



## Model Factory Hiro - New 1:20th resin & metal kits

- HIR228** March 701 Belgium/RSA 1970 STP £234.35  
**HIR229** March 701 Monaco/Spain/Germany 1970 Tyrrell £234.35  
**HIR230** March 701 Holland/France 1970 Antique Autos £234.35

The core parts for these kits are extremely similar and building starts around a chassis tub that is cast in many parts, onto which fully detailed suspension is added and the, now familiar from Hiro, Cosworth DFV engine is attached to the back of. The body parts are again multi part and are cast in very thin resin rather than white metal. There is a good selection of small detailing parts such as wiring, machined shock absorbers and photo-etch and the decals are all clearly printed and the liveries look complete. The works STP kit offers three decal options; Andretti in South Africa, Siffert or Amon in Belgium. There are three options again in the Tyrrell entered car with Stewart's Monaco and Spain mounts or Cevert's German GP entry and in the final kit there are two versions of the car driven by Peterson in Holland and France.



## Fujimi - New 1:20th & 1:24th plastic kits

- FUJ09044** McLaren MP4/6 World Champ 1991 1:20 £38.45  
 Etched parts - **STUFP2054**

Fujimi kits can be somewhat variable in terms of detail but this one has plenty. Builders may wish to take the bleach or oven cleaner to the many sprues of plated engine parts but they are the only real obvious negative. Early feedback suggests that the kit parts and instructions are very similar to the 1:12th scale Tamiya offering, just scaled down. That will certainly mean an involved build project and one that the experienced builder in particular will be able to really get stuck into.



- FUJ12362** Fiat 500 2008 1:24 £25.95

This is a much, much simpler kit than the F1 McLaren above but should still be a fun build. Fiat's retro-styled 500 has been a huge sales success in full size and we're sure that it will be equally popular as a kit. The shape of the car looks very good and chrome is kept to a minimum with just the lights, exhausts and a couple of small trims supplied plated. The wheels and tyres are particularly realistic and whether a newcomer to the hobby or an experienced modeller, you should be able to make an attractive model.



## Studio 27 - New 1:20th resin & metal kit, 1:20th etched set & 1:12th decal

- STU20240** McLaren MP4/24 Australia 2009 £157.10

Also available **STU20241** - Monaco Lewis Hamilton and the McLaren team arrived in Australia as defending champions, though they didn't get off to the best of starts to their season. Hamilton fought through to a podium position, only to yield a place to Trulli while behind the safety car on the team's instruction, ultimately being disqualified from the race. As with all of the 2009 cars, the new regulations make the body design very clean and Studio 27 look to have captured the basic shape well on the cleanly cast resin body. The wing parts and most of the other ancillaries are white metal, there is a reasonable amount of photo-etch and the decals are clearly printed.



- STUDC785** Honda NSR500 FIM 2000 Emerson Decal 1:12 £11.95

This is one of a huge number of decals for Tamiya's kits of the 500cc Grand Prix Racing motorcycles which are being re-issued by Studio 27. All are full livery sets and this particular example offers the Pons team bikes of Loris Capirossi and Alex Barros. We've seen a number of these subjects built over the years and they make for an interesting collection when finished.

- STUFP2054** McLaren MP4/6 PE Detailing Set 1:20 £11.50

For Fujimi kit **FUJ09044**

This set is for Fujimi's recently released high detail kit of Senna's World Championship winning car (see alongside). It's a relatively simple set with a choice of wing endplates, radiator facings, various engine trim parts and the usual fasteners and seat belt furniture.



## Hasegawa - New 1:20th plastic kit

- HAS20243** Ferrari 312T2 Japan 1976 £34.95

This is the second version of Hasegawa's 312T2 that we have seen in a short space of time and once again the level of detail is very good. The bodywork is in multiple pieces to reveal a fully detailed chassis with full engine and suspension. The Japanese Grand Prix was a very wet affair, so wet that Niki Lauda withdrew on the second lap, though Reggazoni battled on to finish fifth. The kit therefore has treaded rain tyres to go on the neatly moulded wheels. The wing elements and a couple of brackets have a heavy chrome finish but everything else is good and clean.



