to move up and down, without any lateral movement. The drag links reach forward 19mm and attach (with Evergreen 1/16" rod) to drilled tabs glued along the vertical frame members The air shocks are made of aluminium rivets + Evergreen 212 - .080 rod + 3/32" tube and 3/16" tubes slipped on the rivets to simulate air bladders. One end (3/32 tube) mounts at the frame member on .040 rod sections (in red), the other glued to the axle tube, on 5/32" channel pads (Evergreen 265) glued to the underside of the axle housing, projecting 8mm toward the rear, and spaced to match the upper shocks mounting shafts on the frame (in red).

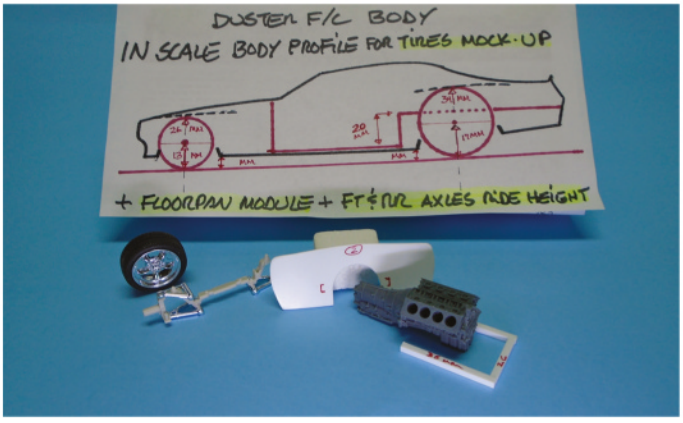


(8) I test-fit the platform and differential with H-Arm, air-shocks system and wheels in position. The module fits as intended: rear axle is level, centered in the frame, and rear

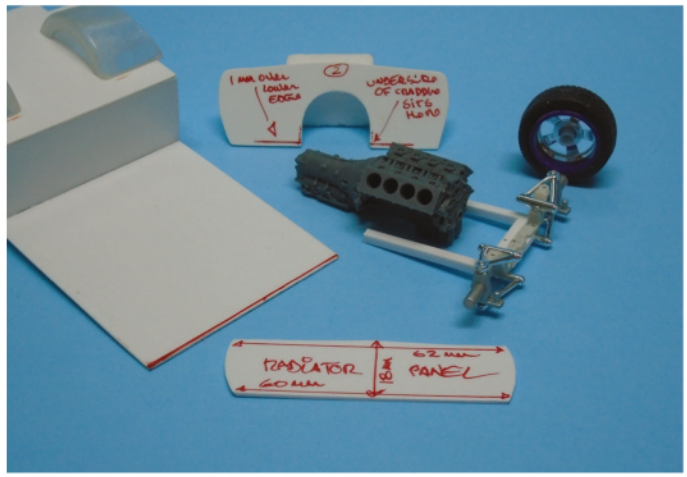
tires clear the inside of the wheel tubs. All-out track width is 60mm outside of the tires, perfect for the width available between the quarter panels. Time to scratch build brake mounting plates and simulated dual piston calipers.



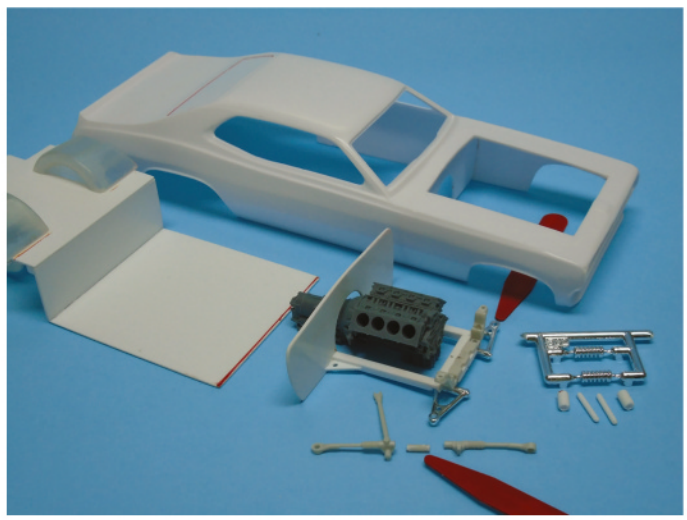
(9) Now I glue the grille panel to the body Two holes (red arrows) will house projector headlamps very low, allowing a modern full width grille to fill the flat grille opening later on. Trace and cut open the hood (red lines), which is narrower and shorter than stock (49mm long X 40mm at rear X 38 mm at front). The front cut line is set back 8mm from the front edge of the body: it will hide most of the radiator panel. The wider than usual fender top panels will extend over the front tires.



(10) The tech drawing shows the front wheel center-line to be 13mm above ground (your choice of wheel may vary). A mock-up of the IFS indicates the spindle center line (that will be level with the wheel center) is 5mm above the underside of the cross member. Therefore, once said cross-member is glued to the transverse beam in front of the engine "cradle", I calculate the attachment points of the longitudinal frame members to the removable firewall. In this case, the underside of the cradle side rails must sit 1mm above the lower edge of the firewall. The cradle is made of .100 X .100 Evergreen 175 and is 35mm long X 26mm wide. The engine/tranny combo will slide in position, most of the tranny entering the cabin above the floor. It also centers the front wheels in their openings.

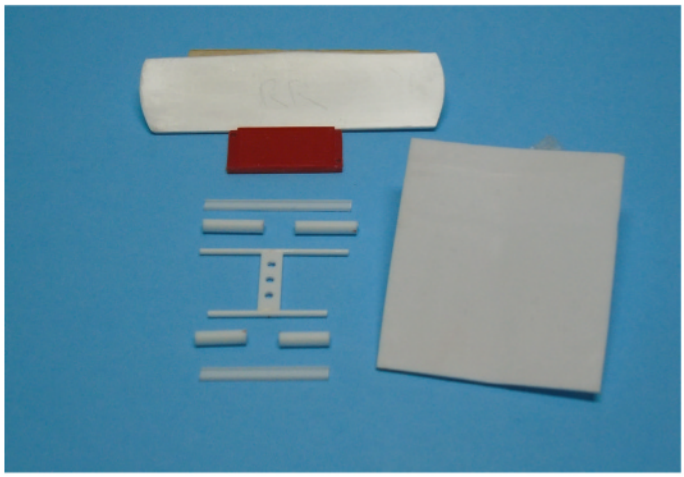


(11) The IFS being made of a crossmember and A-arms/spindle combo, I glue that narrowed (minus 6mm) semi-assembled unit to the engine cradle/subframe. Removing 6mm allows the 62mm wide front assembly (with tires) to fit inside the front fenders. The parts lay-out includes the removable firewall, engine cradle/IFS system, and .040 blank radiator panel that will later support the radiator and hood hinge system. Since the floor pan extends .040 forward of the fixed firewall (see red line), when viewed from below, it will hide the joint in our "firewall sandwich" and make for a seamless SEMA worthy show car!

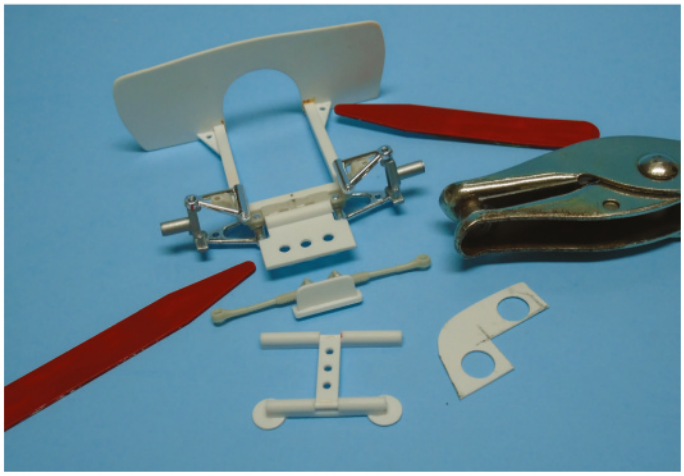


(12) The removable firewall/engine cradle/IFS module is glued solid. The lower A-Arm shows the spindle (red arrow) is centered in the wheel opening. The powertrain is slid in position. I can now measure and build the engine mounts. I removed 6mm from the steering rack (red

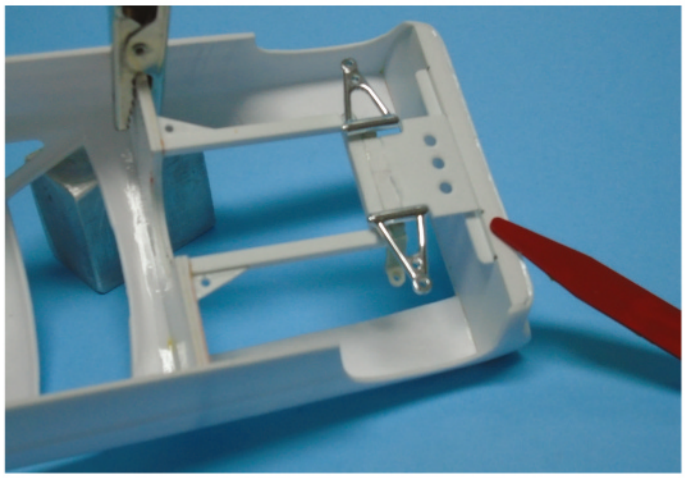
arrow) to match the narrowed IFS unit. I scratch build air shocks to replace the IFS coil-overs . The shafts are 11mm long 1/16" Evergreen 222 rod, the air bladders 6mm 1/8" Evergreen 224 tubes (to be painted Tamya's Rubber Black).



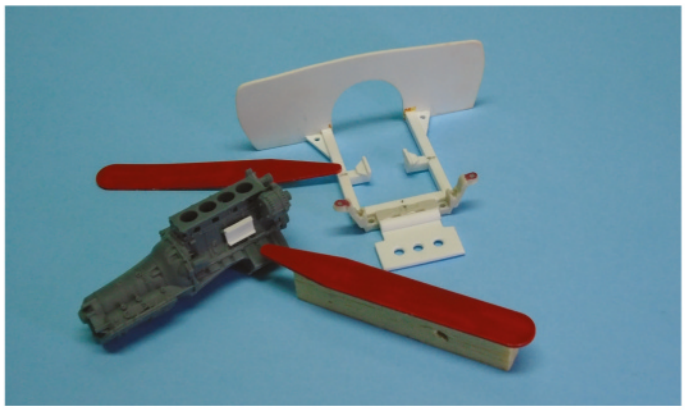
(13) The hood hinge system is next: a 28mm section of Evergreen 273 H beam (sanded flat on one side) holds 2 X 12mm sections of 3/32" tube (Evergreen 223). The hinge "arm" (with lightening holes) is made of .040 X .56 Evergreen 147 flat and .040 rod (Evergreen 211). This arm will pivot in the 3/32 tubes glued to the channel, to be mounted at top of the radiator panel. I duplicated the tube & channel part, only narrower (20mm), for the other end of the arm that will be glued to the underside of the hood at final assembly. It provides solid and level pivot action at both ends of the arm. Keep the hinge short to reduce the risk it might interfere with the front of the engine when closing the hood. Measure carefully!



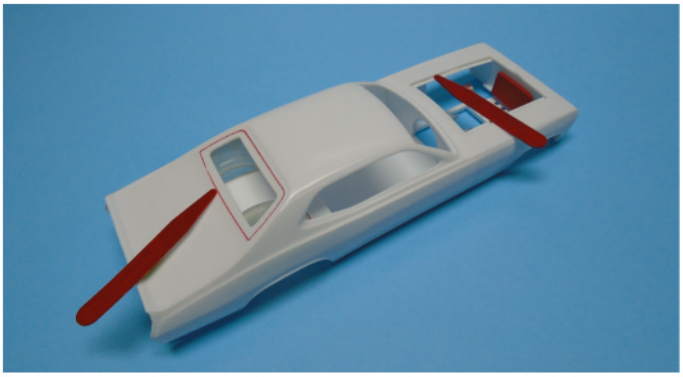
(14) Front module with IFS mocked up. Note the reinforcement gussets at the frame/firewall junction (.040 stock – red arrow) and the 15mm long front "tab" glued forward of the IFS X member, to reach the radiator panel and avoid flex of the subframe over time (.040 stock + Evergreen 248 -.060 quarter round). Three beveled holes add style. The narrowed steering rack mounts on a stand made of .040 X .156 flat bar (Evergreen 147) to be glued on the "tab" during final assembly. The underside of the hood being peaked (not flat), I added two .020 flat stock round "pads" to the hinge, made with a punch for adequate glue surface at final assembly.



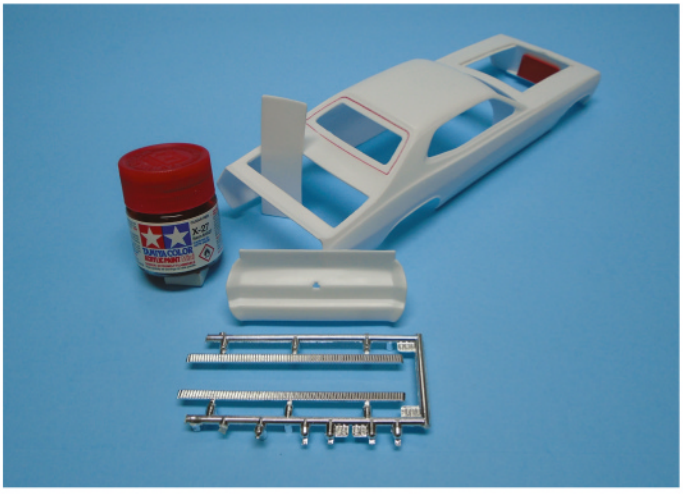
(15) Front module slid in position, seen from below. The "tab" reaches the radiator panel I just glued in place and sits on a "shelf" (red arrow) made of .030 X .100 flat bar (Evergreen 135). The radiator will sit on top of the same shelf. For symmetry, the shelf is 40mm wide, same as the front hood opening. I filled the gap between the radiator panel and lower edge of the front spoiler with Evergreen 147 - .040 X .156 flat bar, for a clean look.



