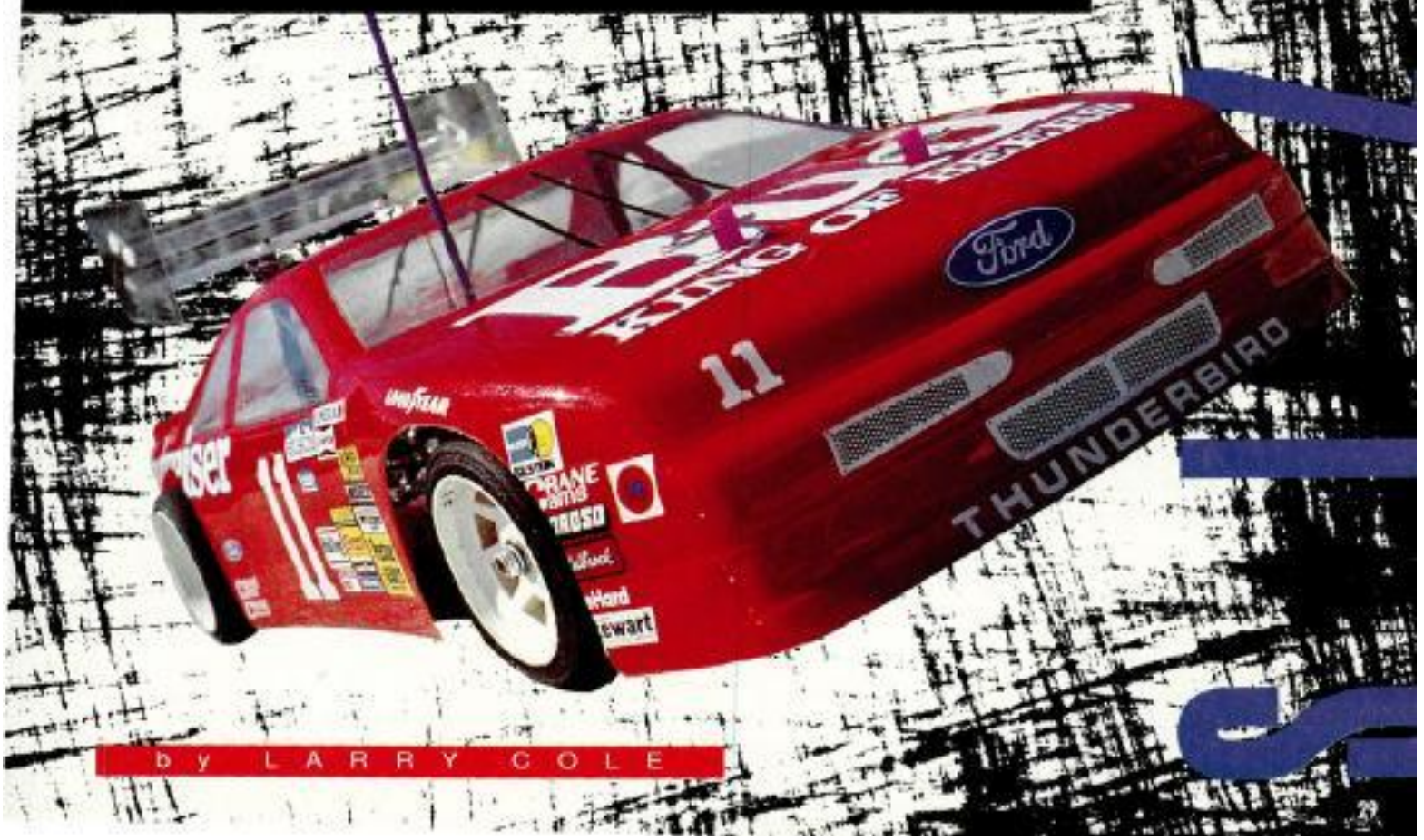
euro-THRASHER

SOMEWHERE ALONG the way, I decided to take the road less traveled. I don't know why, but I've always been a champion of the underdog. While everyone else on the full-size car racing circuit drove Chevys or Fords, I drove a Chrysler. I've always felt bad for the coyote in Looney Tunes, and I prefer Bugs Bunny to Mickey Mouse and Hardee's to McDonald's. When I started racing R/C cars, instead of buying one of the cars that were popular at my local track, e.g., Associated 10Ls or TRC Lynxs, I bought a Bolink, and I was successful with it. At my local "super" track, however, the Bolink developed a "hiccup." The car that had worked so well on carpet didn't work on this concrete tri-oval track, and I had to find a car that did.

Now, any sane man would buy one of the *successful* cars (notice that I said "sane"!), but that's not what I wanted to do. When I raced Chrysler cars, I always said that anyone could make a Chevy run, but it takes a mechanic to make a Chrysler run. I applied this theory to R/C car racing—enter the PB* Sizzler.



by LARRY COLE

S I Z Z L E R

The Sizzler is an English import that's distributed by PB Sales and Racing. Owner Jim Meach was more than happy to discuss this car with me on the phone, and he convinced me to try it. The Sizzler has a straight-axle, graphite front end, and it's advertised as being the first car to use an independent rear end with a five-point rear system.

Since its first appearance on the market, the Sizzler has undergone major changes. If you're familiar with the earlier version, don't use it to make judgments on the new one; you'd be doing yourself—and the car—a grave disservice. (A conversion kit is available, so you can update the earlier version of the Sizzler.)

