



the model car critic

DETAILED SCALE MODEL REVIEWS – FOR COLLECTORS, BY A COLLECTOR

1:18 CMC TALBOT LAGO COUPE T150 C-SS FIGONI & FALASCHI REVIEW

The Talbot Lago Coupe T150 C-SS is a coming together of 3 key people. Giuseppe (or Joseph) Figoni started working as an apprentice at a wagon builder at the tender age of 14. After he returned from fighting in the First World War, he opened up a body repair shop in Paris. He began by modifying the coachwork of touring cars and eventually the high quality of his work allowed him to establish a prosperous business. By 1925 Figoni was building complete bodies on a variety of chassis, including Delahaye, Bugatti, Renault, Delage, Panhard and Alfa Romeo. The second key player arrived in 1935 and his name was Ovidio Falaschi, a fellow Italian – thus creating the partnership of Figoni & Falaschi. He was the man who took care of the finances to ensure Figoni could forge ahead with his iconic designs without having to worry about the day-to-day running of the company. The third cog in this tale is yet another Italian, by the name of Anthony Lago. He was put in charge of the French arm of the ailing company, Talbot. Soon after taking control, he hired the talented engineer Walter Becchia to develop the first Talbot Lago. It would have been tough for him, as he was forced to take over where legendary designer Louis Coatalen had left off. Becchia's first model was a three litre sportscar, but things got really interesting when he was given a blank slate to design a four litre version of the straight six engine. Not only did he increase the engine size, he also fitted a cylinder head with hemispherical combustion chambers. Breathing through two Stromberg carburettors, this engine was good for around 140 bhp, while the three carb competition engine produced over 170 bhp. The new engine was mated to a pre-selector four speed gearbox, produced by Wilson, a company also owned by Lago. Holding it all together was a ladder frame suspended by wishbones at the front and a live axle at the rear. The independent front suspension made the chassis considerably lower than its predecessors.

Dubbed the Talbot Lago T150C (for competition), the new top model was available as the Super Sport (SS) version and as the slightly longer Special. Figoni & Falaschi bodied most of the T150Cs intended for competition with a purposeful two seater roadster design, but in addition they created a coupe version for the richest of customers. As you'll no doubt see from the pictures below, the coupe doesn't feature a single stright line and once it was shown at the 1937 Paris Motor Show it was bestowed with the nickname, "Goutte d'Eau", which literally means "water drop", but has become more affectionately known as "Teardrop". Figoni is thought to have said of the teardrop design that it is the perfect shape in nature when a raindrop falls out of the sky – why should he try and improve on nature when nature already created the most beautiful form. The result of this being that the sensual lines suggest speed even when stood still. Two different versions of the Teardrop can be distinguished; the first notchback coupe named 'Jeancart' after the commissioner of the first car (only five were built) and the second 'New York' style (only eleven were built), which was first unveiled at the New York Auto Show in 1937. Each and every single one was different in its details, as all were built to the unique

specification of each customer. Several of the Teardrops were built specifically for racing, with one coming in third place at the 1938 Le Mans and another was forced to retire in the 1939 24 Hour race. These cars command some serious money at auction, with one owned by Brooks Stevens selling for \$3,535,000 at Christie's Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance auction on Aug 18, 2005, another for \$3,905,000 at the Palm Beach International Concours d'Elegance Gooding & Company auction on January 22, 2006 (where it was unanimously voted "Best in Show") and another for \$4,620,000 at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance RM Auctions Sports & Classics of Monterey auction on August 14, 2010. You'll often find cars referred to as "art" in press releases and reviews, but that's usually just some marketing spiel. For the Lago, however, it is a genuine fact! The car featured in the 1951 New York Museum of Modern Art's (MOMA) exhibition titled "8 Automobiles", which showcased iconic automobile design as pure elements of art & design.

Classic Model Cars (CMC) are absolutely in the highest echelons of model making, I don't think many people will argue with that! They typically make classic cars (the clue is in the name), although they did stray from that with the McLaren Mercedes SLR, but are probably best known for their Ferrari 250 GTO and Mercedes Racing Car Transporter (AKA 'The Blue Wonder') amongst many other Ferraris, Bugattis and Maseratis to name but a few. They also make rolling chassis models (check out the impressive Maserati 300S version) and standalone engine blocks with nice display cases. Their 1957 Fiat Bartoletti racing transporters in both Maserati and Ferrari liveries have shot up in value and command a pretty penny on the second hand market. Needless to say, CMC models are generally considered works of art and a worthy investment. Many a collector will tell you that once you purchase your first CMC model, pretty much everything else pales in comparison in terms of quality and details and consequently your bank account rapidly dwindles and your significant other wonders where all your money has gone to!