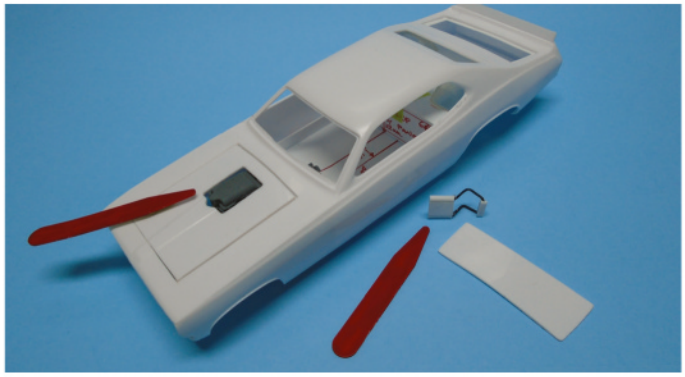
(16) Front engine mounts (red arrow) located 20mm ahead of the firewall and made of two 6mm long .100 X .100 Evergreen -175 + Plastruct 90504 angle on top. The long-block and tranny combo of my HellCat 3D printed engine receives Evergreen – 205 7mm long 5/32 C-channel (red arrow) that will glue to the Plastruct angles, solidly locating the powertrain. I sanded down the pointed tips of the upper shock mounts (accented in red): those headlight stands are useless on this project.



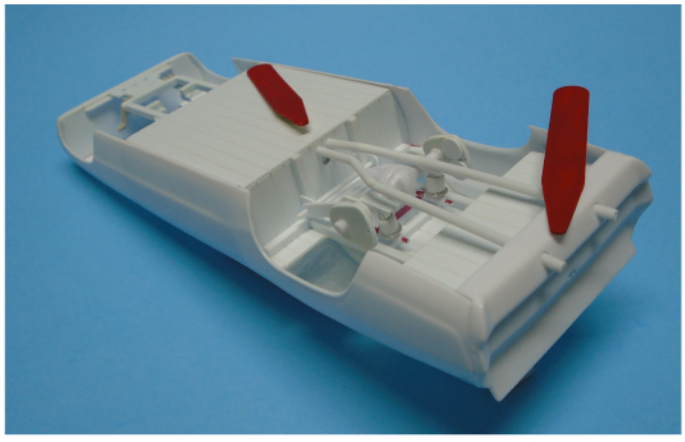
(17) I glued Evergreen -118 .015 X .188 thin strips under the fenders and across the rear hood opening for the hood to lay on when closed (red arrow). The hood hinge will support the hood in the front once glued in place. A Pro-Stock radiator from my part box fits perfectly. The funny-car rear window solid panel was opened, leaving a 3mm surround to later glue a flush-fit clear styrene rear window in place (red arrow). Note the wheel tubs visible in the window opening.



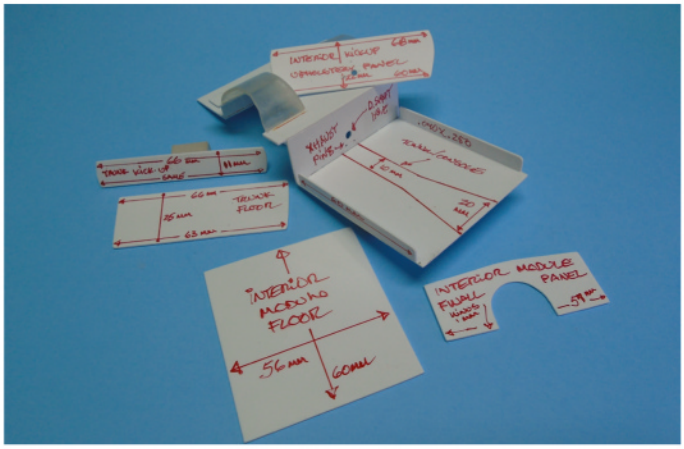
(18) I cut open a smaller than usual trunk lid. The opening will get the same flange treatment as the hood. The smooth funny-car rear panel will now be glued in place. I will use leftover Revell 1970 'Cuda lower rocker moldings from my stash (in chrome), cut to length to create 4 modern custom taillights, to be covered with Tamya's clear red & orange, and glued in place at final assembly.



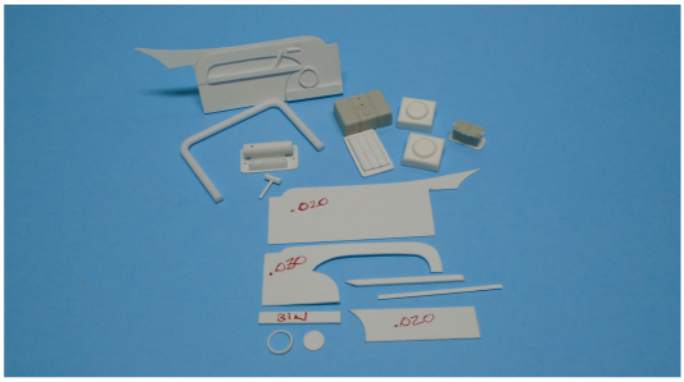
(19) The HellCat engine has a tall intake plenum, requiring a cut-out (red arrow) in the hood. Exact location and size may vary with your powertrain choice.I scratch built a typical side-opening hinge for the trunk lid with Evergreen 223 & 273 and 20GA wire (red arrow). The pivot part will glue under the sail panel on the driver's side, and the mounting pad to the underside of the trunk lid at final assembly.



(20) With the powertrain being located ABOVE the floor, I used block-hugging headers from my parts box to route the pipes alongside the transmission, inside the console/tunnel alongside the drive shaft. They pass through the cabin rear kick-up, just under the drive shaft hole (red arrow). The rear exhaust pipes are Evergreen 223 - 3/32" tubes, with a 20 GA aluminium wire inside: it avoids kinks when bending and retains shape. They exit through the rear roll pan (red arrow). The front end of the pipe retains a 1mm length of wire sticking out, to locate it precisely in the small locating/mounting holes (visible in photo **21**)



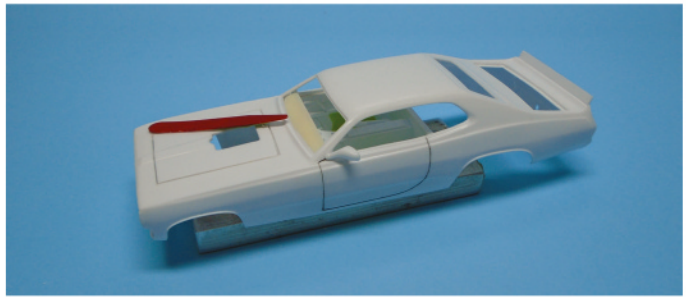
(21) Some components of the interior/cabin module with dimensions of each. 60mm strips of Evergreen 139 - .030 X .250 are glued to the outside edges of the floor pan: they will position the door panels. Leave a 2mm gap between the strips and the cabin kick-up, and 3mm at front for future components. You can see the driveshaft and exhaust holes in the cabin kick up panel, and the location of the future tunnel/console unit. Evergreen .040 stock is used for the interior module floor, kick-up upholstery panel, inner firewall panel, tunnel/console, trunk floor and trunk kick up panel. At final assembly, the contoured cabin kick up upholstery panel, trunk floor and trunk kick up will completely seal the trunk and cabin from the rear end "house" for a cleaner look.



(22) Sculpted door panel (at top) is a stacking of various Evergreen sheet stock (bottom), with a design of your choosing. A sprue was made into a roll bar and the air tank, distribution block, power amp, and shifter were scratch built. The fuel cell and battery are from the Phantom Vicky kit, and the modified speaker boxes are from Revell's 85-4356 Hays TBird kit. Each bucket received a scratch built lap belt buckle and belt retractor.



(23) Interior module shows the inner console/tunnel in place, a padded cushion on top, hand brake lever, shifter bezel, shifter, cup holders, dash with instrument pods, radio, glove box, column drop and pedals, all scratch built with various Evergreen extrusions. The steering wheel came from my parts box, with a scratch built column (flasher and tilt levers added). The trunk module will join the chassis/platform later. The dash pad (.060 flat stock) will be precisely trimmed to size and glued to the dash structure once I test-fit the module inside the body.



(24) The trimmed dash pad is glued in place on the dash structure (red arrow). I engraved the door lines on the smooth funny-car body (highlighted in black), and chose a more daring rounded shape for styling effect (it's a SEMA car after all!). The mirrors came from Revell's 85-2827 Corvette and are a perfect fit. Time for paint, detailing and final assembly!

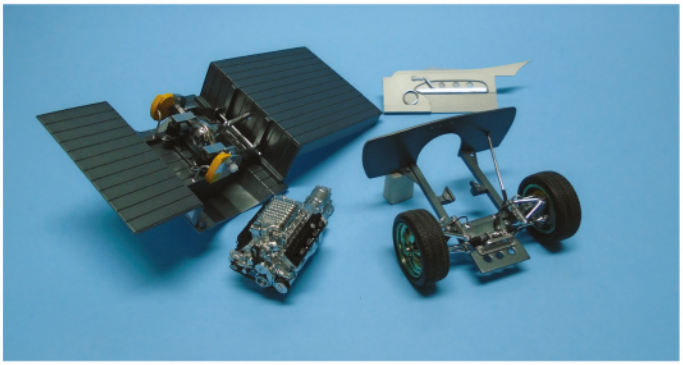


(25) Body was painted with Tamiya's TS-26 Pure White, side spears masked, and a two-tone marble effect applied

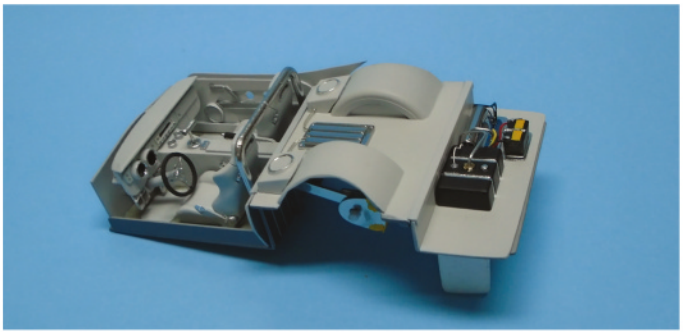
to outside surfaces (hood & trunk lid were taped in place for a continuous pattern).



(26) Metalflake's Dark Cherry (a nod to Mopar's High Impact Colors of the 70') is airbrushed over the marble effect, followed by Tamiya's TS-65 pearl clear overall. Some cobwebbing is done freehand with metallic gel pens in three colors inside the white side spears. Tamiya's TS-13 clear seals everything, wet sanded and followed with Mr.Hobby's Top Coat Clear.



(27) Chassis and engine bay module in Tamiya's TS-1000 Semi-Gloss Gun Metal grey. Detachable components were chromed with Revell's Spray Chrome. Brake and air ride hoses are in place. The Hellcat engine was detailed, and the steering shaft runs to the steering rack. The interior features a mix of Tamiya's Pure white & Titanium silver that shows the interior details well.

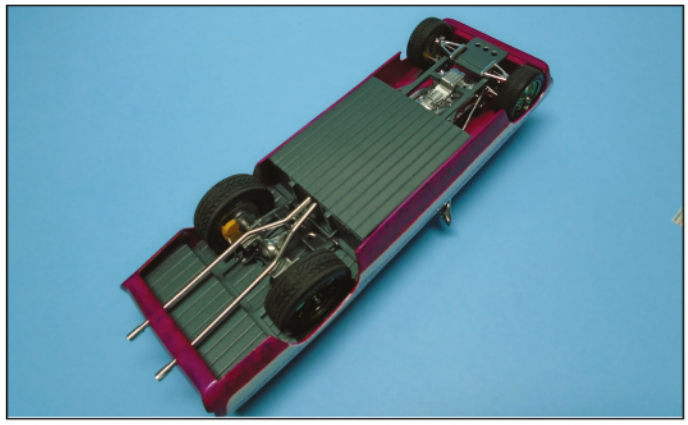


(28) This shows the detailing of dash, door panels, console, steering column, seat belts, pedals and shifter with Molotow's chrome. I drilled holes above the armrests with silver mesh craft ribbon at the back of panels for a nice effect.

Grey flocking covers the floor. The trunk lining mounts the gas tank, battery & air ride system, wired & plumbed. The amp is wired to speakers' enclosures. Hood and trunk lid will be glued in place BEFORE the modules are inserted. The cabin module will slide in and be glued to the firewall. Then the engine bay module (with tires affixed), and finally the chassis module with rear suspension (without tires).



(29) The engine/tranny/exhaust, and radiator slide into place. The windows are patterned from the Funny-Car units with thin Evergreen clear styrene and glued in place. Connect engine wires and hoses, glue the rear wheels, taillights, custom grille (made of Evergreen 4527) and (self-adhesive sequin) headlights… and voilà!



(30) Underside view of chassis with all modules in place: definitely SEMA worthy! ■









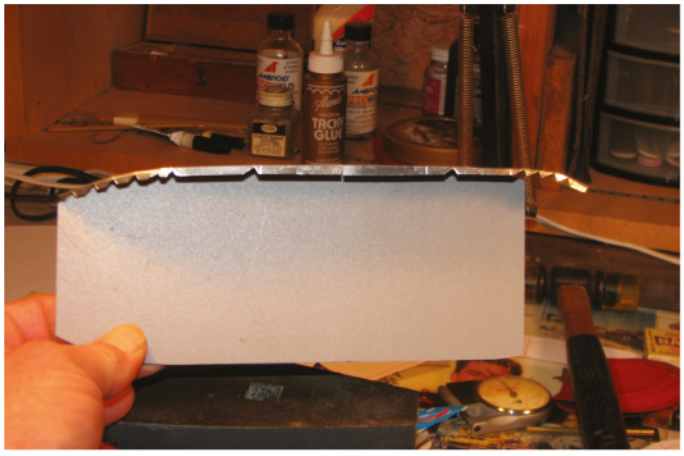
By Dan Himmel

The fastest "Coca Cola Stand" in America

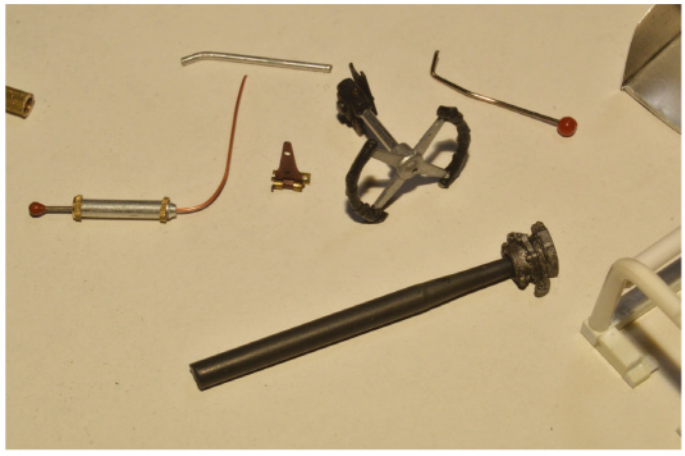
Unstalling a legend with new technology.