The updated Sizzler's rear shock now travels vertically instead of from front to back, and to make it "ROAR legal," the car's rear end has been narrowed. The Sizzler is made of a combination of graphite composite and aircraft-grade aluminum, and it has ball bearings throughout and a "prototype" diff.

SPECIFICATIONS

Type	On-road
Scale	1/10
Price	$299.95

DIMENSIONS:

Overall Length	12.375 inches
Width	9.5 inches
Wheelbase	10.75 inches
Front Track	8.625 inches
Rear Track	9.5 inches

WEIGHT:

Gross (with battery)	2 pounds, 8 ounces

BODY:

Type	Not included

CHASSIS:

Type	Pan
Material	Composite fiberglass

DRIVE TRAIN:

Primary	Pinion/spur
Transmission	Direct drive
Differential	Ball
Bearings/Bushings	Ball bearings

SUSPENSION:

Front: Type	Floating kingpin
Damping	Front coil-springs
Rear: Type	Five-point, full-floating rear pod
Damping	Oil-filled shock

WHEELS:

Front: Type	One-piece plastic
Dimensions (DxW)	1.938x1.25 inches
Rear: Type	One-piece plastic
Dimensions (DxW)	1.938x2 inches

TIRES:

Front/Rear	Special compound foam

ELECTRICS:

Motor	540/05*
Battery	6- or 7-cell saddle pack*
Speed Controller	Not included

OPTIONS AS TESTED:
Futaba Magnum Jr. radio and S148 servo; Novak T-4 ESC; MaxCell 1400 SCR saddle packs; B&R Bullet motor; Bud's* Bi-Level Wing and decals; Bolink front steering blocks and adjustable steering rods; Du-Mor spur gear; Lightning Rod* Memory Mount Body Posts; TRC* T/M Radials; MRP Thunderbird body and Concours interior.

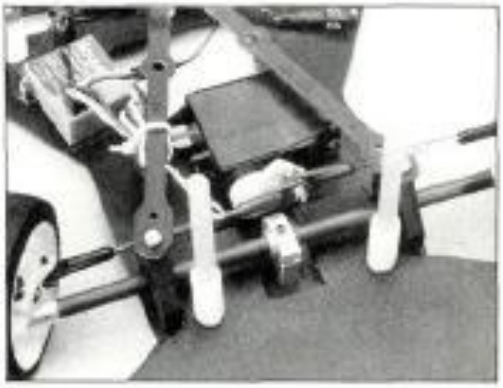
COMMENTS:
The Sizzler is for serious racers. Although it's a "metric" English import, it can accept many common U.S. parts, e.g., bearings that aren't metric. An LTO-type chassis is in the works. This car isn't as narrow a many of the new on-road cars, but its wider stance makes it more stable.