In producing the Talbot Lago Coupe, the CMC team have ticked off one of their life long dreams from their bucket list. In their early days, it would have proven too difficult and ambitious to build such a model. But with 20 years of model making experience under their belts, they are now prepared to do Fioni & Falaschi proud and reproduce the stunning Teardrop design in scale model form. They were able to visit France twice in 2015 and 2016 to take measurements from a real Coupe and liaise closely with the owner and workshop manager to ensure all the details are spot on. CMC will be producing a number of variants – namely;

- Greyish blue (#M-145 and unlimited in production)
- Silver/red (#M-165 and limited to 1,500 units)
- Black (#M-166 and limited to 1,500 units)
- The number 8 racing version from the unsuccessful 1939 Le Mans race (#M-167 and limited to 1,500 which have already all sold out on pre-order!!)
- The 'Memory Edition' in dark aubergine as featured in the Rosso Bianco Collection in Aschaffenburg (#M-179 and unlimited). This was the exact car that inspired the late CMC co-founder Mr Herbert Nickerl to create the Talbot Lago in scale 1:18 form all those years ago – hence the 'Memory Edition' moniker. Personally, I think this is the best colour to buy as the combination of the interior and exterior colours are sublime!

Recommended retail prices range from 493EUR for the unlimited versions and 497EUR for the limited editions and availability will start in September 2017 for the greyish blue variant.

CMC were very kind in sending me this greyish blue variant (M-145) to review for your pleasure. This is a press sample and as such came in a Styrofoam shell in an unbranded box, so I can't bring you the unboxing experience unfortunately. But don't worry, because the model more than makes up for this. This is the very first CMC model I have ever laid eyes on in the flesh and when I've had the cash which would have afforded me a CMC model, I've always hesitated and thought that I could probably get three or four other models for the price of just one CMC and I struggled to justify it time and time again. Having spent a good 20 mins just looking at and discovering every little detail shortly after I received the model in the post, I finally get what all the fuss is about. The quality and fit and finish really is second to none. This model is oozing details left, right and centre! Anyone who knows my collection preferences will know that I definitely prefer the modern automobile – save for a few classics such as the Ferrari 250 GTO, Jaguar E-Type (got to be the Series 1!) and Mercedes 300SL Gullwing – however, holding this model in my hands, slowly turning it around and prodding here and there has really given me a newfound admiration for pre-1990 era cars. The research I undertook for the introduction above has also influenced me like no other model I can remember reviewing before – I guess you could say the Talbot Lago is quite an emotive car, and those sensual flowing lines really capture you! Just look at the pictures below and note how there is nary a straight line on this beauty.





You'll be glad to know this isn't some sealed resin "brick". No, this model is hand-made from 1,488 individual parts (although I've got a sneaky suspicion a heck of a lot of them are screws!) and everything opens. When you think of the RRP of a model such as this versus some of the

similarly priced resin models of the current super/hypercar crop, you realise just how much bang for your buck you're getting with a CMC model. The only potential issue is, by concentrating on older cars they are restricting their market, but on the other hand it is better to be a leader in your chosen area than one who lags behind the competition in others. I for one would love to see CMC have a new model line to continue where they left off with the McLaren Mercedes SLR and perhaps produce one modern car a year with the same level of detail they are known and loved for – do you agree?

I just love this side profile view with all the parts open. The overall shape is still clearly visible and we get a little glimpse of that real leather interior, spare wheel in the boot and 4 litre straight six engine up front. Be prepared for the luscious close-ups as you carry on reading!



Starting with the exterior of the model, just behind the doors are the trafficators which are these little flaps that pop out either side of the car to signal the driver's intent to turn left or right. Sadly these don't actually work on the CMC model, but it surely would have been great to have these as a little bonus feature. The sense of realism is certainly there, because you could be fooled into thinking they should actually work, so all is not lost in that respect. I assume the little red lights above the trafficators are lit up when they're in the open position. This is the first close up look we're getting at that lovely greyish blue paintjob – just look at the even finish and lustre throughout. Top marks awarded to CMC for this.



Moving slightly forward and we come to a nice little feature with the doorhandles. Now they don't actually cause the doors to unlock like on say, the AUTOart Lamborghini Aventadors, but they have a really tactile feature that fool you into thinking they work, because they move in and out a bit. The colour contrast between the metal finishes and the paint is just so perfect in my opinion. I may be starting to rethink my earlier yearning for the aubergine variant.....



The front badge is nicely finished and sits proud above the imposing front grille, although my particular sample seems to have a small section of the gold surround missing from the front badge. I highly doubt you would notice this unless you were looking on the macro level, like we are right now, however. The colours are vibrant and the intricate detail on the crown is especially noteworthy. Again, take a long look at that paintjob!