Projects stall for any number of reasons; Sometimes, we just get in over our heads. Our vision is greater than our ability, or our patience, to accomplish it. Often, other projects steal our focus. Once, it was being unable to discover a way to create a bond that was strong enough to be practical and long-lasting. This model represents that time.

The seed for this model was a single photo in Tex Smith's "Hot Rod History", by Tom Medley. The photo was of a pre-war aluminum behemoth sometimes referred to as "The Coca-Cola Stand." Its unique shape and striking bare-aluminum finish stuck in the back of my mind until the day in 2003, when a bundle of 5"x7" aluminum flashing, unleashed from its bindings, began swirling violently around the



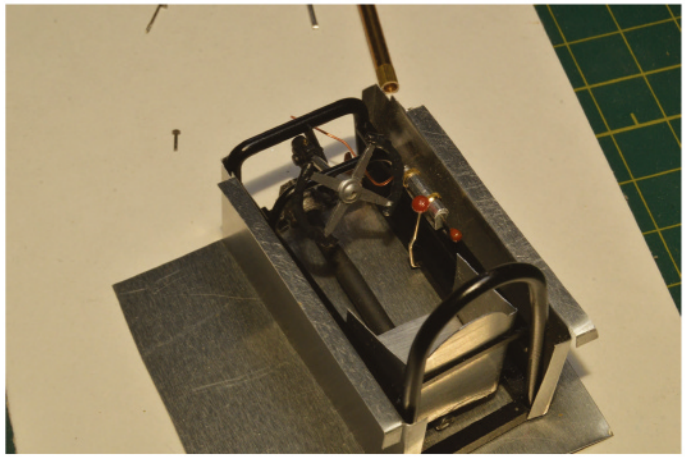
The first day produced optimism, and this. The notches or "pleats" allow the side panels to curve inward while maintaining a surface to attach the top panels to.



Collected interior bits. The wheel is wrapped with narrow strips of a black plastic trash bag. The throttle pedal is made from halves of two sets of dollhouse hinges.



A pile of panels await their turn to be added to the model. The cockpit assembly is taking shape. The large front panel still lacks its louvers.



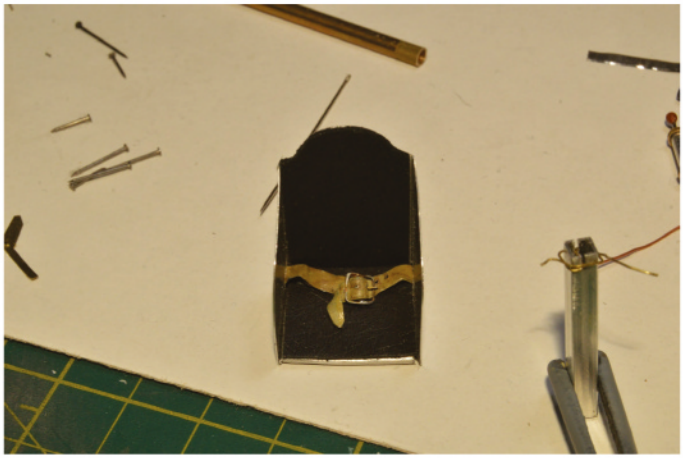
The interior is nearing completion. I used sewing pins for the brake and pressure pump handles. I like the reddish color, because it resembles Bakelite. At this point, I can easily lift out and replace the seat.

UN-air-conditioned cab of the insulation rig I was driving at highway speed. Upon deceleration and stopping, I walked to the passenger side of the cab, and discovered the remaining stack of metal sheet, its plastic banding now dangling worthlessly. At that moment, I sentenced the entirety of those metal sheets to service in my shop. Those sheets changed my life as a modeler. They've served me well!

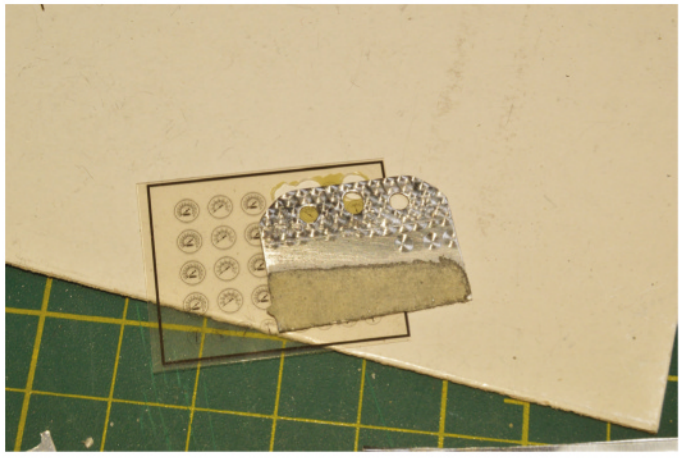
Upon their arrival in my shop, it wasn't long before the car in that old photo crept from the recesses of my mind, to front and center. Somewhere, I'd picked up a fairly large sheet of .090" grey plastic, and I cut the belly plate from that. I then laid out the side panels on the aluminum sheet. I used a straightedge and a scribe to create the panel lines, then used the same tools to replicate rivets.

The sharp(-ish) point of the scribe dimples the back side of the panel, creating a tiny bulge on the opposite. It's an old technique used by armor and aircraft modelers forever. It's also fairly convincing. Within a few hours, I had enough panels to build the car. I had drilled the side panels and the belly plate, and had the sides mounted to the plate with pins. By the time I discovered an adhesive to hold it all together, the pins holding the panels to the bottom plate were rusted!

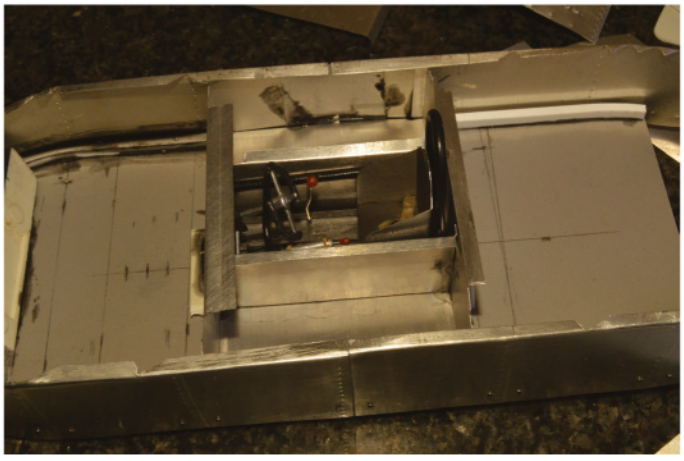
Fast forward to late 2025. Somewhere around November, I first heard of flexible black superglue. Experience has taught me that the biggest reason superglue isn't the best adhesive for metal is because it's brittle and rigid. Any flexing causes it, and its bond to break. I'd used contact cement with some success, but it's thick and stringy, and



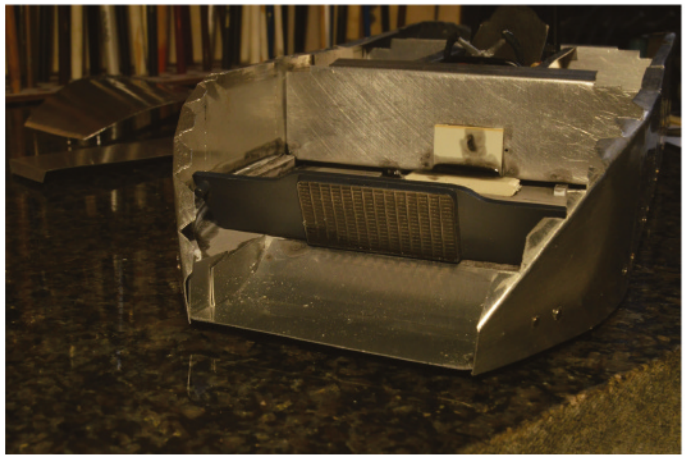
The seat was padded with 1.5 oz. Bookbinding leather. I like to use the "lead" neck foil from wine bottles for belts and harnesses. In 1/25th scale, we don't really need any texture. It's easily poseable, so it doesn't look completely rigid. I made the buckle from fine brass wire. The form is visible, to the right.



My seemingly never-ending quest to find a suitable medium for engine turning has at least found a wayside rest with a set of pin polishers from Rio Grande Supply, in Albuquerque. I used gauges from Model Car Garage.



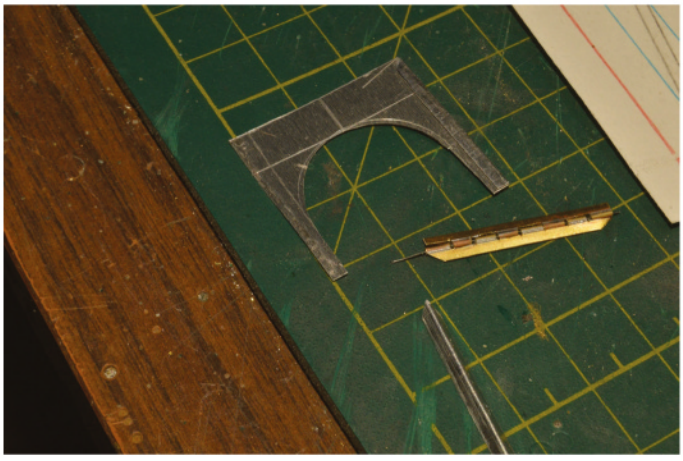
The driver's office, installed.



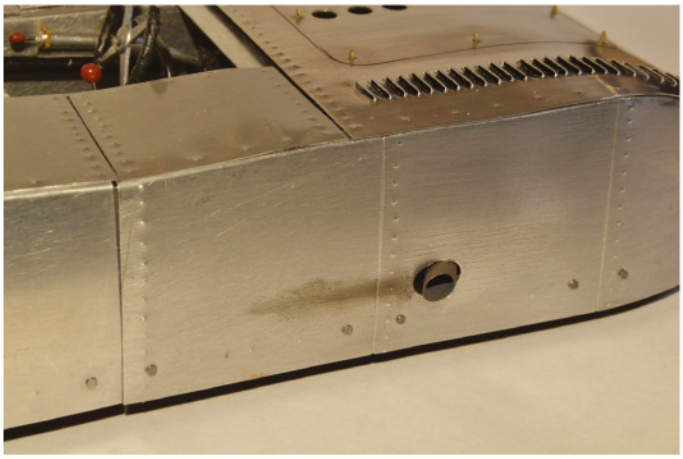
I dug a radiator wall out of the parts box. It helped to block any light passing through the louvers, and added visual interest up the snout.

therefore messy. I bought a bottle of the flexible glue to test it. I used it to build the seat for this car. During the process, the seat's glue joints were repeatedly twisted and tweaked. They never failed. The "tank" was once again alive! We'll let the photos tell the rest of this story.

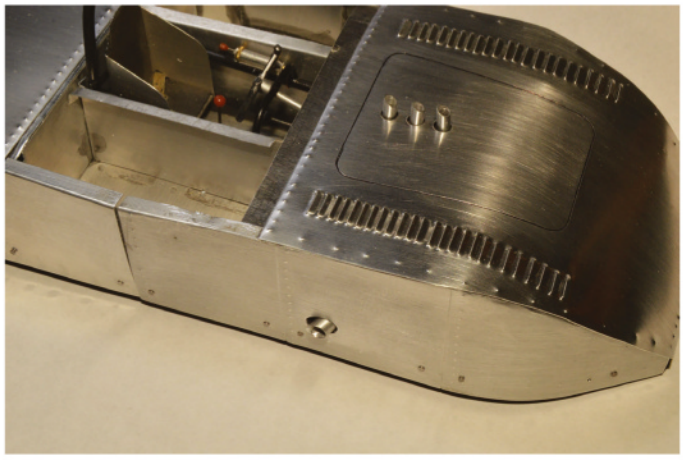
Curbside models don't have to be boring! They're an excellent outlet for exploring new, more advanced techniques, and for honing fundamental skills. I have a display case full of them. They're a wonderful compliment to the fully-detailed models they share the case with. This model won the Competition Straight-Line Class at the 2026 Mile High Open, so they can be competitive, too. Give one a go. You might like them, too! ■



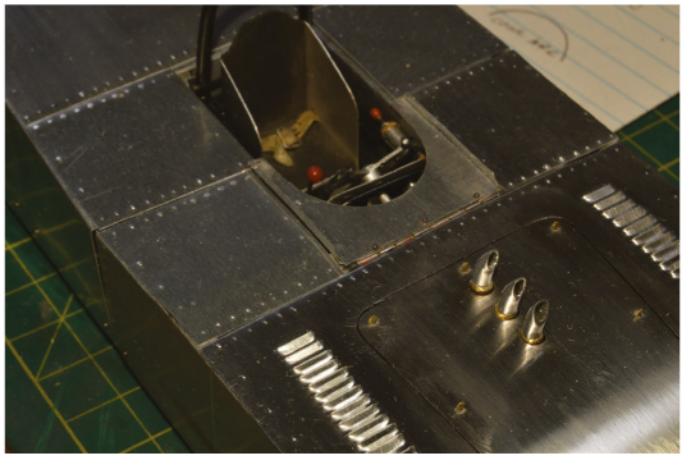
I made a piano hinge from brass strip and 1/32" brass tube. The cowl flap's braces were fabricated from flashing.



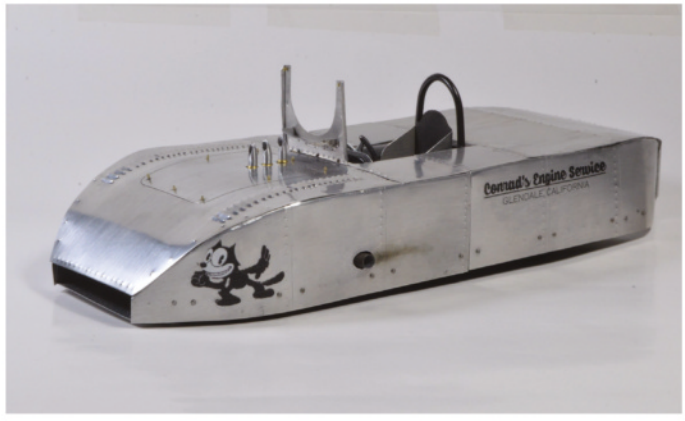
The model still needed something, to give it an added "kick". The exhaust stains came from a Tamiya weathering kit. The pipe was finished in Krylon ruddy brown that I rubbed black pastel powder into.



Upper body panels have begun to be added to the car. The louvers are striking. Work on the intake bells and exhaust pipes has begun.