*** not included**

FIRST THINGS FIRST

When I received the car, the first thing I did was open the box to see what tools I'd need for assembly. There's nothing worse than being halfway through a project only to discover that you need a tool you don't have! The instructions include a separate list of necessary tools (the car is "metric," so this is definitely helpful), but I think the instruction sheet has to go! If I hadn't had experience building R/C cars, I would have been totally lost! There's a main instruction sheet, a supplementary sheet, a supplementary letter and, well, I think you get the drift. Thank goodness for the pictures! (I did say that I wanted a car that would challenge the mechanic in me, didn't I?) I've been told that a new instruction sheet is being written. Let's hope that it will make assembly a lot easier!

Even with improved instructions, though, this car wouldn't be for beginners. It's designed to race, and the skills you need to assemble it confirm this. The best advice I can give is that you should take your time, follow the instructions as well as you can, and use your common sense.



Only one cinch block and two carriers hold the car's front axle in place.

ASSEMBLY DISCOVERIES

Before the car even hit the track, I was impressed by what I

The Sizzler may look like other pan cars, but it has several features that set it apart from the pack.

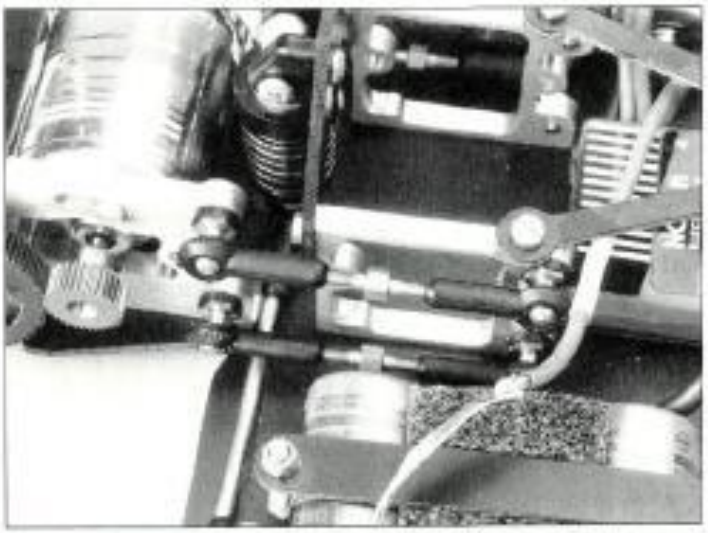
SIZZLER

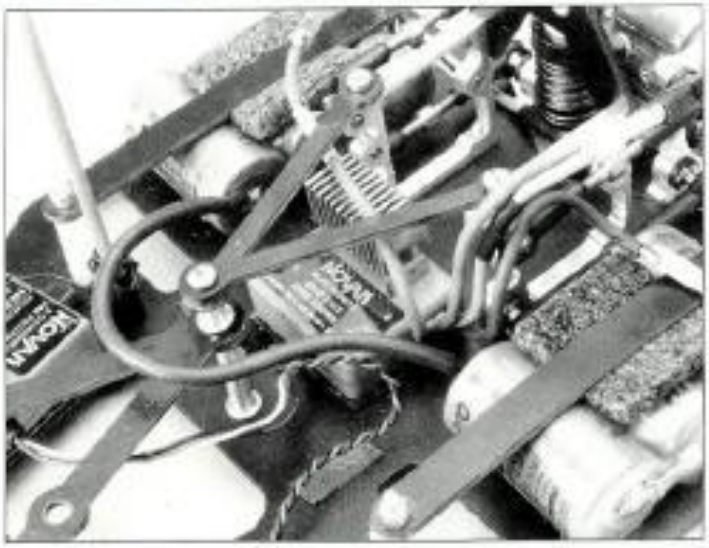
saw. The five-point rear suspension has two radius rods on each side with a panhard bar as a centering device, so you can make many fine-tuning adjustments. I also noticed that the configuration of the cross-braces (i.e., the chassis' upper "plate") is similar to that of a roll cage on a full-size NASCAR car. To prevent the chassis from flexing, the braces are mounted in the center of the car (they form an "X" similar to that found on the cage in a full-size NASCAR car), and they run to the front and the rear from the center. On a full-size car, the brace that runs to the right front is called a Grand National wedge bar, and it's interesting to see this concept applied to an R/C car.