# HISTORY

## The Aston Martin DB2 at Le Mans by David Blumlein

I could not but be in full Aston Martin 'mode'. Just prior to putting this pen to paper, I had been at a sun-drenched Nurburgring covering photographically the Lola Aston Martins on their way to a convincing 1-2-3 victory in the 1,000km race. What an appropriate triumph it turned out to be on this the 50th anniversary of Aston Martin's hat trick in this classic race which was first run in 1953, the inaugural year of the World Sports car Championship. And to add to the spectacle, a beautifully restored Junkers JU 52 (the transport plane) paid us two aerial visits during the six-hour race, reminiscent of earlier aviation contributions at big events in the Eifel.

Aston Martin is, thanks to the inspiration of Prodrive, enjoying another golden era and seeing Spark's 1949 Le Mans DB2 (**SPK0585**), my

mind leaps back some sixty years or so to another of the marque's golden eras, the inspiration of David Brown. So what actually happened to the Feltham company after hostilities ceased?

Like so many of the motor companies during the war, Aston Martin was put to work manufacturing components, chiefly for aircraft, by the government ministries. But by 1945, small manufacturers like Aston Martin were confronted by two main problems: they needed a big money investment to enable them to undertake the production of new models and there was a huge shortage of basic materials. In this situation the Sutherland family saw no option but to put the company up for sale and it was a happy outcome when David Brown answered their advertisement in 'The Times' and bought Aston Mar-

tin in 1947 for £20,500. And it was fortunate for Lagonda that he also purchased them for £52,500 not long afterwards. So what did he get for his outlay? Most importantly, he inherited from Aston Martin Claude Hill's prototype 'Atom', an experimental saloon with a square tube frame, independent front suspension for the first time on an Aston Martin, and Hill's new o.h.v four-cylinder engine; from Lagonda the big prizes were the new twin overhead cam LB6 engine, the work of a team guided by none other than W.O. Bentley, and the stylist Frank Feeley who had been responsible for the gorgeous pre-war Lagonda bodies.

David Brown had been very impressed with the 'Atom' but considered an open car more appropriate to the company's needs, and set Claude Hill to develop a car with a longer chassis but coil springs replacing the original semi-elliptics at the back and of course Hill's new o.h.v engine. The result was the new Two Litre which

went into production in September 1948 (see FSW 04-2009). The bare chassis had been extensively tested by 'Jock' Horsfall and when it was shown to drivers Tony Rolt and Freddie Dixon, they encouraged its use in competition. David Brown was anxious to get production underway but finally gave permission for the construction of a racing version, being in his heart well convinced of the benefits of competition. The one-off racer, with special slim bodywork, went out and won the Spa 24-hour race in 1948 in the hands of 'Jock' Horsfall and Leslie Johnson, the first time an Aston Martin had ever won outright a twenty-four hour race.

This unexpected success certainly helped to prompt the decision to build a team of cars aimed at the revived Le Mans race in 1949. A shortened version of Hill's chassis was clothed in a coupe body by Frank Freeley and it was David Brown's intention that the Lagonda 2.6 litre engine should be used. This inevitably

upset Claude Hill who had been devising a six-cylinder version of his four and unfortunately the friction caused resulted in Hill leaving the company. In fact, two of the new cars initially used the four-cylinder engine anyway.

The stylish coupes, painted at first in matt green, were intended as prototypes for a new production car for 1950, and three of them duly arrived for the 1949 Le Mans 24-hours in the June. The two four-cylinder machines were piloted by T.A.S.O. Mathieson and Pierre Marechal (chassis LMA/49/1, race number 28) and Arthur Jones and Nick Haines (chassis LMA/49/2 race number 27). A six-cylinder car (chassis LML/49/3 race number 19) was to be driven by Leslie Johnson and Charles Brackenbury (who had shared with Dobson the 3rd placed V-12 Lagonda at the previous Le Mans in 1939). 'Jock' Horsfall had by this time left the company and was sadly to lose his life at the wheel of one of those upright and ill-handling E.R.A.s at Silverstone later in the year.