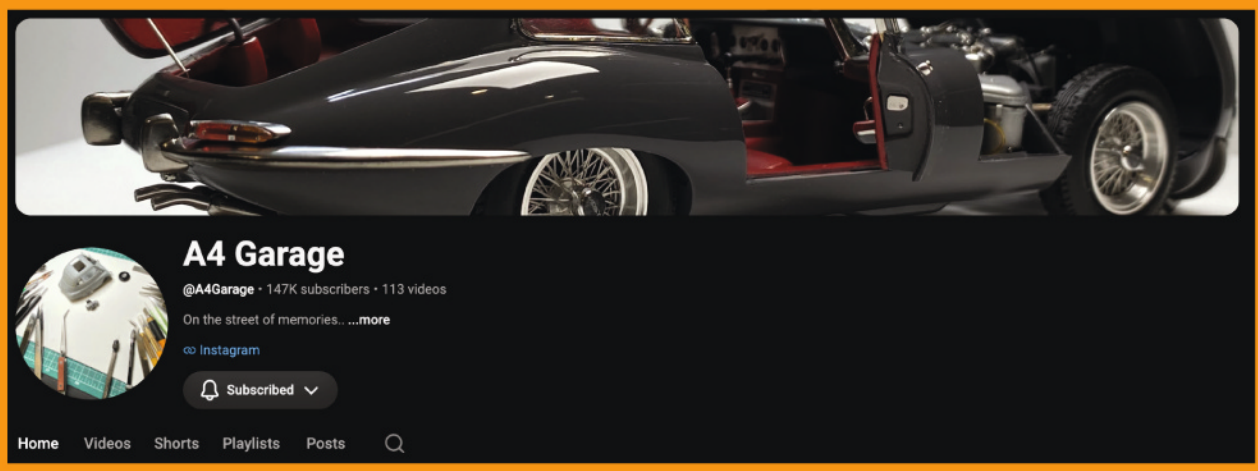


With the cowl flap and the carb intakes installed, the project is nearing completion. I made some quick-turn fasteners from brass wire, mashed in a bench vise. The varied finishes on the panels are apparent here.



Felix The Cat was found online and printed and cut on my Cricut machine. The "Conrad's Engine Service" is a tribute to my dad, and has appeared on all but one of my race car models since the late '80s.

CHECK THESE GUYS OUT!



YouTube

If you have not heard of the A4 YouTube channel you need to be in the loop. This is one of the most popular channels dedicated to presenting high end model car assembly and detailing. Models take months to complete, but WOW! Videos are a hands on format for viewers to follow along. There are text taglines to identify parts used.





FaceBook

We really enjoyed following Aaron Refrow's Drift Duster build up on our FB pages. This one is right there in originality and execution. There are even more pictures including a barnfind before example. Pictures by Aaron posted on the Auto Modeler Magazine Official Facebook group.



As a designer and model car builder, AMT's newly released 1960 Chevrolet Nomad wagon kit gave me the perfect starting point for a question I have often asked: What might Chevrolet's 1960 Nomad have looked like if it had remained a true two-door sport wagon?

My first order of business was to return the car to its roots by converting AMT's four-door body into a two-door "What-If" Nomad. I lengthened the front doors to correct door length, gave the roof a minimal chop and slanted the B-, C- and D-pillars to create a faster, more flowing greenhouse. I believe the rear side glass from any of the available 1/25th (possibly 1/24th) scale Tri-Five Nomad kits should provide a good starting point.

The extended upper fin trim now reaches forward beneath the A-pillar to create one continuous design theme from nose to tail. Another important change was replacing the original 1960 front wheel openings with the lower, softer wheel arches from a 1959 Impala.

The front end features a redesigned grille with hidden headlights, creating a wide and uninterrupted horizontal opening that makes the car appear wider.

The original front bumper was thinned down and divided into two sections. The rear bumper follows the same theme, tying both ends of the car together. After I rendered the design I ran my illustrations (as seen upper right) through AI to see what the cars might look like if they were finished builds.

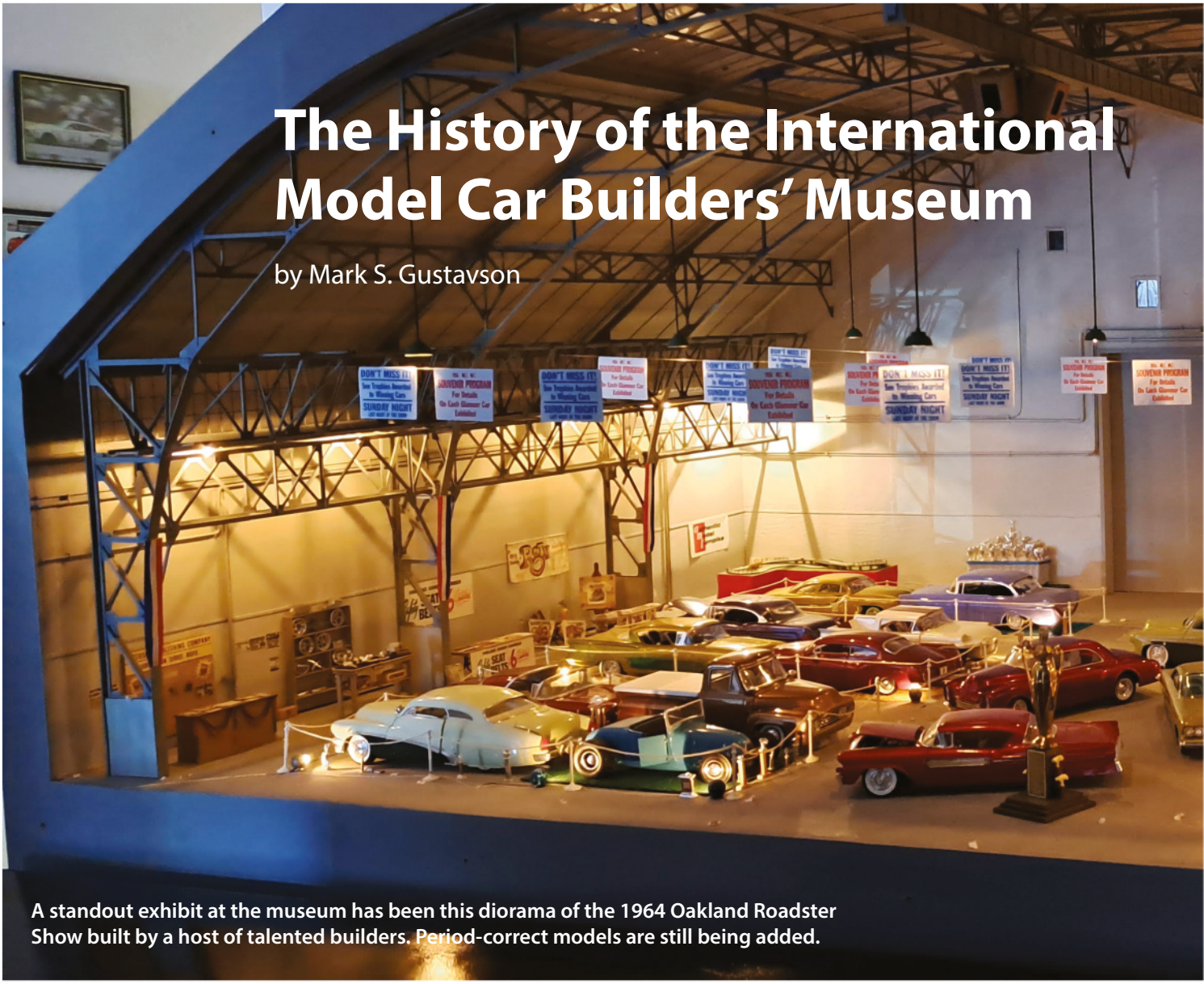
For a wilder front treatment, I grafted the nose from a 1/24-scale midyear C2 Corvette onto the Nomad's front fenders to transform the face into something closer to a Chevrolet experimental car.



To see more original custom car concepts, my new releases of KKM Resin Kits and 1-to-1 scale design work, visit www.kaucherkustoms.com. You can also follow Kaucher Kustoms on Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest.

The History of the International Model Car Builders' Museum

by Mark S. Gustavson



A standout exhibit at the museum has been this diorama of the 1964 Oakland Roadster Show built by a host of talented builders. Period-correct models are still being added.

The International Model Car Builders' Museum was founded in 1987 to preserve, for the future, the history of the scale vehicle hobby. The idea occurred to me because I was greatly interested in the achievements of the great and novice builders – it was hard not to be interested in the winners of the Revell-Pacta/Revell-Testor contests or admire the Crusader on the cover of Car Model. Marinated in a couple of college history courses, the template was set: there HAD to be an active collection of historic models, supplies, kits and memorability that had set the tenor and mood for a hobby that commanded attention. From the earliest days of the Museum, one chief goal of the effort was to gather together the largest possible collection of information, artifacts and documents so that hobbyists, decades in the future, would have a central place to research the wonderful history of the great model car hobby

Consequently, and not long after the GSL Championship started. I completed my collections of Model Car Science and Car Model magazines, and patronized a local hobby shop that had surprising access to a great number of vintage Revell and AMT parts packs, as well as vintage kits – all for sale for nearly the original prices from the early Sixties. I purchased a back-seat load of these items and the collection was underway!

There were literally thousands of old magazines to gather.

Then, I met Jim Keeler (then a Salt Lake resident) and we became fast friends and he started to "tell me the stories" of the early Sixties. Jim donated many items to the Museum including this famed Dodge Fever





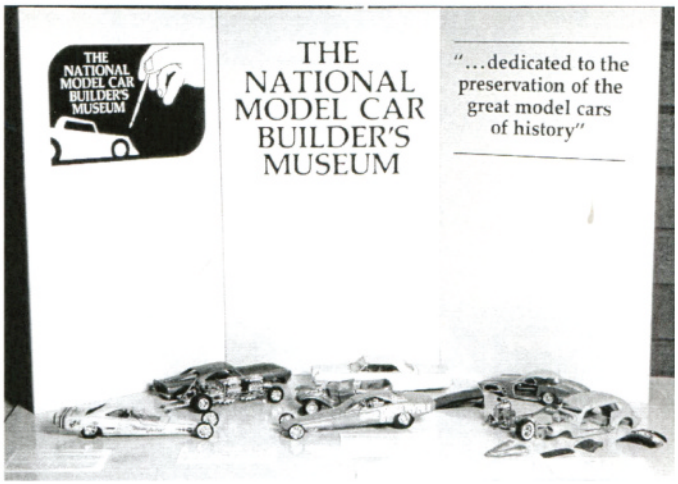
There were literally thousands of old magazines to gather. Photo credit: Ebay seller - auto magazines vintage

models, the restoration of which we carried out. In all of this, my initial instinct to gather artifacts of the model car hobby progressed with increasing speed.

The Museum opened its doors in 1991 to 85 of the larger number of attendees who were at the twelfth annual GSL International Model Car Championship. That initial space was barely 90 square feet but everyone loved it! That first "tour" was electrifying, and convinced all those associated with the Museum that we were onto something.



What a bit of luck to find a hobby shop that still had old school Parts Packs. This is a small sample of what the museum collected.



From the humblest beginnings, but what a line up. Front and center we have Jim Keeler's Dodge Fever models were famous in the '60s and were rediscovered in the '90s The styling and engineering proved timeless.

Not long after that 1991 kickoff presentation, the collection quickly outgrew that initial tiny space, and we moved (in 1993) to a small 320 square foot room in a dank brown stone building in downtown Salt Lake City where the Museum grew significantly in this location. At this time, I incorporated the Museum as a Utah non-profit corporation and soon jumped through the hoops of securing tax deductible Section 901 (c)(3) status with the IRS. It was in this second facility that the 1964 Oakland Roadster Show Diorama was first presented.

It turned out that the collection was growing so quickly that, in 2000, we outgrew the second space: it was clear something had to be done because hundreds of items were packed in boxes stacked in that space which effectively meant that there could be no tours.

In mid-2000, the Museum moved to its final space in Sandy, Utah – into a 2000 square foot room! Alan Raab had displays built, and famous builder Don Emmons funded many dozens of glass shelves for those cabinets. In this larger and final Utah space, there was room enough to unpack the many thousands of historic items that had been purchased or donated. For the first time, the library was organized and thousands of magazines were placed in archival plastic sleeves and then stored in protective binders. Also, models from famed and obscure modelers were organized by subject matter, and a very substantial collection of vintage and contemporary paints, adhesives, putties and Auto World items were finally unpacked and placed on display.

In this final Utah location, the Museum indexed thousands of items of printed ephemera, then placed into two four-drawer legal filing cabinets as well as models, and vintage building supplies. Videos of model car events, Revell-Pactra models gathered (including Augie Hiscano's R-I II joint adult winning street rod) and Richard Mike Johnson's bubble topped model that won the top place in the Revell-Pactra I contest were also acquired by donation as was the Dave Shuklis collection. Of course, the famed Oakland Roadster Show Diorama was transferred from the second space, and a very substantial collection of vintage and contemporary paints, adhesives, putties and Auto World items were unpacked and placed in cabinets.

Also, in this new location, the Museum started two key programs that we're now working to continue: Clone the Past (where historic models could be replicated if we couldn't locate them), and Scan the Past (focused on e-scanning historic magazines – an urgent task because the poor quality of those model magazines was leading to the physical deterioration of those publications of



In the beginning there were the Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild Contests that invited young builders to try their hand at automotive styling - before plastic kits were readily available.



Every wall was covered with models, model boxes, and memorabilia.



One clever display solution was to create double sided glass cases so the models could be viewed from all angles

key historic importance). We made great progress in both of these programs.

As the GSL Finale was being planned in 2022, it became clear to me and other Museum leaders that something had to be done to preserve the incredible collection that we had gathered. As I told many, as things stood, the risk was that the collection would end up in the Salt Lake County landfill upon my demise. Obviously, while dramatically said, the risk of loss was utterly intolerable.

Also in 2022, Clay Smith (CEO of the Museum of American Speed) called me and we met for lunch in Salt Lake. He asked if I would be a consultant to MAS to provide historic information and photographs of Darryl Starbird's Predicta which had just recently been acquired from Starbird by reason of his declining health. Darryl had indicated to Clay that I had more info on the Predicta than Starbird did (which was true because of my lifelong obsession and pending book on the car). I happily wrote text and supplied a lot of history



This is a small sampling of the historic models of the past that the Museum commissioned for cloning/recreation. John Teresi is responsible for cloning the custom in the foreground. Look for more on Clone the Past in a future issue.

and photos to MAS which were used in the incredible display.