Unlike many foreign cars, the Sizzler can accept standard, readily available components. I chose Bolink* steering blocks and kingpins on the front end and a standard Du-Mor* spur gear. (The diff rings on the Sizzler are smaller, so I just used the inner ball holes.) To use standard NASCAR wheels, I drilled out the wheel-bolt holes to make them one size larger. The rear axle has standard bearings, and the car doesn't need longer pinion gears.

When I had finished assembling the car, I stepped back and looked at it with mixed emotions. It's wider than most, but this didn't bother me. Narrowing R/C cars is the newest, hottest trend. The logic behind it is that they're more aerodynamic and, therefore, faster. I think that the wider a car is, the more stable it is. (Have you ever wondered why most R/C car associations, including ROAR, have regulations specifying maximum width but not minimum width?) Although narrow cars are faster on the straights, look out when they have to make tight turns on flat tracks! (Some of you "old-timers" might remember the commercial for the Wide Track Pontiac.) What bothered me about the Sizzler was that it looked as if it weighed a ton! Only the scale would say for sure—later!

The Sizzler's five-point rear suspension has a vertical, oil-filled shock.





These cross-braces prevent the chassis from flexing and force the suspension to do the damping.

GET YOUR GEAR AND GO!

During the motor and the radio gear installation, I discovered the first thing about the Sizzler that I didn't like. The opening in the left-side motor plate didn't give the motor enough clearance, and this could have easily caused the motor to short. Off came the rear axle and the bearings, and out came my grinder! I ground as much as I could off the plate, replaced the rear end and re-installed the motor. Although the motor fits snugly, it has plenty of clearance.

For the car's first run, I chose a B&R* Bullet 27-turn stock motor (I never use a modified for a new car's first run unless I'm suffering from some strange disease, i.e., "brain fade.") I used a Futaba* 148 servo because I didn't have a 132 servo, and I installed a Novak* receiver and a Tekin* speed controller. I covered the chassis with an MRP* Thunderbird body, and then it was off to the track for a practice session!

TESTS AND TROUBLE-SHOOTING

It didn't take long to find out that the Sizzler had a major problem! I ran the first few laps cautiously, and then I decided to open it up. Everything was fine until I came up on a slower car. Although I wasn't used to driving the Sizzler, I did what any normal person would do: I tried to go around the other car at full

(Continued on page 46)

SIZZLER

(Continued from page 52)

throttle! After its brief, violent, encounter with the wall, I couldn't steer the Sizzler, and its body was flapping in the breeze.

When I pulled the car off the track, I noticed that its entire front end had rotated (massive caster adjustment!) and shifted sideways by about an inch. Further, the cross-brace that runs to the right front had snapped.

Back in the shop, I tried to find the answer to the question, "Why?" Not "Why had I been so stupid to drive the way I did?"; but "Why had the front end suffered such a major breakdown?" I soon discovered why. The stock, front, aluminum brace is supposed to hold the front end in place and prevent it from shifting. With a little pressure on this brace, I discovered that I could push it around in the block. As a locking device, it had failed miserably. I drilled and tapped a hole in the top of the block and installed a setscrew. This prevented side-to-side movement, and it also prevented the axle from rotating within the blocks.

