



KIT LOTUS

Volume 9 Issue 1 February 2016



Carousel Lotus 38 conversion
1967 Indianapolis 500
Jim Clark 1:18 Scale

KIT LOTUS AT 50 - EDITIONS THAT IS!

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Kit Lotus editorial - "the worlds only magazine dedicated solely to scale model Lotus"

February 2016 is a special month for Kit Lotus as this issue, the first of Volume 9 is the 50th Edition, so welcome. February also sees us on the road flying the Lotus flag at Race Retro 26th, 27th & 28th February.

Reaching 50 issues is a milestone, a lot has been shared between Lotus model collectors and a lot has been written about Lotus models, creating between us something special. Being part of something this special has become the main driver for optimism toward the next 50 issues especially as there is always something to write about and something Lotus to share.

I always remember receiving one of the early subscriptions from a Lotus collector who commented that he was happy to take the magazine but was philosophical in an acceptance there would be no second or further issues. That collector is still a reader and also a contributor to our small but dedicated fellowship of scale model Lotus enthusiasts.

Many of you have contributed articles for these 50 editions, one edition even had not a single Lotus in it. For all the contributions, pictures, comments (mostly good but occasionally well meaning criticism) I am very grateful. Those contributions have come from across the globe , from the United Kingdom, United States, Europe, South Africa, Scandinavia, Australia, South America, Switzerland and more. Each one very important and despite being a tiny niche in the model collecting world. Kit Lotus retains a loyal readership.

It would be nigh on impossible to single out any one model highlight from those 50 editions. All the superlatives have been used over and over again but such is the quality of what readers bring to Kit Lotus I can guarantee they will be used repeatedly in the future.

So many of you who joined our niche fellowship have commented that the notion of building and collecting scale models was always a solitary pastime. So it was for me and I remember visiting the Club Lotus Festival at Donington Park several times and always mulling over the idea of having scale models on display. Would this be appreciated? The next best thing would be to try writing about it and now several years later it has happened , no longer is it a solitary pastime.

A big change for me since starting Kit Lotus has been the steady growth of my 'built' collection rather than my pile of 'kits to build collection'. All subject matter for the magazine but also a contribution to the travelling Kit Lotus display.

It is also a great privilege to be recognised, and when I asked Clive Chapman if he would provide a comment for the 50th edition of Kit Lotus , he wrote some very kind words:

"From the very start the success of the Lotus Marque was built upon the successful efforts of enthusiastic, able and dedicated individuals. Colin Chapman was the high profile leader and he relied upon the support and contribution of many kindred spirits. Evidently John Thornhill is one of those Lotus characters who achieves an impressive amount, both for his own satisfaction and for the benefit of other kindred spirits.

Kit Lotus is a true centre of excellence. It concentrates on the best in scale models and presents its features to the highest standard. Happily for the Lotus Marque it celebrates the history of Lotus. In some ways this is quite a narrow point of focus, but the achievements of Lotus range far and wide over the automotive and motorsport industries. In particular the reputation and realisation of so much innovation makes the Marque a happy hunting ground for discerning model makers wanting to capture significant Lotus design types, especially if they have not been realised previously.

Above all it is the effort of realising such an extensive publication to such a high standard that I most admire. I have an idea of what it takes to write informative, accurate and interesting articles; most of all it takes a bloody long time. And Classic Team Lotus appreciates the many benefits that are generated, especially in terms of information and encouragement.

So, I am delighted to be able to write just a few words to express my appreciation of and admiration for Kit Lotus and the dedicated team that has realised such a high standard and done so much for the Marque. A full scale achievement for a small scale aspect, of Lotus. Kit Lotus forever!

With best regards.

Yours sincerely

Clive"

Autosport International

It's a while since I last visited Autosport but the Lotus 38 project gave me and Peter the opportunity to attend and visit Classic Team Lotus at their magnificent display. The rest of the show doesn't really hold much of an interest overall although the engineering section was fascinating.



We get to see these cars with their 'clothes' on. As with the 12, when we see them at Hethel they are being worked upon.