During those discussions, I acquainted Clay with our local Museum – and told him that we were greatly concerned about the future protection and presentation of the collection. Clay introduced me to Tim Matthews, curator of MAS, and the whole merger process started.

The actual merger plans took nearly three years. After many meetings, packing materials and cardboard, the collection was unpacked and presented to the public during the formal announcement at MAS on July 24.

Finally, the incredible collection (that will continue to grow) has been protected from loss and damage, and more importantly is available to modelers and car enthusiasts for years to come. We thank Clay, Tim, Neil Young, and the staff at MAS for their dedication, hard work and generosity! ■



Of course, a large collection of Greater Salt Lake Model Car Championship winners are represented along with lighthearted subcategories like Klingon Kruiser award winners.

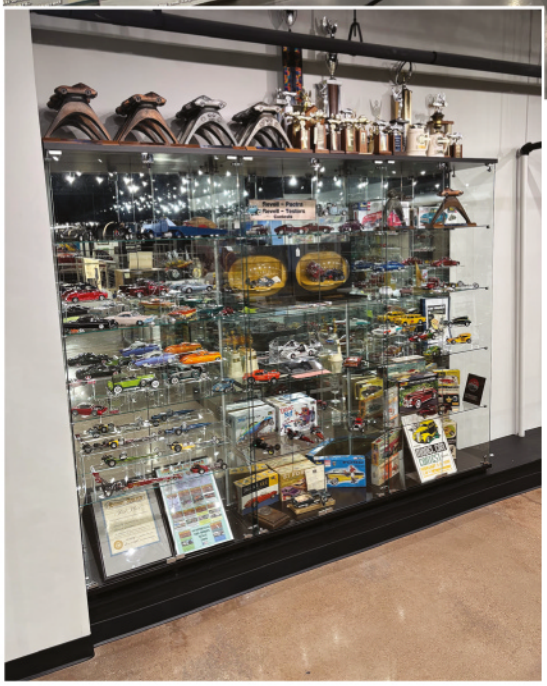
New Home, New Life

The International Model Car Builders' Museum moves into the Museum of American Speed

By Scott Colmer



This is your editor's favorite display room because I have a love of LSR racing. Think of a automotive genre and there is a display for it.



Back in the day if you won a Revell Pactra or Revell Testors contest you had arrived. Take a look at the unique trophies on top of the case. Can you find the model that was used for the trophy tops? Another huge piece of history.

After 3 years of planning and yards of packing material and hundreds of boxes, a semi tuck pulled up to the Model Car Museum, emblazoned on the side was the Museum of American Speed logo. This is NOT a Uhaul rental, the fruits of Mark Gustavson's vision, toil leadership, was going mainstream… in style.

For the whole story on the actual "packing up" and merger process, go to issue 227 of Model Cars Magazine.

The rest of the story is told from the outside as a model car and cool car enthusiast, and a first time Museum of American Speed visitor and witness to one of the great events in our hobby.

Patrons enter through a solid door, no glass panels to act as a preview. Give the Indy Trophy handles a tug and you step onto a lower landing. You can see up a short flight of stairs, but the show stays just a bit out of



Lots of glass, mirrors and modeling history. There is a lot more than what you see in this picture and the collection continues to grow.

view as you buy your ticket. It seems intentional, because it is worth the wait. Go up those stairs and you immediately risk upper spine damage as your head begins to swivel about each time your eye catches another famous car. They are everywhere! And there are thousands of them. The Museum of American Speed is three floors of almost everything you loved as a kid and adult. We do not have room to list all the exhibits so please check out www.museumofamericanspeed.com Put this one on your bucket list.

The perfect fit. The International Model Car Builders' Museum's new home.

If our car model history is first for you, then head to the second floor. Exit the elevator and go left. Across the mezzanine you will see the actual Big "T" standing watch at the entryway of the International Model Car Builders Museum. Let's go take a look. Stepping into the entrance of the Museum one of the first displays is a tall, thin 4 sided glass case that features the freshly restored models of the late Richard Carroll. Move inside and you are surrounded by well-lit glass cases with mirrored backs. And the good news is, it's all there! All the famous models, projects, kits, parts and the stories. All of it! And new additions keep rolling in.



Yep, MAS has their own collection of models too.



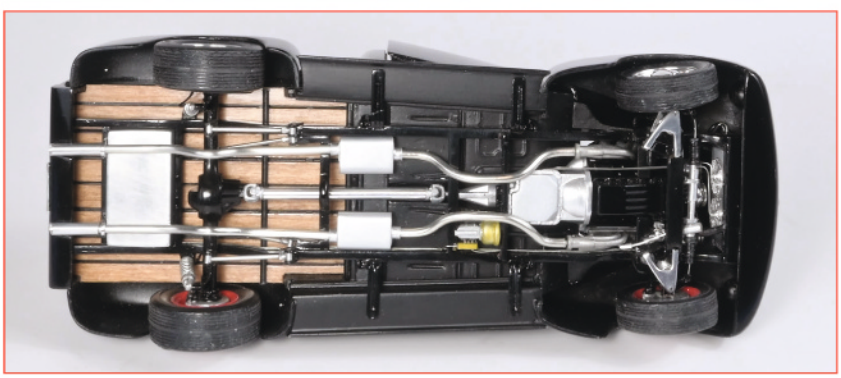
The beginning of a new era. Left to right, in the foreground: Randy Derr - MAS team member, Tim Mathews - MAS Curator, Clay Smith - MAS Owner, and Jim Keeler - first Model Car Museum team member. Jim postponed heart surgery to attend the grand opening!

The car model show that could only happen once

SPEEDWAY MOTORS MUSEUM OF AMERICAN SPEED

In addition to the International Model Car Builders' Museum Grand Opening, the Museum of American Speed hosted an NNL style gathering for attendees to display their notable models. Along with recent projects, there was a plethora of historically significant models that were headed to the museum. Think of a collection of historical models and builders all in one place for a once in a lifetime event taking place at a venue that is automotively mind blowing.







If you are a fan of **Ron Butterfield** then you will recognize the "Look" of this **Testors '48 Ford/Revell '50 F-100 Ford** blend. Ron wanted to use the Foose F-100 window rear window in the '50 cab, so he lengthened the cab 3mm to make it work. He also opened the doors and hood before painting the body Duplicolor black and clear. Ron added his usual super clean detailing from top to bottom.



Nope, not 3D printed. Not resin. This very accurate **Spirit of America land speed racer** was scratch built by none other than **Jim Keeler**. Jim tells the story of this model and his association with the real car so vividly that we asked him if he would tell it to our readers. Look for it in the future.



Roger English started with an **AMT '40 Ford Sedan Delivery** and cut his own windows to turn it in a '39 2 door steel delivery. He also added his own trim and tailgate. This nice cruiser runs in bright red from Tamiya.



Only the most hard core Tom Daniel fans will know this one as the **Marauder**. You are looking at a Testors produced slot car in '67, designed by TD himself. **Joe Porche'** picked this one up to complete his TD collection. It's a rare one.



Rick Hanmore put an All American Models cast **'54 Studebaker Conestoga** body on an AMT '53 Studebaker chassis and headed to the beach. He also scratchbuilt the tailgate before he laid on the Testors Pearl white base and Turquoise checkers in a nice fade. Rick made good use of scale motorsports animal decals. Take a look at the interior and surfboard.



This one actually has a few years on it (20!). But you can't tell. **Mark Johnson** started with Revell Garlits 1/16 dragster then broke out the evergreen styrene and photographs to replicate **Don Prudhomme's wedge dragster**. He had to create a lot of parts to get as close to the photos as possible. Paint? Maybe Testors red? It's been a while.



This **Chaparral 2H** is just one of **Mike Pearsall's** collection of ALL the Chaparrals produced by Jim Hall. On this one, Mike used a Mini Exotics kit and applied the necessary Tamiya pure white. Rivet detail came from a set of Archer decals. This is one of Mike's favorite Chaparrals even though the car was unsuccessful.



Model parts are where you find them. When **Eric Nordstrom** wanted to turn a **Jimmy Flintstone '47 Chevy** body into a woody, he tapped into a cigar box for the siding. To wrap this project up, Eric wired the engine, PE details and that brilliant HOK Passion Purple and 2K clear finish.





It's not often you see a classic British Jag turned into an American style street machine, which is exactly why **Ken Sweeny** did it to a **Tamiya MK II**. His version started as a crushed build. Ken rebuilt the roof and flared out the body, threw in some other mods and a cross injected 572 big block. Then he dressed up the interior in red and exterior in Candy Emerald Green





Acting on a challenge from Ed Fluck, **Elliot Hamm** set to work putting an old tool (AMT?_ body) on a modern tool Willys chassis. He also designed and printed his own wheels and tires for good measure. The Tamiya Blue body features a custom hood hinge.



Australia's **Alan and Ute Barton** pretty much invaded the U.S. modeling world. This time they brought this magazine star from the '50s. Alan started with a '27 T resin body and dropped it on hi-boy deuce frame. After Alan scratchbuilt the interior, it took both of them two days to figure out how to make and attach the custom tube grill. This beauty is headed to the Oakland Roadster Show diorama being displayed in the museum.



The multi hued paint on **Dave Cech's '63 Nova wagon** is even more impressive when you realize it's all done with Testors spray cans. The rest of Dave's racer is mostly Revell Olds prostock. Definitely a cool ride.



Looking like a piece of blue emerald, **Rod Maskiw's '67 Mustang GT 350 from AMT** shows like jewelry. Rod opened the doors, scratchbuilt brake and hand jack detail. He pretty maxed out the engine detail before spraying on the Duplicolor Candy Blue



When **Jim Pistol** decided to take another shot at a childhood favorite, he called Tom Daniel to make sure he got the details of his **TD California Street Vette** just right. For the color, Jim custom mixed Createx paints to get that slick pearl orange. He also detailed the engine and interior to make the perfect match of the car that Tom Daniel still owns.



Joel Klassen had a **Cadillac** vision so he took a 3D printed 1980 4-door body and turned it into a two door. The next step was to find or scratch build all the rest. The whole exterior received elegant coats of Tropical Glitz Rose Gold and Cadillac Black Raven.



As part of a USACC group build, **Dan Hay** chopped and sectioned **Monogram's '55 Ford F-100 Pick Up**. He also added a T-Bird hood scoop before he laid down the Tamiya Gold and Testors Maroon. Of course it's slammed a millimeter from the table top.



Getting the right look was key to **Bob Hood's** production of this **'29 Model A sedan** featuring a JF body. To really set this one apart, he added a Nissan straight six engine to the Tamiya Orange and semi gloss black "office."

At an event like this one, sometimes you know a builder by the model in their hand. In this case **Larry Booth** walked by with this very well known **'63 T-Bird** and this photographer knew exactly who he was. When Larry built this car over two decades ago he started with a junk body and a mission to update it back to a two seater; the trick was stopping the restyling at just the right point. The color is MCW lacquer red.





Joel Klassen owns a **'71 Buick Estate Wagon** so it was only natural to take a 3D printed body and get to work. The paint is Duplicolor Jeep Green. He also added ALL the parts that match the real one.



Pico Elgin brings a 3D printed ghost from the depths of the Atlantic. The Ghia built **1956 Chrysler Norseman** concept car, as seen here, beautifully finished in a light metalflake turquoise blue and white, never made its starring debut in New York for the 1957 car show season; it went down with the SS Andrea Doria.



Andy Martin is a master of the outrageous. His scratchbuilt Bantam rail features twin engines placed according to tractor puller inspiration. Andy detailed **Twin Winder** to the hilt and used exotic metals for the rims and other parts. Look for more Andy Martin madness in future issues.

SCRAPBOOK



The display room pretty much looked like this for three days straight unless the whole crowd went off to a special event. The set up by the Museum of American Speed was first class!



When you have an event filled with past GSL attendees, this is going to happen. And we are glad it did!

2025 Heartland Model Car Nationals

Photos by Ken Sweeny • Captions by Scott Colmer

The 2025 Heartland Model Car Nationals was the 33rd show put on by the KC Slammers Model Car Club based in Kansas City, KS. They had 28 separate classes and 15 Master Awards, including the Heartland Champion award. The Overland Park Convention Center, Overland Park, KS is a great venue with plenty of parking, nearby restaurants and lodging.

It is simply a great show put on by fellow car modelers and we even have a class called "Military (automotive related)… any non-track, automotive-style vehicle used by any military force from any nation." for our fellow military modelers. If you haven't been to a Heartland Model Car Nationals, you just haven't been to one of the best model car shows in America. YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED!





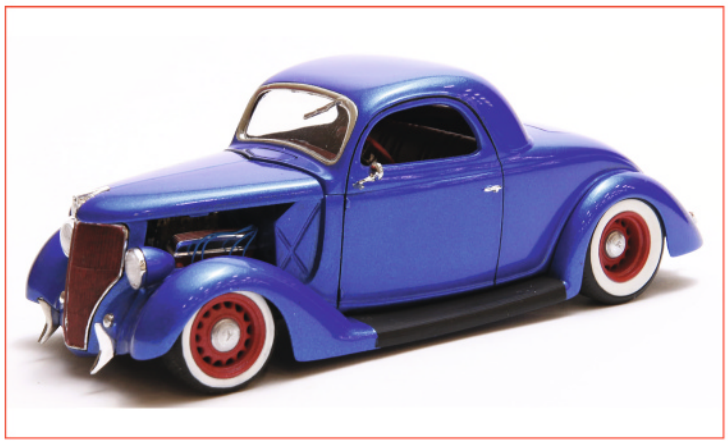
This off road raider by **Drew Martin** is just gnarly. The base is an **AMT '79 Ford pick up**. After that, we are looking at an extreme 4X4 chassis and suspension. A race engine with cockpit rattling headers make the roar. The light weathering adds to the "Means Business" feel of this beast.

This amazing firetruck project by **Tom Mathews** started with a **AMT American LaFrance** kit back in 2023 and is still getting finished off. The cab is from Ranger Detail Technologies and the kit chassis was modified for additional length. The is a huge array of scratchbuilt and functioning parts, many of which are covered in Tamiya red paint or Rustoleum Bright Metal when a chrome finish was needed.





The Tamiya Mica Red paint on **John Ruiz's Revell Marmon** really sets his Big Rig apart. John scratchbuilt the sleeper and added custom rims and tires.



This blue beauty was inspired by a 1:1 version **Jason Gette** saw at a car show. After Jason ground off the molded in exhaust, he set to work adjusting the stance and adding 3D printed wheels and tires. The kit engine was pretty cool, so it stayed. Color is Testors Viper GTS Blue.



