

Monte Carlo Mustang

Building Arena's 1965 Monte Carlo Mustang

by Wayne E. Moyer

Spurred on, no doubt, by the success of the Ford Falcon (2nd overall!) in the 1964 Monte Carlo Rally and Mustang's victory in the Tour de France later that year, Ford France had Alan Mann prepare at least two of the TdF Mustangs for Monte Carlo. Any American snow-belt Mustang owner, myself included, could have told them of the folly of entering Mustangs in a rally noted for its icy, snow-packed roads, but they didn't ask. As it turned out, the '65 Monte had some of the worst weather ever seen for the event; only 22 of the 237 entries finished and predictably, none of them were Mustangs.

One of my first Mustang models was the Tekno diecast in Monte Carlo markings (1969), so when I saw Arena's Monte Carlo Mustang kits listed in FSW I ordered [ARE486](#), the 1965 car, which was really a 1964½ model like my car. The FBB appeared in my mailbox soon thereafter and on opening it I found a relatively simple, very well cast multi-medium kit; the 58 parts included 12 clean resin castings, 2 plated bumpers, 5 white-metal castings, 4 rubber tyres, and 29 photo-etched pieces, along with the miscellaneous bits. You won't use all of the photo-etched pieces since they include the grille and a couple other parts for the 1968 car. Instructions are just colour photos of the finished model; it's a simple kit so that's no problem if the builder has some photos of a Mustang interior, which Arena doesn't show at all.

Parts preparation took only a few minutes; there are small mould lines along the bottom of the body and ragged edges in the wheel arches and windows. Don't sand off the "lumps" on the rear valance panel; they're the reversing lights although Arena shows red lenses there! Interior detail is very good, with separate interior door panels that include the handles and cranks and even the

chrome trim - which may have been removed on the rally-prepped cars! The dash and steering wheel are accurate, but Arena doesn't provide any instrument decals so I added some from my decal box ([VIR105](#)). I don't have any photos to verify that the rear seat upholstery was removed, but it certainly seems likely.



The first primer coat showed just a couple of pinholes on the lower edges which were quickly filled with more primer; no putty was needed anywhere. Arena's colour photos show a red-brown interior colour that's like nothing offered on early Mustangs. After looking at my paint chip book, I found I could match the stock red interior colour with a 50-50 mix of Tamiya Gloss and Flat Red paints. The headliner and cockpit sections were sprayed with that, and when dry, masked so the rest of the inside of the body could be sprayed flat black. Interior and baseplate parts were done the same way.

It's most likely that these very early Mustangs were painted "Wimbolden White" an eggshell shade, although the bright white "Pace Car White" would have been a possibility. I chose "Wimbolden White" since it's available here in lacquer form in the Model Master line. I sprayed the



entire body white, applied all the decals except those on the bonnet, and gave the body several coats of clear lacquer. By the way, the decals are very thin and the use of Micro-Set ([MSSET](#)) to move them into place is highly recommended. Once in place, they snuggle down like a coat of paint without any solvent needed.

The "FORD" hood lettering has lots of clear carrier film which will be very obvious if the decal is applied to a flat black finish, so I masked everything but the hood and painted that gloss black. After the decals were in place the hood only got a coat of clear flat and looks fine.



I picked out the interior handles and trim with silver paint. Arena has modelled the dash accurately but as already mentioned, doesn't provide any instrument decals, so I added those from my spares box and painted the radio panel. After the model was completed I found photos of the TdF Mustangs that show a big tachometer and another round gauge (oil pressure/temperature??) mounted in front of the stock strip speedometer; I'd bet the Monte Carlo Mustangs had the same. I did find a reference that said the Monet Mustangs were fitted with a Halda Speedmaster and a Tripmaster, so I built those from sheet plastic and spare decals and mounted them on the stock glove box in lieu of better information. I added the Mustang's stock lap belts using aftermarket pieces; most photos from that time



don't show lap belts in rally cars.

Curiously, Arena provided "3-D" photo-etched parts for the side window surrounds and vent windows, but none for the windscreen or rear glass. I "plated" those with Bare-

Metal Foil ([BME](#)) and while I was at it, did the same for the door handles. The "glass" must be cut into individual pieces; once that's done it fits well. Assembly was easy though the inside of the plated metal bumpers had to be filed to get them onto the body - a combination of chrome plating and several coats of paint would account for that. I covered the taillights with Bare-Metal Foil and gave them a coat of Tamiya Clear red before gluing the photo-etched taillight frames in place with Kristal Kleer ([MSKK](#)). The result is very realistic. I also painted all of the clear light lenses with Tamiya Clear Yellow to match Arena's instruction photos. Arena's model has the Mustang GT exhaust pipes that exit through the rear valance panel - the GT package wasn't available at the time these cars were built but some photos seem to show a similar exhaust. Perhaps the TdF Mustangs served as inspiration for the GT package exhausts?

The body shape is excellent - much more accurate than the older Starter Tour de France Mustang, whose body isn't deep enough and whose C-Pillar shape is not quite right. Arena's body shape is the best of any kit I've seen, and better than many die-cast models for a stock Mustang. Unfortunately, photos clearly show that the Tour de France Mustangs had the front wheel arches enlarged to the point where they're cut out above the side cove line. I haven't found definitive proof, but I'd certainly think that the same cars, prepared by the same team (Alan Mann) a few months later would have had the same much larger front fender openings. Can any FSW readers confirm or disprove this with photos from the 1965 Monte?

Dimensions check out to 1/43 scale very well. Overall, this is a relatively simple kit and quite easy to build as everything fits well with no tweaking needed. It does need some additions to the interior - primarily instruments and belts - and I think the front fender openings need to be enlarged considerably with new flares made from plastic and putty. I hope some FSW reader can show me that I'm wrong there.

The finished model certainly looks right from all angles (except for the fender opening question) and makes a fine addition to the early Mustang's competition history.