In that first post-war Le Mans the DB2 Astons, as they came to be known, did not fare too well. The Lagonda-engined car was out after just six laps having lost all its water, the rules forbidding early replenishment. Poor Marechal crashed on the Sunday morning when confronted by a slow car at the difficult White House bends and sadly succumbed to his injuries; only the Jones/Haines car survived, despite losing an hour with starter motor trouble - they finished 7th overall. Some compensation came when the privately-entered production Two Litre of Lawrie/Parker finished 11th; Claude Hill must have had a special dose of satisfaction when the only Astons to finish the race were powered by his four-cylinder o.h.v engine!

The Spa 24-hour race beckoned just three weeks or so later and the two remaining DB2s were entered, the crashed Marechal car not being rebuilt. Chassis no.2 still with the four-cylinder engine was entrusted to Lance Macklin and Hains (the car now registered UMC 65) and the six-cylinder (now UMC 66) was once again driven by Johnson and Brackenbury. They did much better, coming in a fine third behind Chinetti's Ferrari and a three-litre Delage; the other DB2 finished 5th, albeit behind Horsfall who was running his pre-war o.h.c two-litre.

The company now turned its attention to the need to get the DB2 ready as a production car and it made its public debut as such at the New York motor show in April 1950. As it turned out, customers would have to wait some time before receiving their cars! In the meantime, Lance Macklin was lent chassis No.4 which gave him a second place in the Inter Europa Cup race at Monza in March behind Sanesi's 6C2500 Alfa Romeo. Macklin's car had the six-cylinder engine and henceforth all DB2 cars were thus equipped. He tried his luck in the Targa Florio race but had the misfortune to crash.

Encouraged by the increasing success of the car, David Brown

Spark 'die-cast' SPK0585  
Aston Martin DB2 Le Mans 1949  
Johnson / Brackenbury



elected to construct a team of three new DB2s for racing in 1950, using the first production chassis. These cars came to be widely known by their registration numbers VMF63 (LML/50/7) VMF64 (LML/50/8) and VMF65 (LML/50/9). They were aimed naturally at Le Mans and for this race the engines now gave 125 b.h.p instead of 105; the larger 32-gallon fuel tanks had quick action filler caps, the batteries were larger, and the production sound-proofing and most of the interior trim were removed. The cars were now painted in dark green and the legendary John Wyer was henceforth in charge! The first Lagonda-engined car from 1949 (UMC 66) was bought along as a spare - what foresight because Jack Fairman managed to crash VMF 65 at Rouen on the way to the circuit! This car in the hands of John Gordon, failed early in the race with a broken crankshaft, denying Eric Thompson a drive. The other two cars had a trouble-free race, Macklin/Abecassis in VMF64 not only finishing an excellent 5th overall behind the two ex-G.P Talbots, a 5.5-litre Allard and a 3.8-litre Nash-Healey, but also winning the 3-litre class and the coveted Index of Performance (which it shared with a Monopole) - one could not expect more! Parnell and Brackenbury in VMF63 followed on in 6th overall and, of course, second in the class.

A chance for spectators in Britain to see these promising cars in action came with the Daily Express International Trophy meeting at Silverstone in August in the over 2-litre Production Car Race. This event had been inaugurated with great success at Silverstone in 1949 when it became famous as the scene of the Jaguar XK120's debut win and for 1950, it was deemed sensible to split the over-subscribed entry into two divisions: the DB2s could aim for a 3-litre class win. VMF63 was entered for Parnell, VMF65 for Thompson but VMF64 was to be driven by famous French driver Raymond Sommer as Macklin had injured his foot. Sommer was conveniently on hand because he was due to drive the new V-16 B.R.M and this turned out to be the notorious occasion when the car failed on the starting line, capturing the front pages of the national press and earning it a reputation as Britain's Grand Prix flop!

Sommer's race for Aston Martin was spoilt when his windscreen was

smothered in oil by Whitehead's failing Jaguar, preventing him from noticing a charging Duncan Hamilton in a Healey Silverstone going by him to win the class. The Frenchman finished tenth overall with Parnell eleventh and Thompson fifteenth. Tragically cruelly stepped in once more when Sommer was killed later that year at a small French race at Cadours when he was driving a little Copper- it is thought that a wheel bearing may have seized.