Wes Salazar knows how to make a model look cool. HIs Tropical Glitz Avocado green **AMT '62 Impala** is a great example. It's slammed to the ground, but rides on real springs. The rollers are Z-Force as is the LSA engine.

When **Andrew Grany** wanted to build a factory stock Chevelle, he cracked open his **'69 version from Revell**. Before he laid the GM Cortez silver paint, he made the moldings for the vinyl top. The result is as factory clean as it gets.



From rocket launcher to log truck? That's the route **Dave Roeder** took when he wanted to build something different for the show. He started with a **Trumpeter '95 Military truck** and then scratch built the bed and its woody load. The color is a light green.





When you are an avid GT3 fan like **Bill Gouthier**, you have to build a **Tamiya GTS RS**. Bill brought his vision to life with Mr. Hobby bright green paint and carefully worked his way through the carbon fiber decals. He really likes how the rotors actually rotate.



When **Jim Birky** saw a '67 Camaro SS for the first time, the vision stayed with him until he recreated that car with a **Revell '67 Camaro**. The factory looking paint is Odds N'Ends yellow mixed with Testors white. A set of AMT redline wheels and tires complete the memory

Pat Minarick wanted to build his own version of the **Revell '56 Nomad** so he cut one to pieces. What he put together is this highly rusted and patina'd, fender scooped, rat wagon. Wild.





If you are going to add a custom interior and detailed engine bay, you need to open it up. **Don Timon** did just that when he cut out and hinged the doors, hood, and tailgate on his **'63 Chevy II wagon**. He added a bunch of chrome to set off the Folk Art Violet and silver paint.

For those who know, *this* is the real Eleanor. To replicate this iconic car, **Tom Birky** started with an **AMT '71 Mustang 007** then made a hood from embossing foil that he added to a heavily worked resin body. He had the promo decals custom made. Color this one Gone in 60 Seconds.





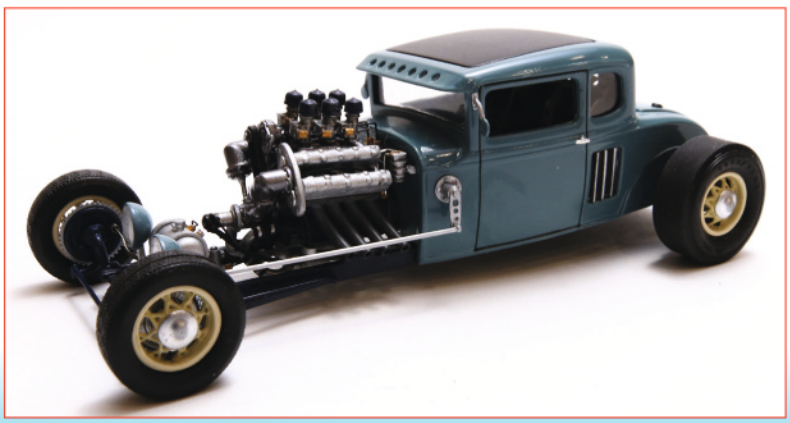
Jose Delgado came all the way from Puerto Rico to treat us to his upgraded **'70 ½ Deals Wheel Camaro**. He pushed the already strained envelope further with a larger engine and Dub City wheels and tires.



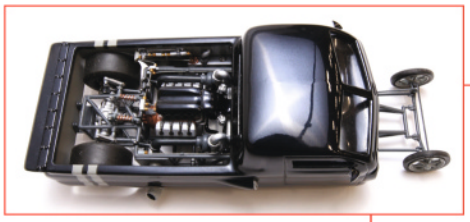
Six year old **Noah Lavender** is off to a great start. He put together this **Revell Graver Digger snap kit** without paint, but made sure he slowed down to get the decals on in just the right place.

For his 4th model car project, **Colin Nicholson** used a Tamiya kit to fulfill his love of **GTR** spec cars. He used his favorite HOK Blu-by You paint and he painted the Brembo calipers yellow for that just right look.





When you are inspired by an engine, it becomes necessary to build a car to fit it. **Scott Bischoff** saw that Steam Punk Flatty at the Museum of Speed and had to make a **Revell Model A** worthy of carrying it. After he scratchbuilt the engine and interior, Scott moved the radiator to the trunk and opened cooling vents in the side of the body. This killer is painted Mission Modes US blue.





When **Scott Bischoff** saw a rendering of a wild **A400** online, he just had to get to work. Scott says the hard part was chopping the top, but the highly detailed, twin turbo engine and chassis had to take some time as well. This Tamiya Dark Mica blue beast demands attention.



11 year old **Garrett Sims** loves '60s dragsters so he combined elements of **AMT's Double Dragster and Willys kits** to make this period flyer. He used magnesium on the wheels and blower and dressed up the body with Tamiya Champaign Gold.

John Ruiz worked hard to get the stance of the **Revell '72 Cutlass** just right. The Tamiya black paint is set off nicely by the white stripes and white interior. Unseen are the engine lines made from various sizes of solder. Nice trick.





Inspired by an image he saw online, **Kyle Nolan** got work on his **Hasegawa VW Type 2 micro bus** by widening the fenders with aluminum and Tamiya epoxy. He got the stance just right before he sprayed the Scale Finishes teal and Tamiya Aqua colors. A Canvas roof tops if off.



Love those elevated tables..and the cool models on them!



A day that will live forever.



This just needs to be seen. Sorry we do not have the name of this artist.



That is one busy vendor area.



Building the Jo-Han Haulin Hearse

By Dave Armstrong



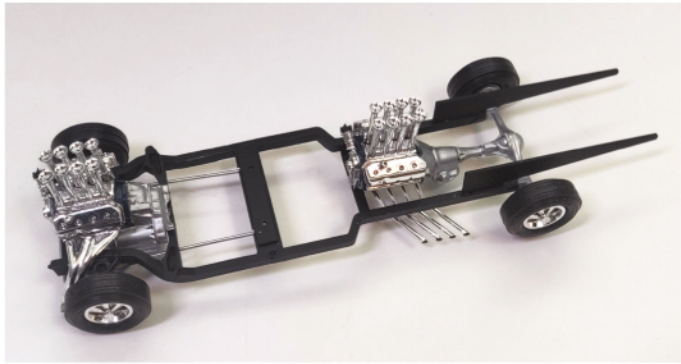
This is a pretty rare kit, the flat box shown here issued in 1966, then rereleased in 1967 in more like the shoebox style. A mint kit in a nice box can sell for $500 or more, but a complete kit in a worn box can still be had for less.

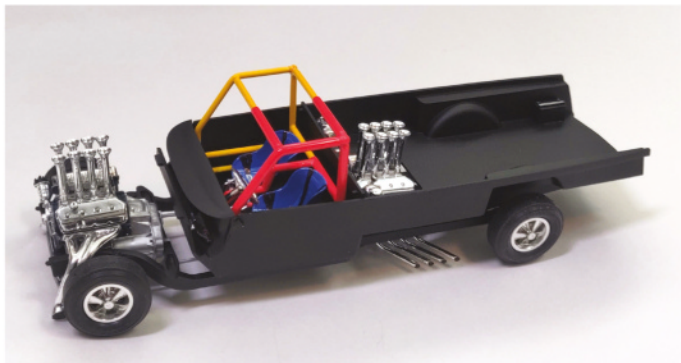
A well known iconic kit from the sixties, this was a wild concept for a drag car model kit, and actually inspired some 1:1 hearse drag racing cars to be built!

I opened up the kit, and because of the sheer size of the car it really fills up the box. This example was mint, with just a very few parts having come off the sprues. There was very little flash (The abundance of which was a running joke in the waning days of JoHan production.) The parts molded in off white, clear, clear red, black tires, and chrome, and a decal sheet is included.

It seemed to be a well designed kit, parts fit was good. For an iconic kit such as the Haulin Hearse, it had to be built box stock, no changes or additions. It comes with dust plugs for the injection stacks, but I opted not to use them. I think I've only ever seen maybe one or two of these ever









built, so I used some basic color themes, like a black interior tub and spiced up with colored seats and roll bar. I only slightly paint-detailed the engines.

Continuing with the box stock theme, Tamiya Yellow was spray bombed on the body and primer white finished off the landau top. I used Fusion Firm for the window and body trim. Being a vintage kit, the decals are really old. They looked decent, but I didn't trust them. I coated them with liquid decal film, but even so, I ended up using a combination of a replacement decal set, and part of the original that had sponsors the replacement didn't have.

Despite the car being so large, it was a simple, uncomplicated build, and went together quickly. The Haulin Hearse is such an unusual drag car, it just stands out. Put that together with classic box art, and you have a stunning display on your shelf! ■







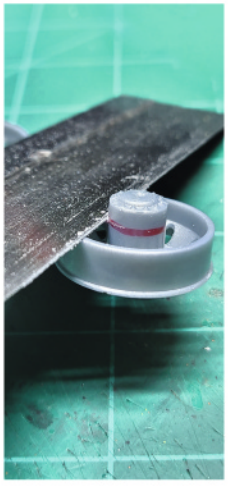
The Big Chiller

Building the AMT reefer trialer.

By Alex Melnychuk

Manufacturer: AMT
Scale: 1/24
Price USD: $35.99

In this issue I'll be covering a big accessory for your big rig build, literally! The accessory in question is the 1/24 AMT Reefer Trailer (originally an Italeri design). The trailer body measures 24" long (25" with reefer unit installed) by 5 ¾" tall. The kit is very well detailed and has minimal parts, making this a simple build for anyone. The only roadblock is you will need extra space! When this trailer is hooked up to a tractor, it can measure out to well over 3ft long, so plan your display space accordingly and make sure to have enough paint too.



Step one was assembling the rims. A modification I did to mine was to shorten the hubs down. If you decide to shorten the hubs, you will not use part number 70A.

The Italeri hubs stick out way too far to look accurate, and with these rims being a two piece assembly, it was much easier to shorten. I took my saw blade from Hobby Lobby and cut it flush with the face of the rim.

Once the hub is shortened, clean up any excess debris, and assemble per instructions.



To cover up the hub portion, I used stick-on jewelry beads from Hobby Lobby, and painted them with Revell Chrome. A perfect fit, but I also suspect any AMT or Italeri big rig kit chrome hub covers would work as well.

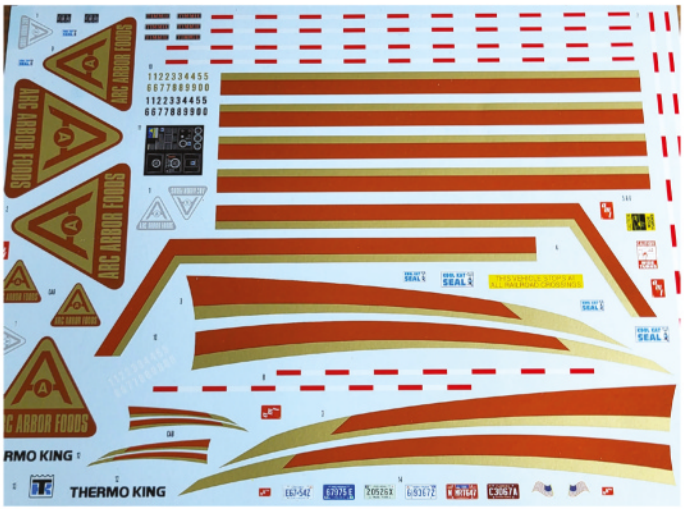


The suspension and body were assembled per the instructions. However, be careful when assembling the body

panels and the van body together. The left and right side panels as well as the roof are two pieces. You need a big flat surface to glue everything together so it can be level during assembly. There is also the option to not install the reefer unit and build the trailer as a dry van. Simply fill in the four tiny holes on the front wall panel of the trailer, sand smooth, and that's it. No other modifications necessary.

With the trailer body being 2ft long, painting indoors in my paint booth was very difficult. I would suggest a sturdy piece of plywood or a piece of an old shelf to paint on outside on a nice day, or indoors inside a garage. I had to paint mine in the garage, using an old piece of shelving, laying down masking tape, and putting the trailer on so it would not shift or slide around when painting.

The decal sheet included with this trailer is massive as well.



It comes with enough decals for the trailer, a big rig, and extras. Company logos, stripes, numbers, reflective tape, even a decal for the reefer unit controls, which was a very nice touch. It's everything needed to build a fully matching truck and trailer. The decals laid down perfectly with no issues, and were very easy to work with. To get the stripes perfectly hugging the trailer ribbed siding, I highly recommend Tamiya Markfit super strong. Lay the decal down, brush on the Markfit, and let it dry. I have had spectacular results using it the last few years and it is always my go to for decals on any project I do.

This trailer came out looking amazing and was fairly simple to build up. I am super pleased with the results, and looks great paired up to my (issue #8) Ford LTL9000 tractor. Even though the trailer is 1/24 scale, it can be hooked to a 1/25 tractor without looking out of place. You can find this kit quite frequently online, at hobby shows, and in hobby shops for fairly cheap. I highly recommend purchasing this one the next time you stumble across it, it is well worth the time and effort assembling this behemoth for your big rig project.

See y'all in the next one!

PROS- Minimal parts, easy assembly, no flash, vast decal sheet

CONS- 2 piece body panels can be tricky to assemble and align properly during build up, no fuel tank for reefer unit ■







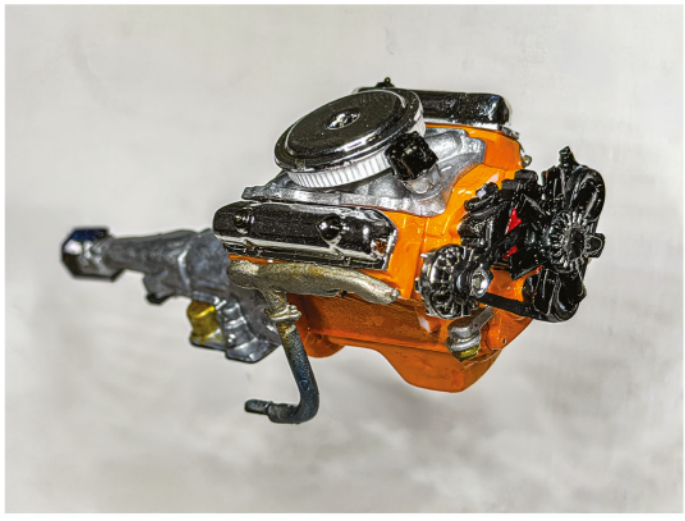
Revell 1971 Plymouth GTX Street Machine

By: Roy R. Sorenson

Kit Supplied by Spotlight Hobbies
Manufactured by Revell (Monogram)
Scale: 1/24
Price USD: $30.85

In 1971, the Plymouth B-body platform underwent a significant redesign, characterized by rounded "fuselage" body contours, a shortened 115-inch wheelbase, quad headlights, and a loop-style front bumper. The 1971 Plymouth GTX marked the final year of the upscale muscle car as a standalone model, concluding an era of high-performance luxury before stringent emissions regulations and escalating insurance costs compelled it to become a mere option package.

