

The Final Ford Building Marsh Models' Ford 429'er

by Wayne E. Moyer

During the era of Total Performance, Ford spent millions to win Le Mans, the Indianapolis 500, NASCAR Championships, and the Trans-Am series, but did very little to contest Chevrolet's domination of the Can-Am Championship. Dan Gurney's 1966 Lola T-70/Ford win at Bridgehampton was the first—and last—for Ford in this country's premier road-racing series. When FoMoCo decided to promote their new 429 engine via the 1969 Can-Am races, Holman-Moody had become the factory Can-Am team by default; by then even Dan had given up and put a Chevy in his McLeagle. Holman-Moody's own "Honker II" had frightened even Mario Andretti, so in desperation they bought a two-year-old McLaren M6B (NOBODY was able to get a current-year McLaren), powered it with a NASCAR 427 bored out to 494 cubic inches, and called it the "429'er". Truth in advertising laws hadn't been created yet! With 700 horses and 600 foot-pounds of torque, Andretti reported that he could "spin the wheels in 4th gear any time he wanted".

But even a stiffened chassis, revised suspension, big rear wing, and lightweight fibreglass body couldn't give Andretti an edge. The car wasn't ready until Elkhart Lake, where Mario qualified it third behind the Orange Elephants, but broke the suspension in the morning warm-up. More work was done while Andretti was competing in Indy car events, and he put it into 6th place on the grid at Laguna Seca and finished in 4th. That was followed by a third place finish at Riverside, and then Mario and the 429'er split the McLarens to qualify second at the season-ending Texas International race. After leading the first four laps, the big 494 V-8 blew up and Ford's final Can-Am effort was done.

There's an old and not too accurate diecast model of the G7A Can-Am car (that's a hint, Mr. Simons), so the 429'er was the only significant

1960's Ford-powered racer missing from my collection until Marsh Models announced their kit (MM141) of the 429'er. As soon as I saw the listing in FSW I emailed an order to GPM and within a couple of weeks the FBB was in my hands.

There were no surprises—5 resin castings (body and tyres), 23 white-metal castings, 14 machined alloy, 42-photo-etched parts (several of which aren't used on this kit) and two vacuformed windscreens, plus decals, screws, and axles—about 120 parts in all. The instruction sheet has a large exploded view with the parts all numbered on one side, several colour photos of the completed model on the other, complete painting information, and an actual paint chip of the proper Guardsman Blue colour.

The castings—resin and white-metal—are excellent by any standard. The body shell's mould lines are so small they're hard to find and all the openings have just "ragged edges" that were easily sanded smooth. There are some very small feed tags inside the body that must be sanded smooth to get the baseplate to tuck up inside the body. The white-metal castings are equally good so preparation was a matter of minutes.

The primer coat confirmed my first impressions; the body was flawless and needed no filler of any kind. "Hot Stuff" CA glue joints are stronger than primer-resin bonds, so I glued the front "dive plane" fins and the rear spoiler to the body before priming it. I simply block-sanded the primer, sprayed the interior flat black and masked it and applied the colour coats. North American modelers can get precisely matched Guardsman Blue lacquer from Model Car World (www.ourworld.cs.com/mcwwautofinishes). That's what you see here and it matches my Ford paint chips. Since the number disks overlap the bare metal lower body panels, I fitted those photo-etched pieces before applying



the decals. The bends were more square than I liked; if I were to do it again I'd try forming the lower panels around a dowel.

I built the rear wing at the same time. Like the Chaparral 2H kit (MM125), the wing is made from a single photo-etched sheet that's folded over a spar. The metal used in this kit was more "springy" than that in the 2H and it took several tries before I was able to get a glue joint that held when the clamp was removed. Once I succeeded, the wing really looks good,

the rear spoiler and there's only one on a sheet. There's one small American flag and "USA" lettering on each sheet, too. That's readily visible below Mario's name on the restored car but I don't see it in actual race photos, so I took it off.

Marsh's 429'er matches photos from Laguna Seca very well; the car had a slightly different nose and different sponsor decals at Riverside and I haven't found any photos from Texas International. Published dimensions for the M6B vary a bit, but



though. I bought a small photo-etched bending tool a year ago and it really worked well for the interior tub. The parts folded crisply and everything, including the white-metal seat and instrument panel, fit without any tweaking at all.

The decals are thin enough to conform to the body and tough enough that they can be worked into place with no problems. Marsh provides two sheets of decals, but the second really isn't a spare; there should be a "Competition Proven" decal on both sides of

the ones I'm most comfortable with put the model right at 1/43 scale, too. Marsh's "429'er" was a very easy kit to build, though I'd recommend roughing up the inside of the wing with #220 sandpaper before folding and gluing it. It produces a model that matches photos very well and the rivet detail on its photo-etched interior and wing gives the finished model a very realistic appearance. I recommend it highly—now all I really need to complete my racing Ford collection is a good G7A!