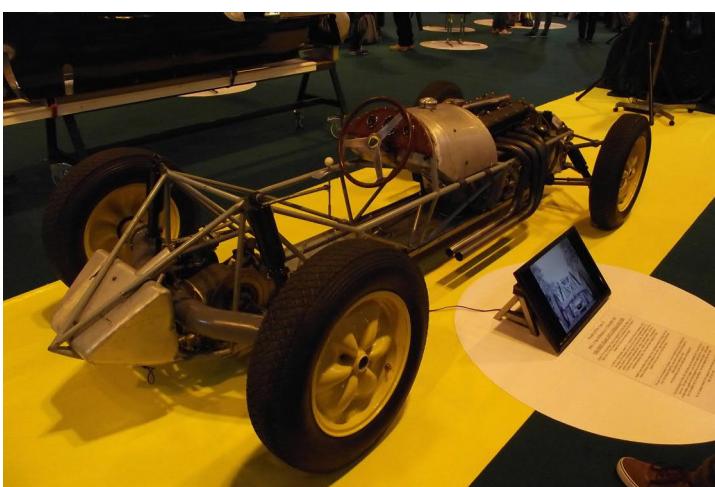
A Ronnie Peterson Lotus 72 sat proudly alongside the CTL display sporting a period style JPS winners decal announcing first place at the 2014 Monaco Historique



next to the JPS roundels celebrating the car's 1973 wins with Ronnie at the helm.

Later in the afternoon, CTL unveiled the Lotus 56B to the public as the next restoration. That is going to be something.

There is always lots to see for the motorsport enthusiast, plenty of live action and plenty of famous faces. Fascinating stuff on display including a Ford Anglia for sale at £170,000 (well it was only an Anglia on the surface) but all routes led back to that giant green transporter and the cars surrounding it.



The CTL display was up to its usual very high standard and it gave us the opportunity to view the progress of the Lotus 12 restoration. The last time we saw it at Hethel it wasn't on its wheels, it had no tanks or steering wheel and dash panel. The bodywork was also on display giving a taster of how the whole project will look. Can't wait to see it finished.

Greg Thornton's Lotus 91 looking immaculate flanked the stand. Pete being no stranger to this one spent some time looking over it. It is only shows like this or at the race track



Jim Clark 1967 Indy 500 Lotus 38/7—Carousel conversion

Modifying diecast models is a skill some people have. I don't count myself in that camp but occasionally something comes along that just has to be tackled. To be asked by CTL to convert one for a customer is a big challenge as well as a privilege. On my last visit to Hethel a 1:18 Carousel Lotus 18 left with me as a 1966 car, it was to return as the 1967 version.

The last Kit Lotus, featured the Spark 1967 Clark Indy 500 Lotus 38 in 1:43 scale illustrating the difference between the model currently on sale and the car that actually took part in the race, my project.

Carousel, no longer with us, also had a reputation for super diecast models in 1:18 scale producing many Indy 500 replicas a couple of which I proudly hold in my collection. Values of the rarer Carousel models continues to rise steadily especially those Lotus



subjects like the Lotus 38, like the real car, gave the maker the option to produce several variants. Carousel made the 1965 Jim Clark Winning Car and the 1966 Jim Clark second placed car and then several 38 variants representing other drivers and other years including the Al Unser #18 car.

This is the car that presented the opportunity to convert a Carousel 1966 #18 car into Jim Clark's 1967 #31 race car on behalf of CTL for the cars current owner, but with it came the problem of researching what the race car actually looked like. This is where sticking your nose into Lotus books on a regular basis reaps rewards.

1967 was described by Andrew Ferguson in his book Team Lotus the Indianapolis Years as a "recipe for disaster" Colin Chapman had arranged to be supplied with an Indy version of the humungous BRM H16 but in the end had to revert back to Ford power at the 11th hour.