Revell's 1:24th scale replica accurately represents the car. The body exhibits commendable detail, and the interior is spot on. The decal sheet includes both white and black gauges (as well as a radio face), but I would have preferred wood panel decals for the interior. The chassis comprises several pieces, facilitating detailed assembly, although it lacks rear shock absorbers. The kit includes two sets of wheels: Cragars and factory rally wheels (both meticulously represented).



While not as rare as the HEMI, the 440-powered Plymouth GTX remains scarce due to limited production numbers for the 1971 model year. The 440 Magnum engine, paired with a TorqueFlite automatic transmission in this kit presents a few drawbacks. The The most evident mistake is the distributor. The actual 440 distributor exits the front of the engine at an angle, the kit rendition sticks straight out of the intake manifold. Additionally, the flat, four-barrel carburetor beneath the flat air cleaner is a

notable issue. I would have preferred the factory six-pack as an option instead of the four-barrel carburetor. The kit does offer a tunnel ram, two four-barrel carburetors with velocity stacks, and a distinct hood featuring a large hood scoop. These new components suggest that this version is the "Street Machine" variant. Other new parts include a trunk-mounted rear wing, rear suspension risers, and a set of classic five-spoke Cragar wheels.

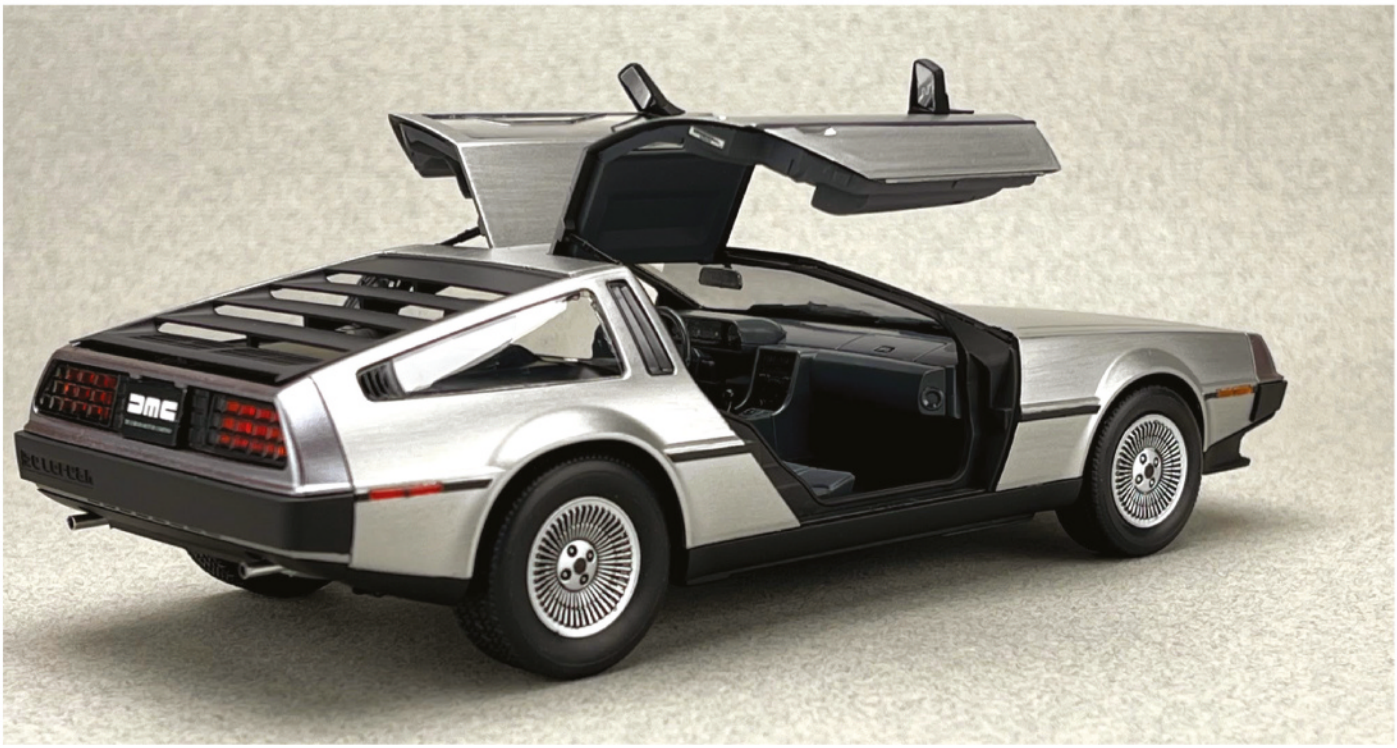
Certain model kits, such as those featuring molded interior tubs and engine compartments integrated into the body, may pose challenges for some modelers. However, with meticulous masking and attention to detail painting, these elements can be brought to life. In my interior, I opted for a faux wood finish on the dashboard, center console, and interior tub. This slight enhancement contributes to the overall detail of the model. Although this is the new "Street Machine" version of the kit, I chose to build mine in a more Pro Touring style. I discarded the large hood scoop and rear deck spoiler to the spare parts box and removed the spoiler mounts from the deck. I painted the model in a vibrant "Plumb Crazy" purple with a touch of additional metal flake, complemented by a white interior.

The kit was relatively straightforward to assemble, with minimal construction challenges. It is an enjoyable build that I highly recommend to anyone. ■









‘82 DMC DeLorean

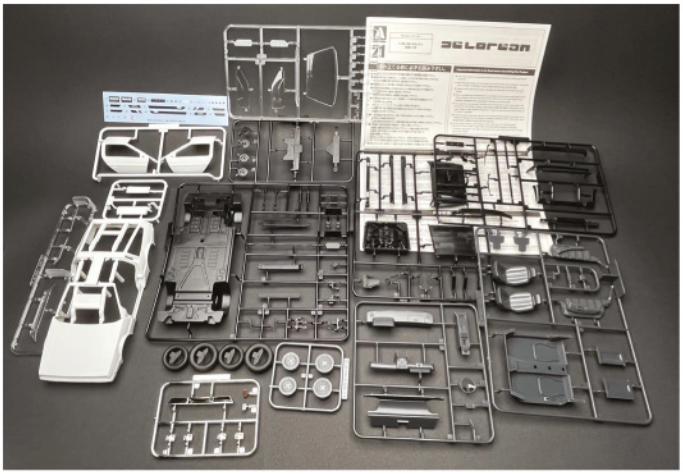
By Jodi Doyle

Kit supplied by Spotlight Hobbies
Manufactured by Aoshima
Scale: 1/24
Price USD: $48.85

In writing this article, I would be remiss not to start with the impact of the 1985 pop culture film Back To The Future! The movie not only single handedly launched careers it also solidified the legacy of well-established personalities within acting. The movie also introduced most of us to the silent actor in the movie that played the most pivotal role in the plot, the DeLorean time machine! The DeLorean Motor Car Company was the brainchild of John DeLorean. The name John DeLorean should not be foreign to fans of American Muscle Cars, as he was instrumental in bringing us the Pontiac GTO, Pontiac Firebird, Pontiac Grand Prix and one of my favorites, the Cosworth Chevrolet Vega. With the tremendous success of the movie franchise, we as model builders have had the opportunity to build the DeLorean model kit in “Time Machine” livery across multiple manufacturers, and as seen in the various movie releases. Until Today! Aoshima has now offered the DeLorean for the first time to us model builders in stock form. Buckle Up! When this baby hits 88 miles per hour, you are going to see some serious… building, and review of this kit.



Upon receiving the kit, you are greeted with imagery of a 1:1 DeLorean on the cover. Inside the box you will find a body, doors and small parts tree molded in white, 4) black trees, 2) dark gray trees, 1) silver tree, 1) small chrome tree, 2) clear trees, 4) vinyl tires, small decal sheet and a detailed instruction sheet. At first glance there are no mold lines visible on any of the parts. The body has very minimal mold lines that are barely visible and hidden well. All the parts are “pinned” for lack of a better term, with positive alignment and support which makes assembly a breeze. The clear parts tree is amazingly crystal clear. This is my first opportunity to build an Aoshima kit, and from a cursory view I have to say that I am very impressed.



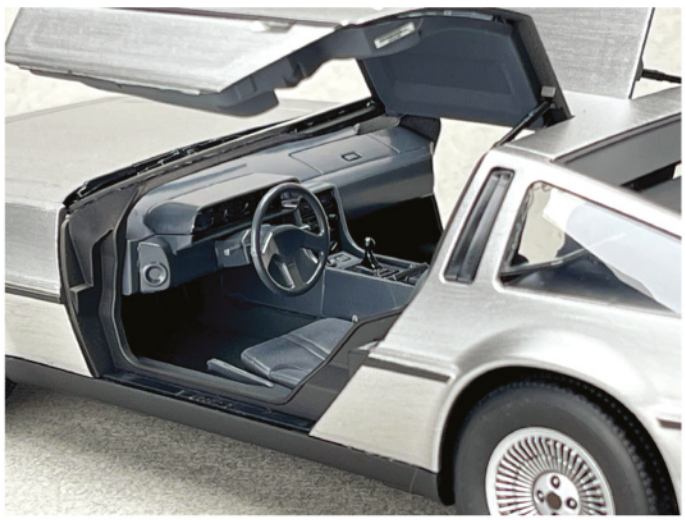
I started by building out the chassis and suspension first. There is some guidance in the instruction booklet for painting call outs on the chassis pan which were masked and painted with Tamiya Nato Black, Gloss Aluminum and Mica Silver Lacquer. The black molded parts were left as molded, and Tamiya Acrylics were used to brush paint details on suspension and brake components. The interior was next and I used all the gray molded parts as molded, for the interior color. The dash and center console were left in raw plastic with Tamiya Semi-Gloss Black Acrylic brush painted detail per the instructions. Tamiya Black Panel Liner was also applied to further enhance details. The seats and 2-piece door panels were cleared with Humbrol Semi-Gloss Clear to add contrast between the dash and these parts. The floor pan / rear bulkhead was painted Tamiya Nato Black Lacquer. There was a gauge cluster sticker provided, and small details were brush painted with Tamiya Semi-Gloss Black Acrylic. Though the interior, by and large, was not "painted", the application of the previously mentioned methods produced a great result.

One of the only disappointments I had with the kit is the engine bay / engine are molded as a single unit. The details are crisp enough and added parts lend themselves the ability to detail it appropriately. BUT! The engine cover (Hood? Trunk? Boot?) is a single piece that once the model is assembled, cannot be removed. Because this specific area would be hidden, I chose not to do anything with it as I wanted to focus extra time on the body and paint.

The DeLorean's factory finish is bare brushed stainless steel. I wanted to duplicate this effect, so I started by applying Mr. Hobby Black Surfacer 1500 to the body and doors. I then applied 3 light coats of Mr. Hobby Super Metallics Stainless Steel Lacquer. I let the body sit for a couple days to assure that everything was appropriately cured. I then used a 400 Grit sanding sponge and GENTLY sanded in one direction as straight as possible to apply uniform scratches to the surface of the body and doors. I then went back over the body and doors with the Stainless Steel to even out the surface. I think for the first time trying this technique it turned out convincingly. I may suggest a 600 Grit sponge to start and be VERY mindful of straightness of the sanding striations to assure the look is uniform.

Final detailing and assembly were straight forward. All the cladding that goes around the bottom of the car, body moldings and door jams were painted in Tamiya Semi-Gloss Black Lacquer. The cladding was installed effortlessly due to the positive engagement and alignment that is engineered into the kit. The nose and rear sections were masked off and painted with Tamiya Light Gunmetal Lacquer which felt like a fitting color. The wheels were painted Tamiya Mica Silver Lacquer and treated to Tamiya Black panel Liner for the achieved result. The windshield was back-masked and painted Tamiya Flat Black Lacquer. The taillights and marker lights were painted with Tamiya Clear Orange and Red as appropriate. The doors are operable with a basic pin and socket style of hinge and have prop rods provided in the kit to hold them open. The rear louvers are also hinged but were less friendly to get them to function correctly. Decals were applied to the door jams, doors and rear license plate.

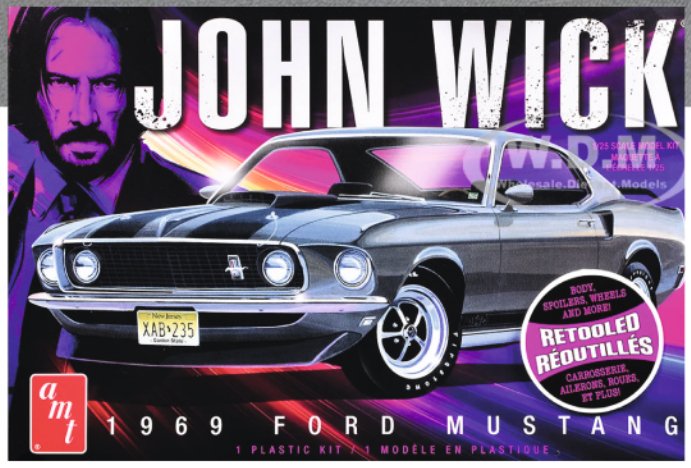
This is a WONDERFUL kit to build at any skill level. The kit is engineered in such a way that everything fits together as expected and no modifications were needed to achieve a great result. For beginners or a weekend builder, the kit is molded in 4 colors and can easily be assembled as molded. Black side stripes provided on the decal sheet applied to the white body surely would bring enough depth and contrast for a high level of realism out of the box. We should be thankful for the Back To The Future movie franchise for bringing this once obscure car into our periphery. We should be even more thankful that Aoshima has re-tooled this into a kit that can easily be built out of the bounds of our imagination and creativity. Lowered stance? Modern wheels? Full engine detail? Shiny paint job? I see another one of these kits in my future! Now Back To The…. model bench. Happy building!