The little badge on each side just below the door sills certainly could have been better executed. You can just about tell that the top line is supposed to say Figoni & Falaschi with the top line of each 'F' continuing over each word, but I can't help but think it ever so slightly spoils the feel you're supposed to get with a CMC model in that every minute detail is visible and enjoyable. Not a dealbreaker for sure, but an ever so slight disappointment when you compare it to the rest of this highly detailed model. In case you're wondering, the full text reads "Figoni & Falaschi, Carrossiers, 14 Rue le Moine, Boulogne-Seine".



The rear 'Talbot 4 Litres' badge is absolutely spot on. Just look at all the elaborate swirls in the script. It has a smooth texture to it and has a subtle shine to it – a real pleasure to see in the flesh. You can also see the metal accent line that flows all around the car and meets the headlights on each side, plus the metallic trim that curls up from the crescent shaped fender skirts. I'm not sure what interesting things to tell you about the rear lights, except they accurately represent red bulbs. I can't see any reversing lights (did they even have them in the 1930s?) and there are no indicators to speak of because of the trafficators present near the doors, as mentioned above.



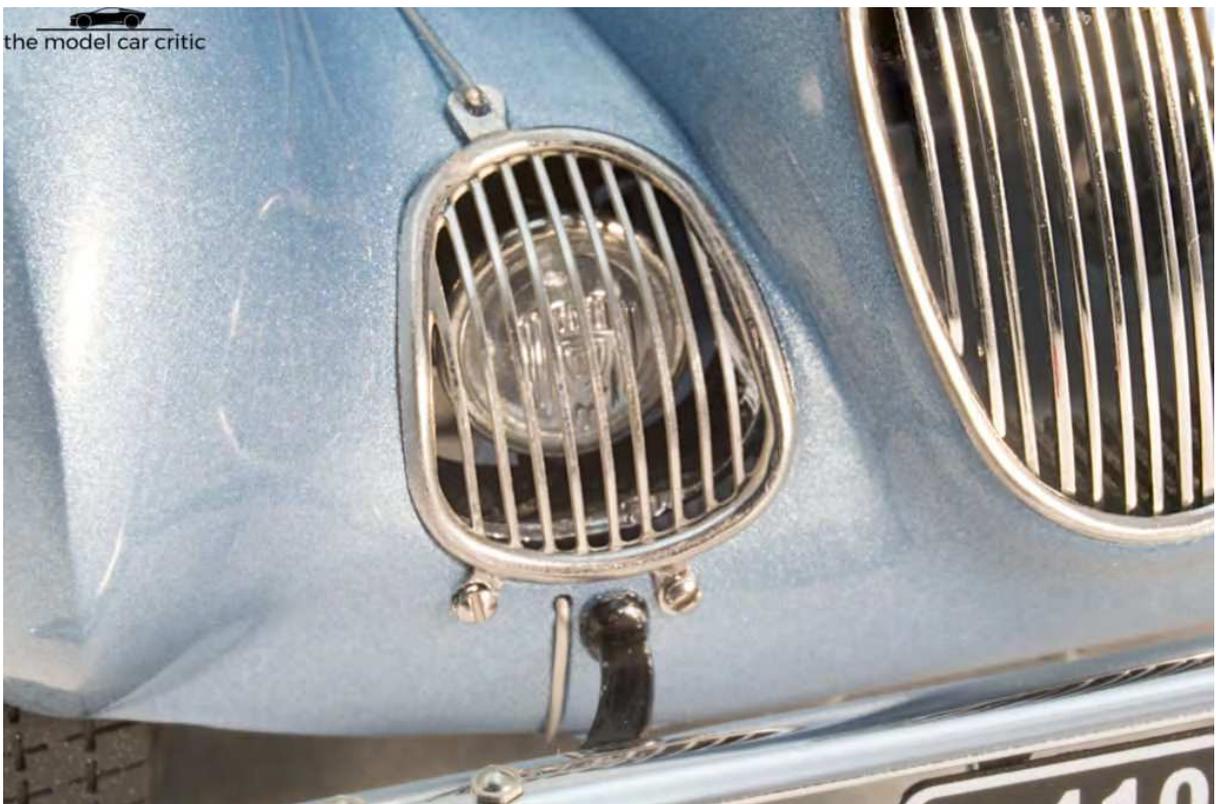
Another welcome little detail is these 2 little flaps on either side of the bootlid. I was wondering what they were for until I watched Jay Leno's video which showed Peter Mullin inserting a key into each hole to unlock the boot and lift it up. To take that detail that bit further it would have been cool for CMC to include that little key in the box – that would surely have made these pictures look that little bit better and would look awesome in a diorama setup.