Team Lotus' gang of gladiators had to convert Graham Hill's Lotus 42 to accept a Ford V8 whilst Al Unser's Lotus 38/7 was called into service for Jim Clark. Of course the team made it to the grid but in low qualifying positions and both cars took an early bath.

The picture seen most of Jim Clark in the 1967 Indy 500 is of the crippled 38 heading for the pit lane with smoke billowing from the offside bank of cylinders. This is the first clue to the car's I.D. showing some of the subtle differences between the car in 1966 version and the car in 1967 version.



Photo: Indianapolis Motor Speedway

The Carousel model of the 1966 car is very accurately represented but being a diecast, is made in a way that things don't break off easily. Consequently, some things are over scaled to ensure the manufacturing process can produce this robustness whilst still capturing the essence of the subject. Carousel did this really well and with the exception of the suspension mounts being enlarged, the model is very good.

To change the car to its 1967 guise, some things had to go. The rear wheels used in 1966 were the Halibrand pattern with Lotus spoked alloys at the front. The spark box on the 67 car vacated its offside nest, leaving a gaping hole, and found a resting place nestled up against the rollover bar on the other side of the cockpit. However, it started the race in the normal position but gave problems during the rain soaked Sunday which saw the race red flagged. Overnight the magneto and spark box were moved to the nearside ready for the Monday re-start in weather more akin to the Brickyard's preference. Rear view mirrors sprouted extended mounts and were finished in black. The livery changed slightly of course and the top rear radius arms were set below the normal mounts. The biggest change however is the blister tank mounted on the nearside.

Carousel Indy Conversion continued

Various extra fuel tanks appeared on several 38s. none of which being particularly elegant, the Team Lotus version being no exception. The Carousel model comes with the Airboxes covering the inlet trumpets as seen on Jim Clark's 1965 Lotus 38. However, most photographs from the period show the car with inlet trumpets exposed. Remove the model covers and there are no inlet trumpets, just a stub. The metal genius Peter Pedroza machined bushes to fit new trumpets and a set of new aluminium inlet trumpets for me, along with a pair of mirrors and two very neat Lotus four spoke rear wheels. That just left me to remove the 1966 livery, make the new fuel tank and spark box and apply a new livery.

One of the longest and most tedious jobs was to remove the existing livery without damaging the paintwork. For this I use a product by 3M called FINESSE, it is a very mild abrasive fluid, similar to a Jeweler's



Rouge, applied with cotton buds. This takes hours , the livery on the model is Tampo printed and the white stripe running front to back is painted and many hours of painstaking work is needed to lift the livery. I left the white stripe on the front of the car but the rear stripe took an age to remove.

Where do you go to for a one off livery of a fairly obscure model in 1:18 scale? Indycals of course. I contacted Michael Portaro over in Colorado who prints to order. Yes he could help and was amazing in sourcing many research photographs needed to identify the decal set and their position on the car. He did this for an amazing \$12US. OK so they aren't Cartograph but they are brilliant for the price, the white comes in a little thin but I fixed this by retaining the painted stripe on the front of the car and just using the black Indycals outline from his print.

Number roundels were backed up with some spare Cartograph blank roundels.

I made the fuel tank from Milliput, then hand shaped to fit using sand paper and eventually Tamiya 1500 grit finishing paper. To fix the tank on the side of the car, some lugs were needed. These are 3mm bee-



chwood pegs in holes drilled into the Zamak material. Zamak is a bugger to drill so slow progress and blunt drills were the order of the day.

Another feature of the 1967 car was the rear suspension top radius arms, they were fitted below the usual brackets. This takes us back to the Zamak diecast material and the over scale of the mounts. Only grinding the mounts away and starting from scratch would have given me a chance to change them but that meant stripping the whole car and re-spraying so a compromise was made. Peter to the rescue again, I robbed his spares box of a steering rack from a 1:20 Honda to use the rod ends. Removing the rod ends and shortening the Carousel radius arms gave me the length to set the rods below the normal place and so to splice them together I drilled down the length and used a steel pin as the joining piece. A plastic bush cut and cross-drilled to fit the standard mount was used and I was able to use a shirt pin through the rod end. Another piece of milliput and aluminium served to produce the new spark box and new aluminium strips were used to mount the newly machined mirrors.