John Wick Mustang

By Elliot Hamm





Kit supplied by Spotlight Hobbies
Manufactured by Round2 / AMT
Scale: 1/25
Price USD: $33.85

The Real Car's Back Story

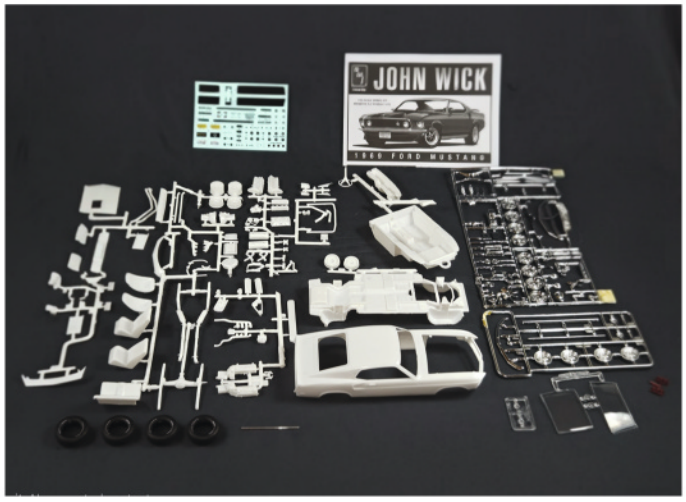
Introduced for the 1969 model year, the Ford Mustang Mach 1 was FoMoCo's premier performance package for the fastback horse. Designed to compete in the height of the muscle car wars, the Mach 1 featured aggressive styling that set it apart from other trims including a non-functional (or optional Ram-Air) hood scoop, chin spoiler, decklid wing, high-backed bucket seats, and classic Magnum 500 wheels. Under the hood, engine options ranged from the standard 351ci V8 up to the 428ci Cobra Jet.

In the *John Wick* movie series, Wick's cherished '69 Mustang serves as the central catalyst for the entire series. Even though the film's dialogue makes us believe it's a "1969 Boss 429", the actual hero and stunt cars built for the movie were built from 1969 Mach 1s. The iconic movie car sports a pretty mean appearance finished in dark metallic grey with dual satin black racing stripes, hood pins, the Mustang's iconic front chin spoiler, and deep Magnum 500 wheels; a brand new set awaits us in this retool!

What's In The Box?

Round 2 gave this well-used mold another fresh update specifically for the John Wick release. This update fixes past fitment quirks and introduces movie-accurate Magnum 500 wheels, a brand-new body, a retooled front valance, a chin spoiler, and high-quality pad-printed tires.

AMT/Round 2 did a great job capturing the stance and silhouette of the movie car. Personally, I love seeing this classic tooling put to good use, we get the charm of



an older kit alongside the luxury of brand-new parts. The modified tooling yields solid fastback proportions with the new body shell, correct front fascia details, and clean quarter panels that lack the wavy sides you usually get with vintage molds. Plus, the included Magnum 500 wheels are crisp, boasting awesome detail thanks to Round 2's new tooling.

Unboxing it, you get six bags: two with white styrene, two with chrome, one with clear parts, and one with the tires and axles. In total, those hold six sprues of white parts, the chassis, body, two chrome sprues, glass, new headlights, and new transparent-red taillights. The box includes newly retooled parts, the beautifully sculpted body, new wheels, new pad-printed Wide Oval tires, and the supporting hardware. This includes new chrome bumpers, rocker moldings, front valance, splitter, mirrors, spoiler risers, hood, and a hood scoop. All the new parts are super crisp, feature positive locator pins, and barely have any flash. With that said, the legacy parts from the original MPC will take some cleanup. Luckily, it's nothing anyone who knows how to handle a #11 blade can't fix.

Round 2's update of a legacy mold is a genius move; without it, we might not have seen a '69 Mustang from them anytime soon. We got an awesome new body without paying a fortune for a full redesign. I'm genuinely grateful they're still using this classic tooling and gave us the smart updates we actually needed.

It's worth noting this kit has been known to be slightly undersized since its original release. That hasn't changed here, the new body was built to match the original proportions so the rear roll pan and glass from the old kit still fit seamlessly.

New VS. Old Body

Since we got a new body, I thought it would be nice to show you what you could have had with the old body. I am reviewing this kit for the first time, so I didn't have any of the older bodies to show you. Luckily my buddy that helped me with the history of this kit also had a 2006 past issue (middle) and an original 1970 issue body (bottom), which is a completely different mold than the 69 body compared to the new body (top). You can tell that each one of these bodies are each derived from different body molds by looking at the ejector pin size and placements on the under side. The old tool 69 body definitely has some scars from the Dick Trickle wheel wells being hogged out then re-added and the shapes are a little off. Some of the body lines are also not super straight. The old body and the 70 both lack super crisp trim lines like the wipers, window moldings, and door seams. In the comparison of the different bodies you can see why we



needed this retool. Hats off to Round 2 to bring new life to this kit on a budget.

Sub Assemblies

Starting with the interior, you'll find the usual flash to clean off the bucket seats and dash. Looking closer at the dash, it's definitely not straight. I fixed it by blocking the dash pads (top and front) and reshaping them with a little sanding. It's an easy fix that makes a huge difference when looking through the windshield. There are also some noticeable ejector pin marks on the rear package tray that show right through the back glass. A little putty makes them disappear, and they're easy to reach with no back seat in the way. Checking reference photos to detail-paint the cabin, I noticed the door cards are actually '67 engravings—just another quirk from this kit's long history.

You get two engines in the box. The instructions call for the 351 Windsor small block, which goes together pretty well and has good detail for its age (and thankfully no hole in the block!). I painted mine Ford Engine Blue, stripped and painted all the chrome except the air cleaner, and picked out the extra details. This engine would look incredible with some aftermarket wiring and fuel lines, especially since the kit includes a separate fuel pump and filter that mount to the water pump.

Moving to the chassis, it has a fair amount of flash out of the box. The wheel wells also have some mold misalignment that takes sanding to smooth out, but they clean up fine. Like a lot of this build, you just have to remember it's an old kit brought back to life, it's not going to be modern/

perfect, and that's fine. The front wheels mount on pins with three height options; I recommend the top hole. The rear suspension uses tabs off the chassis with three holes of their own. I went with the middle hole, though you could use the lowest one if you want a pretty aggressive rake.

The body goes together great. The new wing risers, splitter, and mirrors have solid locator pins and crisp molding, making final assembly way easier than struggling with the old body. To the eye, the stance and proportions look spot-on to the screen car. The only thing that really gives away the kit's undersized nature is the supplied tires. While they're true 1/25 scale, they fill out the wheel wells a bit too much, for my eye. This was my only part swap on an otherwise box-stock build. Digging through my spares, I found a set of Round 2 tires with a shorter sidewall and the exact same tread pattern. You can steal these from the front tire sets in kits like the AMT '55 Chevy, MPC Grumpy's Toy Vega, or the MPC '57 Chevy Flip Nose, just to name a few.

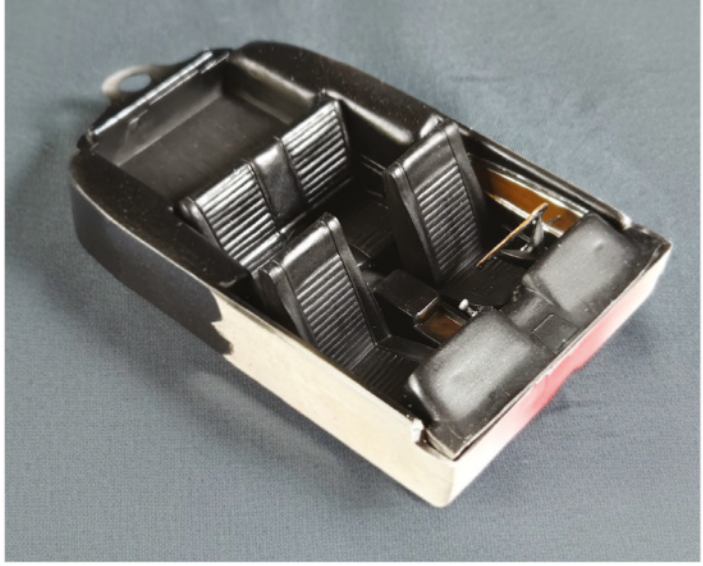
Painting

If you really want to get that sweet light gunmetal look that John Wick's car sports in the film, here's how I did it: I mixed Tamiya x10 gunmetal and x11 chrome silver in a 50/50 ratio. I think this color matches really closely to the box art. Now if you want to paint your model any of the other factory 69 colors, they would still look killer on this kit! The decals went on and laid down with no issues.

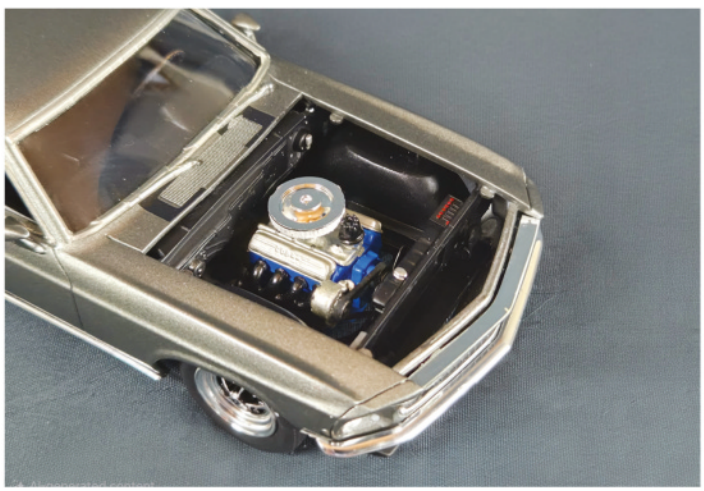
Final Thoughts

All in all, this kit is definitely a genius move for how to handle classic modeling molds. Round 2 took a massive gamble, bringing back a super worn-down 1969 MPC mold, but the pay-off is huge. Instead of making us suffer through a retro body shell, or charging an absolute fortune for a brand-new ground-up kit, they smartly spent their budget right where it counts. The newly-tooled body, sharp Magnum 500 wheels, clean trim, and retooled front valance totally revamp the whole kit, breathing new life into some seriously vintage plastic.

Sure, you'll definitely need to pull out your #11 blade, some sand paper, and use some patience to clean up the flash on those older sprues. But honestly? That's part of the fun. You get the cool history of an old-school AMT build, but with the luxury of crisp modern parts dropped in where you need them most. It was a super fun build, the screen-accurate John Wick stance looks incredible on display, and it proves that old tooling can still look good if you treat it right. ■



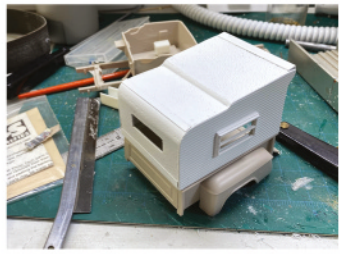




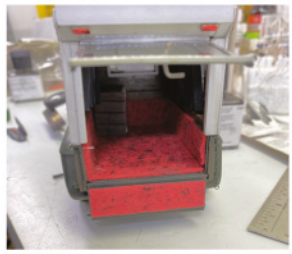


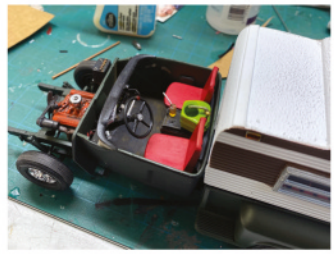
Welcome to the Reader's Table. This is the spot where you can send pictures of your favorite project to share with other readers. Good stories and photos make a difference. Send submission to contributors@automodeler.net











A Journey Back to a Simpler Time

By James Lieto

The great thing about modeling is that we can duplicate a familiar car, truck, or anything that we may have enjoyed into a compact form. It doesn't have to be 100% exact, but you want it to capture the essence of the experience.

In 1974 I traveled cross country in my 1955 Chevrolet pickup. My friend Cliff and I prepped this battle worn wreck to accomplish this. I had purchased the truck from my girlfriend's father. I remember it leaked more oil than it burned. No problem. Gas was $.29 cents a gallon and we threw a quart of oil in on every second fill up.

I had a truck cap made for it (sleeping quarters) and we had an 8 track stereo, sending music to the front and back. We carpeted the truck bed and installed an ice box. We carried sub zero sleeping bags, a propane stove and a self contained sink between the front seats. We were ready to go. With no goals, and no set time to return we were off to see this great country.

It only took me only about 50 years to duplicate this vehicle but the idea had always been there. AMT provided the basic 55 Chevy truck and the Model King Camper provided me with some needed cap windows, cabinets etc., but they could have been scratch built. Easier was the better choice.

My biggest obstacle was to make the cap. I had a few pictures of the truck so I basically eyeballed it. I cut a cardboard template for the sides, and transferred it onto some plastic siding material. The curves in the roof were going to present a problem. The shag carpeting was made using red felt, dabbed with black paint on a Q tip.I plated the tire mount using a Micro Mark metal plating kit, then attached the spare tire.

The interior was important and needed some details especially that ugly green sink. I used a suitcase from my parts box and fashioned it into a sink. Heated sprue made the faucet. Many details are difficult to see, such as a vacuum gauge, CB radio and 2 wires attached to the brake pedal. The importance of the 2 wires was because of the real trip. We were outside of Cheyenne, WY and the brake pedal light shorted out. I gerry-rigged 2 wires and a piece of metal to temporarily activate my brake lights. You use what's at your disposal. It was a must have addition.

The real truck had a soft roof carrier above the cab. The model's roof carrier was made with folded cardboard covered in tissue and then spray painted the appropriate color. The color was sprayed dry to give it a texture. I attached this makeshift roof carrier with thin strips that I cut from the printer's plate.

The total model took about 60 hrs to complete. It brought back memories of a simpler time and allowed me to experiment with scratch-building, weathering and the joys of modeling.

2026 SOUTHERN NATIONALS

MUSIC IN MOTION

Automobiles immortalized in songs: "Pink Cadillac", "Lil' Deuce Coupe", "My 409", etc.



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- The ACME Southern Nationals is a non-judged event organized to promote fellowship among model builders. However, special awards will be presented for Best in Show,Top Ten, Best Themes, etc.*
- The **Clarence Brown Convention Center** is located about 40 miles northwest of Atlanta, only 1 mile off I-75. The host hotel, **Courtyard Cartersville by Marriott**, is adjacent to the Center.
- A "Make It-Take It" event is scheduled for children 12 and under to learn modeling skills. A FREE kit is provided *(one per child per paid admission)*.
- We offer an **"Early Bird" admission pass ($TBA)** which will include entry to the contest.

Entry Fee to place models into the show: $TBA unlimited entries
General admission: $TBA | Children under 12 free with paid adult | 8' vendor tables $TBA ea

**Previous ACME award-winning models are not eligible, models must be entirely built and painted by the entrant. Other restrictions may apply.*

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