

Best of the Rest

Building SilverLine's Williams FW06

by Wayne E. Moyer

The Williams team introduced their first in-house F.1 design, Patrick Head's FW-06, in 1978. Unfortunately Chapman introduced the first ground effects car, the Lotus 78 then, too. When Chapman and Andretti had the wing car sorted correctly, it was unbeatable, but by the end of the season Alan Jones and the FW06 were the best of the non-Lotus class, finishing 2nd in the USGP East at Watkins Glen. I missed the 1978 USGP and never got to see the FW06 so when I saw the new SilverLine kit (TMS042) listed in FSW I immediately emailed an order to GPM.

The FBB appeared in my mailbox not long thereafter and, having never seen a SilverLine kit, I opened it eagerly. The contents were something of a surprise - a very pleasant one. There was no resin - just lots of white-metal, machined, and photo-etched pieces. In fact, the kit looked very much like a Tameo kit of half a dozen years ago but with their current computer-drawn instructions. All told, the kit has 36 very clean white-metal castings, 30 machined metal parts, some of them very small, 68 photo-etched pieces (only a couple of which are "spares"), and assorted springs (you build the coil-over shocks just like a Tameo kit), rubber tyres with the sidewall logos printed on them, and assorted small bits to bring the parts count to 140. The decals are very well printed but there's no duplicate sheet as we'd find with Tameo. Finally, the 8-page computer-drawn instruction booklet has 27 illustrated assembly steps, numbered layouts of the photo-etched trees, three colour photos of the car, and a 2-view drawing for parts placement. All colour references are given in terms of Tamiya paints.

Close inspection revealed only small mould lines on the upper

edge of the nose, along the edges of the baseplate, and a few very small parting lines on round parts like the exhaust pipes. Cleanup took only a few minutes and test fitting showed that all the parts fit perfectly - too perfectly as it turned out. After a coat of primer, three coats of white paint and three more clear coats, the front suspension arms wouldn't fit into the slots - top and bottom - of the body, so be sure to open these up to a very loose fit before you start painting. As usual, I did as much of the assembly as possible before priming.



I did disagree with the painting instructions and left the Gurney Flap on the rear wing off and it looks to me to be bare aluminium in photos rather than white. If you find photos showing it to be white, by all means fit it before painting the wing. There's enough give in the photo-etched end plates to allow the wing to be slid onto the mounting bar - very carefully - after it's painted.



The engine assembly is very well thought out and all the parts go together well. Plan on spending a LOT of time fitting the tiny photo-etched parts back here. If



you want some idea of the level of detail, each inboard rear brake disk is made from two 3-D photo-etched pieces so the vent slots are visible!

After all the engine and interior (more photo-etched parts!), assembly was done and the body was painted and decalced, I found the only real problem with this kit; the engine cover was too thick to allow the body to fit onto the baseplate. Grind or file as much metal from the inside of the engine cover as you can before painting



the body and this problem should go away. The decals, by the way, were quite well done, fit perfectly, and were easy to work into position when some Micro Set (MSSET) was applied to the spot before the decal. As mentioned, there are no spares, so I spread the decal application over three or four sessions, making sure the previously applied decals were thoroughly dry before handling the body to apply more.

It took me some time to figure out just where some of the tiny, beautifully scaled rear suspension links went but once I'd matched up the parts it became apparent. Don't try to short-cut SilverLine's assembly sequence or you could have real trouble fitting some of the parts. The rear uprights have dimples on both sides where the axle hole must be and I drilled from both sides to the middle to be sure they'd match up. I left part of the axle sticking out of the upright



which turned out to be a mistake; you need a hole in the outer face to accept the centre-lock nut that

holds the wheel on! Cut the axles short enough to fit into the hole you should have drilled in the gearbox case and the one in the upright, but don't leave them sticking out! With the 3-piece spring-shock units, white-metal hoses, and photo-etched upper radius links in place the rear end is exceptionally realistic. In my younger days I'd have wired the Ford DFV engine, and I'm sure many of our more talented readers will add that as a finishing touch.



The front suspension is a lot simpler - provided you opened up the slots enough to account for the paint thickness. Please don't ask why I keep mentioning this! Given the complexity of the suspension at all four ends, it didn't take a lot of tweaking to get the wheels to sit square and on the ground at all four corners. My finished model matches all the photos I found very well - the Fruit of the Loom sponsor decals appear to be unique the USGP - from all angles and chassis dimensions are right on 1/43 scale.



Because of the complexity of the rear end and engine, I wouldn't recommend this kit to a 1/43 scale novice, and those of us old enough to have seen the car in action during the 1978 season will need trifocals or magnifying glasses, but all those tiny parts fit with no tweaking or modifications needed and the result is an especially realistic and accurate model of a car that might have won the F1 title if Chapman had been a year or two later in developing the wing car.

Once my hands have stopped shaking I'm going to have to look at some more SilverLine kits.