Job done and with the honour of delivering the finished model mounted in its Widdowsons acrylic case, to its new owner who I met along with Peter in the Classic Team Lotus transporter at the 2016 Racing Car Show – Autosport International.

JT

Lotus 38 Conversion continued



Presenting the model in the Lotus Transporter at the 2016 Autosport International Racing Car Show. Left to right Pete Pedroza, Sapphire Nichols, Nick Fennel, Clive Chapman, John Thornhill.

How do you present your models? Over the years, experience of my own and seeing other collectors models has taught me that dust is a killer, especially to plastic kits that can't be easily wiped over. Thankfully, more and more options to display our models are readily available.

Presenting a model to show off its best attributes is also key. So when I was preparing the 38 to present to its new owner, I had a careful look at what was around and came across Widdowsons Ltd of Colchester.

It is no coincidence that Classic Team Lotus use their acrylic display cases so it had to be good enough for me. I phoned with my requirements and an overnight despatch ensured the 38 was ready to shine on time for Autosport as one of their 1:18 Acrylic cases with the raised base on stainless steel legs arrived.

The clever packing was almost as impressive as the acrylic case. Using air bags and bubble wrap separated by flat cardboard sheets and held together by a low tack spray adhesive prevented any movement of the case or its base during transit. Both the base and cover are wrapped separately helping to maintain an unblemished delivery. Great service and only £48 including overnight carriage. Give them a try.



www.widdowsonsltd.co.uk.



AUTOart DeLorean DMC-12

Although not strictly a Lotus, there is enough Lotus DNA in the DeLorean DMC-12, commonly referred to simply as the DeLorean, as it was the only model ever produced by the company, to be considered in Kit Lotus magazine. Plus, this fine model is the work of AUTOArt, renowned for their high quality diecast models and especially for the authentic features they re-produce. It is hard to look at the pictures and not see a full sized car. The DeLorean was a two seater mid-engined sports car, manufactured in West Belfast, Northern Ireland for the US market from 1981–1983 by John De Lorean's DeLorean Motor Company. The intriguing story of DeLorean is well covered elsewhere in other publications, whereas the diecast is very recent and thus very worth a mention. The car features gull-wing doors and an innovative fibreglass chassis and underbody structure developed by Lotus, along with a unique, rust-proof brushed stainless-steel body, all mounted on the double Y framed chassis derived from the Lotus Esprit. The body design of the DMC-12 was a product of Giorgetto Giugiaro of Ital Design and was fitted with unpainted panels made of brushed SS304 stainless steel, making this car a very difficult proposition just to own and maintain in the first place.



AUTOArt bring us this fine model and true to their quest for authenticity they undertook for the first time, the challenge of producing a die-cast model car body with the same brushed stainless-steel finish. The whole development of this model took over two years from start to finish. To replicate the same effect and texture in a scale model is a long and painstaking process. Different types of nickel-chrome plating effect were tried in an effort to ensure the finished product was not a bright chrome such as normal chrome plating presents. It had to look like an anodized, brushed surface.

To simulate the actual brushed stainless-steel texture, more than one year of continuous trial and error was required before the desired effect was achieved. Then to ensure we collectors don't spoil it by mauling it around trying to open the various moveable panels, not only do AUTOArt provide us with a specific tool, they also provide us with a pair of



cotton gloves, so definitely no finger prints then? Surely a diecast model first.

Before the chrome-plating process, the cast body surface needs to be finely polished, then buffed to a perfect finish in order to achieve a good chrome-plating result. The polishing process alone takes an average of 70 minutes for each and every body, and is performed by experienced workers. After the chrome plating, the surface is polished again with a special formulated cloth roller to create the very fine hairline texture simulating exactly the brushed and polished stainless-steel body texture of the DeLorean. The chrome plating of the complicated body shape must be flawless, but tiny bubbles or rashes often appear in some areas of the body after the plating, which means the body must be scrapped as rework is impossible. Because of this, more than 40% of the metal bodies are scrapped after chrome plating, making the production cost extremely high. The retail price reflects AUTOArt's commitment to delivering the highest possible precision to its discerning collectors by creating a fitting tribute to this unique car. Internet prices are shifting from around £200 to £350 .

