

## Formula Models

A few miles from Hastings, well hidden in the Sussex countryside, we find a small, picturesque farmyard similar to many across the south of England, except that this one houses several model car specialists, namely Marsh Models, Model Assemblies and Colin Fraser's **Formula Models**.

### FSW - When and how did you start modelling to begin with?

CF - The usual, I started with Airfix kits as a kid. The first car I built was a Protar kit of the 1965 Ferrari 166. I grew up in Dartford and I would go to the local model shop with my Dad who made flying planes. In 1964 I went to our local race circuit, Brands Hatch, for the first time and that became a regular day out when the bug really bit. I built a 1:25th AMT (I think) Lola T70 Spider kit and used to modify Corgi and Dinky toys.

### FSW - What got you started with 1:43rd?

CF - The shop at Brands Hatch had Solido kits but they were always too pricey and then I saw my first John Day kits and was particularly taken by the choice of subjects, Ferrari 365BB NART, Lotus 78 etc. At this time I saw both GPM and Lamberts of Ley Street advertising in Motorsport and contacted Lamberts as they were relatively local, going along and getting some 1977 or '78 Le Mans car kits. My first order from GPM was for a Lotus 78 and Ferrari 312T3, one by Western, the other C Scale. The latter never got built!

### FSW - So when did modelling become your living?

CF - It was gradual. I discovered that I was quite good at building and that the shops would buy what I built, allowing me to buy more. I had joined the Ferrari Model Club through which I made a few more contacts including Nathan Beehl at GPM, who was able to give useful advice over the phone. I then bumped into John Simons of Marsh Models at either GPM or Lamberts and we immediately got on well. Plus he was local (I'd moved to Hastings by now). So when I eventually started modelling full time it was as a kit builder, working for John, GPM, Lamberts and one or two others.

### FSW - So how did you end up going in the direction that you have?

CF - I think like many others, there were subjects that I wanted that weren't otherwise available. I've



Colin Fraser and the Ferrari 640 at Maranello

always admired the work of John Barnard and wanted a model of his Chaparral 2K which didn't exist as a model, so I made it. Connoisseur Carbooks in London were bringing out some interesting books and I saw an ad for the Indy yearbook in another publication and started getting them imported for me, giving me reference to create other current Indycar subjects.

### FSW - Do you have a favourite subject?

CF - Easy. We're back to John Barnard and his Ferrari 640 in high airbox form. Such a pretty car.

### FSW - Is there a particular model that you have created that you are especially pleased with or proud of?

CF - The same subject, which will be known to your readers as the Raccoon kit. I decided I wanted to make it and do something a little special, so I just rang John Barnard and he invited me down to the Guildford factory that he had set up so that I could have a good look at the car. He supplied me with drawings which he had scaled to 1:43rd and had the lads in the workshop photograph the bits that I needed close up details on. I got the model to the pattern stage and then ran out

of money. At this point Raccoon stepped in and bought the project, giving me much needed cash for other projects and to feed the family! A close second is another high detail kit, the Oldsmobile Aerotech Indy pace car. That said, if I were to do these subjects again I would do them kerbside. Superkits are a great challenge to design but they are also an absolute pain in \*\*\*\* as it is high on impossible to get it all to fit. I have huge admiration for Luca Tameo and his kits, they're not always easy but they are very well done and if I were to collect a particular range it would be his.

### FSW - On that point, do you collect and if so what?

CF - I've had various themes, Ferrari, Lotus, Chris Amon but it seems that with any theme I always get to a subject that I don't particularly like and so stopped and ended up going off at various tangents. Now I just collect what takes my fancy and have gone through lots of phases. Nascar was a recent one and now I'm on a Porsche 917 kick, concentrating on the various body styles. They don't have to be winners, just good looking and I particularly like DVA models, they're beautifully done and there are some interesting variants there.

### FSW - How do you go about creating a new model and how much of the time is spent on research rather than hands on?

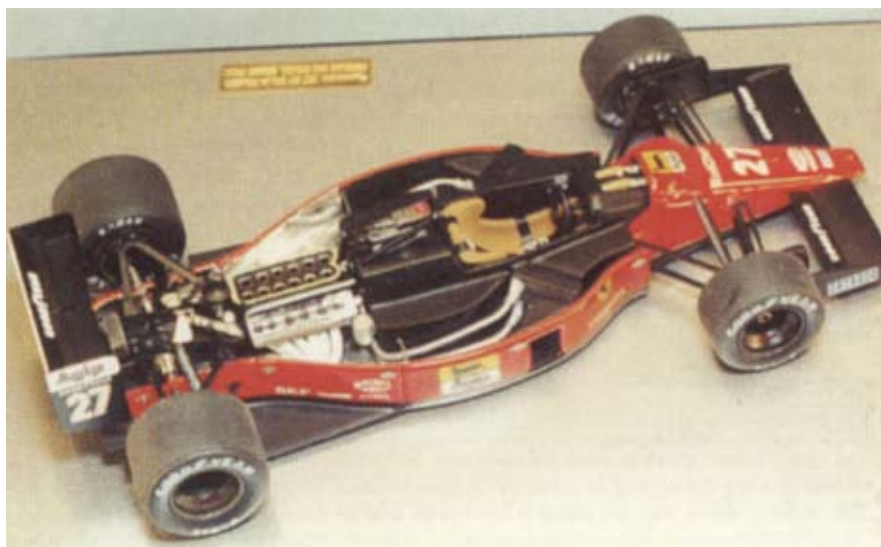
CF - The physical creation of new patterns is now farmed out. In the past I have had masters created by Keith Williams, Dick Ward and Ian Pickering and most of them are now done by Chris Sargant, who works here at the farm and also does pattern work for Marsh. I long ago learned to concentrate on my strengths and delegate to others the bits that either I can't do or they can do better. I do the design, the development, research and I draw all the photo-etch. With decals I provide all of the info to the printers and then make any adjustments needed to a test print before final approval. The biggest problem is to pass on the passion for a subject to the suppliers and subcontractors as it takes intimate knowledge of the subject to get it right. Now that we are all at the farm it is better and we can bounce ideas off each other which is always useful.

### FSW - Do you have a typical working day?

CF - I'm very organised and structured in my days. I start work at 8am and the daytime is pure building work and then when I get home in the evening I do the research and development work and any paperwork that needs doing. I have always done my own painting but am starting to get some help with this now. I'm trying to change things so that I have to do less at home and get a bit of my life back.

### FSW - What's next?

CF - The long promised Penske PC4 is now at the pattern stage and this will be followed by the PC6. Also later this year there should be the 1973 - 1975 Eagles. When the current Dallara chassis ceases to be in use I shall stop with modern Indycars and look back to more classic subjects. The cars of the 1960s, 70s and 80s are more interesting to model and create as there are so many developments and it seems that the collectors are also more interested in these rather than the modern era. There are a couple of interesting liveries on the Dallara that I would like to do though. We'll have to see!



Colin's model of the Ferrari 640, here in Brazilian GP form, released as a kit by Raccoon.