The front brace snapped because the body post was mounted to it and, when the body was pushed back against the post, something had to give. In this case, it was the brace. To solve this, I mounted the body post on the front bumper (yes, the car has one).

READY TO RACE

Feeling confident that I had solved all the car's problems, I decided that it was time for a modified motor. In went my 12-turn, single-wind B&R motor and Max Cell® conditioned SCR batteries and off I went to the track. The results? During the first race, I made better lap times and ran more laps than I had ever run at that track! The Sizzler went on to the A-Main, where, owing to some poor mechanical work on someone's part (I seated one of the brushes incorrectly), it "DNF'd." By the way, with the 148 servo and full, race-ready gear, the Sizzler weighed 2.68 pounds.

The Sizzler lives up to its name; it sizzles! It's difficult to assemble, but you can adjust it to handle as well as most cars. It's also very durable. It has had several collisions since its initial one with the wall, and it hasn't been damaged. Finding Sizzler parts at your local hobby shop is a problem, but PB carries a full line of them, and you can use several over-the-counter replacement parts in this car. In England, PB is currently working on an LTO car. The company plans to fix some of the problems that I discovered (i.e., the left-side motor-plate clearance) on this version as well as all other cars, too.

If you want to just stand around and copy the others at the track, forget the Sizzler; stay away from it. If, however, you want to be more than just a follower—someone who drives a fast car with superior handling that's just a little different—get a Sizzler!

Sizzler went on to the A-Main, where, owing to some poor mechanical work on someone's part (I seated one of the brushes incorrectly), it "DNF'd." By the way, with the 148 servo and full, race-ready gear, the Sizzler weighed 2.68 pounds.

The Sizzler lives up to its name; it sizzles! It's difficult to assemble, but you can adjust it to handle as well as most cars. It's also very durable. It has had several collisions since its initial one with the wall, and it hasn't been damaged. Finding Sizzler parts at your local hobby shop is a problem, but PB carries a full line of them, and you can use several over-the-counter replacement parts in this car. In England, PB is currently working on an LTO car. The company plans to fix some of the problems that I discovered (i.e., the left-side motor-plate clearance) on this version as well as all other cars, too.

If you want to just stand around and copy the others at the track, forget the Sizzler; stay away from it. If, however, you want to be more than just a follower—someone who drives a fast car with superior handling that's just a little different—get a Sizzler!

post, something had to give. In this case, it was the brace. To solve this, I mounted the body post on the front bumper (yes, the car has one).

READY TO RACE

Feeling confident that I had solved all the car's problems, I decided that it was time for a modified motor. In went my 12-turn, single-wind B&R motor and Max Cell® conditioned SCR batteries and off I went to the track. The results? During the first race, I made better lap times and ran more laps than I had ever run at that track! The

izzler went on to the A-Main, where, wing to some poor mechanical work on omeone's part (I seated one of the rushes incorrectly), it "DNF'd." By the ay, with the 148 servo and full, race-eady gear, the Sizzler weighed 2.68 ounds.

The Sizzler lives up to its name; it zzles! It's difficult to assemble, but you an adjust it to handle as well as most ars. It's also very durable. It has had everal collisions since its initial one with he wall, and it hasn't been damaged. inding Sizzler parts at your local hobby hop is a problem, but PB carries a full ne of them, and you can use several ver-the-counter replacement parts in this ar. In England, PB is currently working n an LTO car. The company plans to fix ome of the problems that I discovered .e., the left-side motor-plate clearance) n this version as well as all other cars, so.

If you want to just stand around and opy the others at the track, forget the izzler; stay away from it. If, however, ou want to be more than just a fol-ower—someone who drives a fast car ith superior handling that's just a little ifferent—get a Sizzler!