Footnote: In Texas the DeLorean Motor Company is back in business selling brand new real life DMC-12s under a strange law allowing classic cars to be re-manufactured providing they are less than 25 years old!!



CELEBRATING DAMON HILL'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WIN

FEATURING CARS FROM THE WILLIAMS HERITAGE COLLECTION

Race Retro will celebrate the career of British racing driver Damon Hill to mark the 20th anniversary of his World Championship win and his time with Williams, when it returns to Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, from Friday 26th to Sunday 28th February 2016.

Various famous faces from the Williams team will appear throughout the weekend, which will culminate with a confirmed appearance by Damon Hill, making his Race Retro debut, on Sunday 28th February.

As part of the celebration, four of Damon's most famous cars from the Williams Heritage Collection will be on display

– the championship winning FW18, the 1995 FW17 race winning car, the 1993 FW15C with which Damon won his first Grand Prix, and a 1990-91 FW13B which Damon drove to make his debut as a Williams test driver in 1991. In 1993 Damon was promoted to the Williams race team after and took the first of his 22 victories at the Hungarian Grand Prix.

During the mid-1990s, Hill was Michael Schumacher's main rival for the Formula One Drivers' Championship. The two protagonists clashed on and off the track. Their infamous collision at the 1994 Australian Grand Prix gave Schumacher his first title by a single point. Hill went on to become World Champion at the 1996 Japanese Grand Prix, memorably captured by an emotional Murray Walker who proclaimed 'I've got to stop because I have a lump in my throat'. Hill won eight Grand Prix on his way to the 1996 title and started all of the 16 races from the front row of the grid, completing a dominant year for Williams Renault securing the Constructors Championship some 105 points ahead of Ferrari.

Williams Grand Prix Engineering was founded in 1977 by Sir Frank Williams and engineer Sir Patrick Head, the cars on show at Race Retro form part of Williams Heritage whose mission is to preserve, showcase, run and service cars from the teams past. It is overseen by Jonathan Williams and former Williams F1 team manager Dickie Stanford. Both Jonathan and Dickie will be available for Q&A's on the live stage during Race Retro.

I'm pleased to announce that Kit Lotus will once again be attending Race Retro in February 2016 as an invited exhibitor.

Race Retro is rapidly becoming our key exhibition of the



Jim Clark display Race Retro 2015

year with our visitor numbers far outweighing the size of our stand. The organisers have heard our plea for more space and given us 6metres x 3 metres of prime space in Hall 2.

Many times during previous shows we had to vacate our stand and wait in the aisle so that visitors could get a closer look.

In 2015 we celebrated 1965, Team Lotus and Jim Clark's best ever season with our Jim Clark display and whilst our 2016 plans are for a more general display, we will have several debutants on show.

The theme this year is Damon Hill. However, we will be flying the Lotus flag again and we look forward to catching up with our Kit Lotus friends. Drop in and chat about all things scale model Lotus.

Visit us on stand D60 in Hall 2 and check our progress on a 1:8 scale Lotus Eleven and Lotus 18