The great Tourist Trophy was revived in 1950, now on a new circuit at Dundrod in Northern Ireland and this race was the scene of a young Stirling Moss winning outright in a rain-swept race in a private Jaguar XK120, very much a career enhancing drive. Our three DB2s were there, Parnell, Abecassis and Macklin taking the first three places in the class.

It had been a successful season and the cars appeared a week later at the Shelsley Walsh Hill Climb to show the flag, Parnell, Abecassis and Brackenbury taking 4th, 5th and 6th in their class, albeit in an event not really suited to the characteristics of a long-distance racer!

Much to Wyer's chagrin, it was by now becoming increasingly clear that success in the big endurance races was going to be the monopoly of the emerging sports-racers, those prototypes which were accepted to help Le Mans and others to get back on their feet after the war and which were now becoming the chief attraction to bring the public through the gates. Aston Martin realised that, if they were to compete for outright honours, they would need such a car and the pre-war Auto Union engineer, Eboran von Eberhorst, was engaged by David Brown to be the chief engineer and provide the company with a contender. The resulting car, the DB3, was on the whole a failure, too heavy, too underpowered for the job and, to Wyer's great irritation, too late on the scene.

Sensing the latter, Wyer commissioned the building of two lightweight DB2 cars, XMC76 (LML/50/50) and XMC77 (LML/50.55) for 1951. Their weight was reduced by drilling the chassis, using a lighter gauge alloy and fitting Perspex side and rear windows; their engines now gave 128 b.h.p. Their first appearance was at the Silverstone Production Car Race now brought forward to May and it yielded a sixth place for Parnell while

Abecassis retired with transmission trouble. Interesting to note, the old 1949 four-cylinder car (LML/49/2) was running in this race, privately owned and driven by B. Whitehouse to 16th place.

Le Mans now loomed up and still no DB3 was ready. The two lightweights were accompanied by one of the 1950 cars VMF64 which was entrusted to Macklin and Thompson. All three cars had their fuel fillers moved from the roofs to the tops of the rear wings and the engines had triple Weber twin-choke carburettors giving now 138 b.h.p. It is a characteristic of Le Mans that so often an older well-tried runner beats the newcomers and among the Aston Martins this was the case! Macklin and Thompson came 3rd overall winning the 3-litre class, with Abecassis and Brian Shawe-Taylor 5th (XMC77) and Parnell and David Hampshire 7th in XMC76. Two privately-entered production DB2s also ran, Nigel Mann and Morris Goodall coming 10th and Peter Clark and Jack Scott 13th. It was a high spot for the DB2, five cars entered for Le Mans and five finished!

By the Tourist Trophy the DB3 was at last ready, if not really competitive. Aston DB2 VMF65 was now owned by Rob Walker and Thompson drove this to 8th place. The two lightweights also ran, Shawe-Taylor (XMC76) coming 7th and second in class behind Baird's Ferrari. Abecassis broke his clutch once again in XMC77.

The season was rounded off with another visit to Shelsley Walsh where Parnell and Abecassis ran the lightweights, the latter 4th in the class ahead of Parnell.

By 1952 the DB3 had become the mainstay of Aston Martin's efforts but it took the emergence of the DB3S, thanks to the designer Willie Watson for the team to make any lasting impression in the mid-fifties. The DB2 was now stepping back but in 1952 it was used on two occasions: a team of three cars went to the Mille Miglia (where Tommy Wisdom had scored in 1951 an 11th overall and first in class with VMF64) and Wisdom and mechanic Fred Lown repeated the class win and 12th overall, Parnell and Serboli following in 13th; Abecassis broke his clutch! Finally the two lightweights went to Switzerland to the Prix de Berne sports car race. Motorcyclist Geoff Duke (he won the 500cc bike race on a Norton the same day!) used his knowledge of the demanding Bremgarten circuit to follow the three leading new Mercedes 300SL cars into 4th in XMC77 with Parnell 5th.

At Le Mans there were just two private DB2s, Peter Clark and Mike Keen finishing 7th and Nigel Mann and Morris Goodall running out of luck this time as the electrics failed. And it was only privateers who carried on competing with these magnificent cars which completed what was surely the first chapter in this golden era of Aston Martin's history. And the tail piece? Lyndon Sims and John Ambrose scored a superb outright win in a DB2 as late as the 1956 R.A.C Rally.