Lotus 91 Studio 27 conversion - by Peter Pedroza

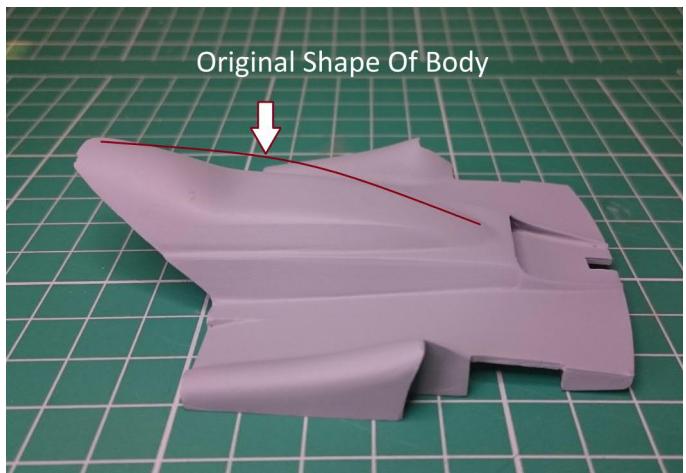
Picture the scene if you will. Friday 13th March 2015, Classic Team Lotus headquarters, Hethel. I had just handed over three 1:5 scale Climax V8's to John Bowers, the owner of 25 R4. Sat with John and Clive Chapman I spent a few minutes answering their questions, explaining what had been involved in building the models. At the end of this Clive looked me in the eye and said, "So Peter, are you taking a little break from modelling after all this work or have you something else planned?" to which I replied, "Well, I'm waiting to build your next model!!" He turned to one side picked up a Studio 27 Type 91 kit and placed it in front of me with a very big grin on his face.

If you remember, in 2014 I built a one-off Type 92 at CTL's request for them to present to Greg Thornton in celebration of his winning the previous years Masters Championship. Since then Greg had the tub taken out of 92/5 and put back into 91/5; hence this was the car I was asked to build. I asked why this change had taken place and what was involved from CTL's point of view. Clive Chapman explained:-

"In 1982 the team raced the type 91 design. Although the 1983 type 92 design was a fundamentally different car - flat bottomed as opposed to ground effect - it featured the same tub construction as the type 91. Evidently Greg went well in 92/5; by winning its flat bottomed class he won the Championship overall. But he fancied having a go at winning races overall and for that you need a ground effect car. Reinstating the tub out of 92/5 back into 91/5 was the obvious and fairly straightforward solution."



Building the 91 was a lot more straightforward than the 92, only requiring three mods to the basic kit. The Studio 27 model on which the model was to be based was for the car as raced in Austria 1982, the famous Elio de Angelis win and sadly the last victory that Colin Chapman would see. In this race it ran without front wings, had top rocker front suspension and the original rear bodywork which gradually sloped down from the roll hoop to the exhaust



tail pipes. Later during that season it had front wings added at certain circuits, was converted to Pull Rod front suspension and had a more abrupt and lower engine cover. The car as currently raced in the Masters series has all of these later modifications but it wasn't difficult to convert the kit.

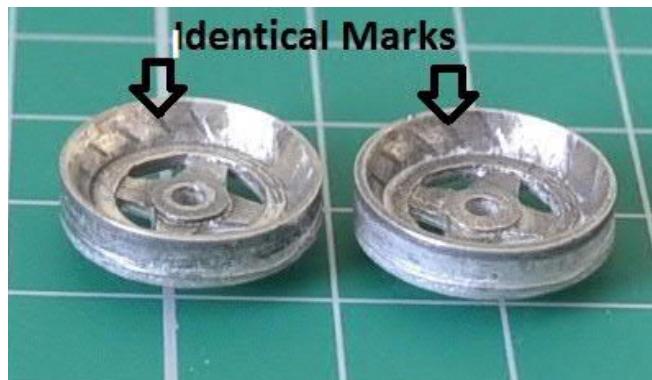
When Kit Lotus went on the last works tour in May, this 91 was in the workshop being readied for the Masters race at Brands Hatch. It goes without saying that I was all over it like a rash. Tape measure, note book and camera all being put to good use. Sometimes you just seem to look at cars without really taking it all in but on this occasion I had time to study parts in detail. It was fascinating for example to look closely at the pull-rod front suspension system figuring out how it all worked.

This pull-rod system on the model was added as the front suspension was assembled and the front wings simply made from plastic card. For the engine cover it was just a case of drawing a template of the new shape, marking the moulding in the kit and then getting to work with razor saw, files and filler. In theory the rest of the kit was as per box - except it wasn't! All was going well until I started on the wheels.



Lotus 91 continued

These wheels on the 91 are very highly chromed with the fronts having a particular dished shape. In the kit these are nicely made from a turned aluminium rim and a cast white metal centre insert. The rears were no problem, just requiring a quick polish of the rims and the flat gold painted centres added. On the fronts the dished effect is part of the insert and so I thought that as this white metal alloy polishes up quite well it would be more effective than chrome paint. I put one insert in the lathe and applied metal polish. After 20-30 seconds I had a look and found 7 half moon marks on the dish, almost like "chatter" marks. This can sometimes happen on a lathe when a cutting tool digs into the revolving metal bar, but this particular operation was just a gentle turn with a cotton bud. Very strange. I continued hoping that these marks would polish out but they were too deep. While thinking what I could do to rectify this problem I had a go with the second insert. I had a close look at this one before I started and it seemed fine, but the same thing happened. Not only that but the marks were the same number and in exactly the same position so obviously there is just a single mould for these front inserts that has some damage to one side of the die. After moulding these depressions seemed to be filled with a bit of extra alloy to make them smooth. So if anyone out there has one of these kits, beware!!! Maybe chrome paint is the way to go, but for me it was too late, I had to turn two new inserts from aluminium bar.



Following the usual process of spraying, the decals were applied with the pin striping and component logos as per kit. The John Player script had to be purchased separately, these being TABU Design. At the same time I had got some of the distinctive tartan weave to cover the inside of the tub and a more simpler carbon fibre weave to cover the wings.

This then left just the extra decals that are on the car as raced today. These comprise the FIA, Masters, BRM Watches and Greg Thornton's name. If you remember I had some success with making these for the 92, and as I had kept the template on the computer all I had to do was add the extra Watches logo. I thought it would be quite easy this time but what I hadn't added in the notes last year, (Kit Lotus Volume7 Issue5), was that after printing the decals they need two coats of Microscale Liquid Decal Film to make them waterproof. Needless to say I forgot all about this process and just plundered on. First decal in the tepid water and I watched in horror as the drivers name just washed away! Time for a small panic, but if I'd bothered to read the instructions that came with the decal paper.....! Anyway, I found the magic bottle and started again, this time with success.

Now I'm afraid it's confession time. As you all know the requirement to build a model consists of just two things, patience and an eye for detail. I've always had the first and thought I had the second, but apparently not. Going back to the front suspension, the model required changing from rocker arm to pull rods as I have already said. I added the pull rod system but omitted to change the top wishbones.



On a rocker system the pivot points for the wishbones are outboard a little whereas on pull rods they are close up against the tub. The model was totally finished before it was gently pointed out to me that the bodywork was incorrect, it still having flares over these out rigged top pivot points. I had photos of the car I had found online but in my own defence these were mostly side views and when I photographed the actual car in the workshops it obviously had had the bodywork removed. Not much of a defence I'll grant you but it's all I have!

Lotus 91 continued

I could have asked CTL at anytime during the build for photos, drawings etc. and from experience I know they would have been only too pleased to supply what I wanted. But no, I didn't ask because I thought I knew it all! It was just one of those occasions when you fail to register something no matter how much you look at it, either that or it was the ultimate senior moment!

As luck would have it the Studio 27 model is basically in two parts and removing two screws underneath allowed the floor, seat and front suspension to drop out so I could carefully rectify the mistake. It was only at this point that I realised what I had done. It had both top rocker and pull rod suspension! Luckily it was only a model, because if I had been let loose on the real car it would have probably gone straight on at the first corner with that set-up!

So with a very red face I set to work changing the top wishbones and cutting back the bodywork to make it much slimmer around the scuttle area. I had to call upon Mr. Thornhill to help with this and he sent me some spare decal stripes of the correct colour and some magic elixir which allowed the removal of the existing pin striping around the nose and cockpit sides without damaging the paint. It was then all rebuilt and mounted in a really nice JPS display case which had been thoughtfully provided by Classic Team Lotus. Another further set of photos were taken which were submitted, this time passing "scrutineering"!

I have now made quite a few models for Classic Team Lotus or their clients and it has been an honour and a total pleasure to do each and everyone for



them. Making this 91 was no exception but it all got more than a bit embarrassing at the end.

Peter Pedroza

SMTS can be relied upon to keep us fed with Lotus models even if the gestation period is lengthy, this one longer than even an African Elephant!, Years in the making, or at least on our "when is it coming out" list but here at last the long awaited Lotus VI. Whilst we have known for ages SMTS planned to release the 6, its arrival sneaked in under the radar so a pleasant surprise over the Christmas period.

In 1:43 scale, it will be a diminutive model even at this size but with the advantage now of 3D modelling, firstly expect other versions – this model is the works prototype – and secondly the finish on the castings and the detail is yet again remarkable.

The Lotus VI was the first Lotus production car, around 110 were made, many going as racing cars and most of them built by owners as kits to avoid the then dreaded purchase tax. As an aside, I remember 1973 when VAT was introduced, this would have meant new cars being cheaper at the time as the VAT rate was cheaper than purchase tax but those nasty government people slapped an extra car tax on new cars to make sure we plebs didn't gain anything. I digress, the Lotus VI set the company on the road to fame being the forerunner of the legendary Lotus 7, still in production today as the Caterham 7.

The space frame chassis of the Lotus VI was made by the Progress Chassis Company and the aluminium body by Williams and Pritchard both becoming Lotus suppliers for years to come. Most VIs ended up with either Ford or BMC power units and this model.

This model can be in several early guises. XML 6 which was raced by Colin Chapman himself and his wife Hazel as well as the Allen brothers Michael and Nigel, 1611 H which went on to be owned by Gerard 'Jabby' Cromabc and UPE 9 which was raced successfully by Peter Gammons, one of the very first customer cars.

SMTS have again captured the car beautifully with very little flash on the castings. This should be a straightforward build and as the early cars tended to be polished aluminium, the model should polish up very nicely requiring just a sealing coat to protect it.



Bits and pieces



Spring_and_autumn_2012

Fujimi has released this rather neat model of the sub-aqua Lotus Esprit featured in the James Bond film and driven into history by Roger Moore as JB himself in The Spy Who Loved Me.

Kit Lotus has featured this Esprit before in various forms, diecast and resin, but never as a 1:24 scale plastic kit. This one looks really cool and crosses both Lotus and film collectors paths at a not too shabby £40 odd quid on the vendor.

Automodello Lotus 49

I can hardly complain if someone criticises what I write when reviewing models and so I am happy to put another opinion to readers and set records straight when appropriate.

James Cowen, CEO of Diecasm, whose Automodello brand gives us the fabulous 1:12 Lotus 49 was less than impressed when he heard about my comments comparing his model to a Tamiya Lotus 49, this is what he said:

"I can tell you from the investment involved and 4-years of development with Classic Team Lotus that our model is certainly not a kit nor did it use any of the Tamiya kit as a basis. Automodello does not copy other manufacturer's work product. It was one of the most heavily researched and accurate models of the Lotus 49 which was fully scrutinized by Classic Team Lotus throughout its gestation."

Until learning of your review today, there has been only one other less than positive review. Virtually every other reviewer worldwide has praised this model as the most accurate representation of the Jim Clark winning Lotus 49. Clive Chapman has said it is simply the best model on the planet."

I mailed a copy of the offending magazine over to James with some clarification which I won't share with you save, in the hope having read my review the context would become clear to him, and to reiterate that far from a scathing review I commented several times what a fine model he has produced. It is a matter of record the admiration I have for those having the bravery to bring us this type of model. I can speak from first hand knowledge of die casting, the horrendous cost for tooling when I did it will probably still be the same nowadays, as will the difficulty in achieving 100% accuracy to satisfy those of us with the Anorak badge. I also spelled his company name wrong demonstrating a lack of attention to detail, but he didn't pick me up on it so I apologise for that as well.

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