Next we drop down slightly to the rear bumper and exhaust area. The tiny little bolts that attach the strikingly reflective bar to the struts that support it are great and even the little red lights either side of the number plate are housed perfectly in a metal surround and you can just make out the wire that feeds into it – more can be seen on this when we flip the model over to take a look at the underside later on in the review. The single exhaust pipe sits below it. Am I the only one that thinks it is shaped like an old vacuum cleaner?!?



Moving to the front of the Lago and we can begin to really admire those beautiful curves. See how the fenders sweep over the wheels into those creases that mark the extremes of the bodywork? Also notice the metal accent wiring that flows from the back to the front and meets the headlight grilles and continues on underneath the car. Such attention to detail by Figoni & Falaschi has been perfectly remastered in scale form for the 21st Century by CMC. The chromium-plated metal grilles, which also follow the curvature of the car, cover the recessed headlights and sit either side of the metal cooling grille. There are variants of the Lago that have the headlights mounted to the outside of the body itself, but I definitely prefer the recessed version we have here as it looks more elegant. Not only that, but I'm sure they're more aerodynamic which would have helped on the racetrack.

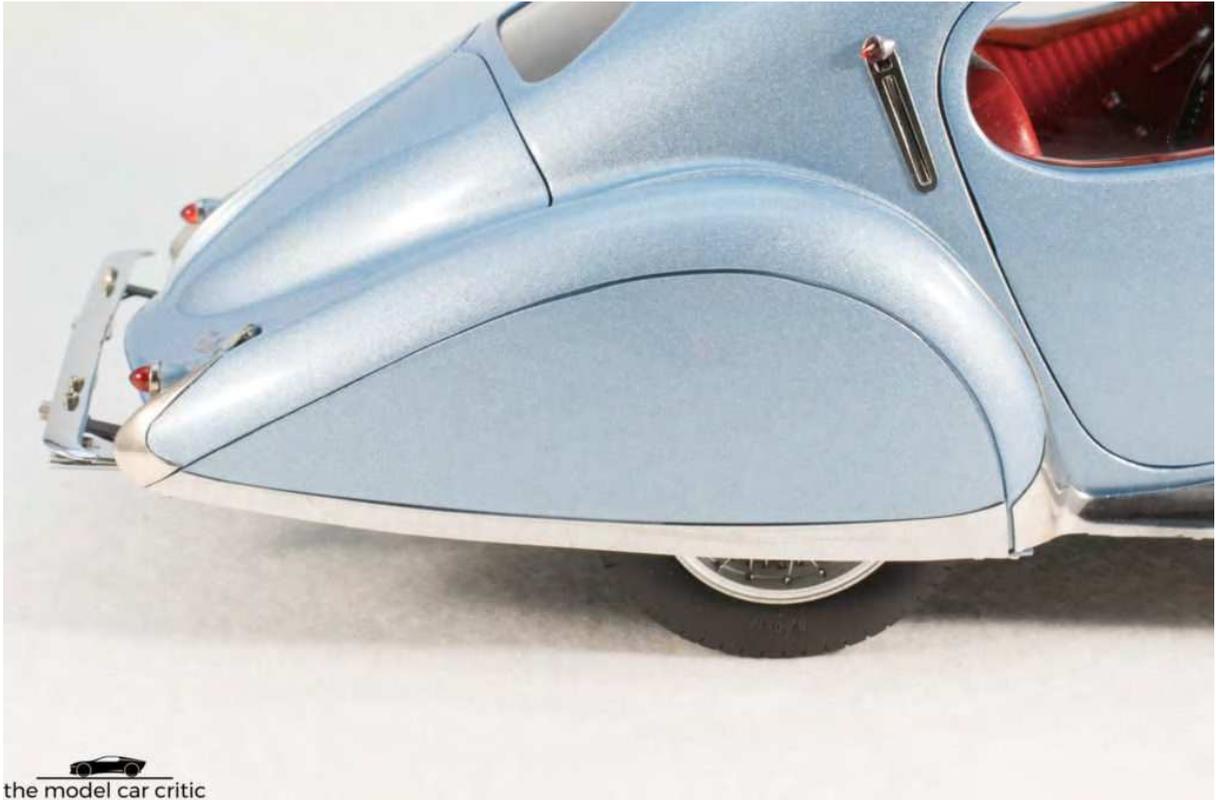


The subtle, but well defined shark fin on the bootlid carries through from the central spine that starts on the bonnet, continues into the split windscreen before reemerging on the boot after that smooth roof. I have seen pictures of Lagos with this partially covered in chrome to match

the chrome on the fender side skirts, but personally I prefer the more sophisticated and less chintzy look CMC decided to replicate. It's only a small design element, but really serves to add some visual clout to the overall look of the Talbot Lago.



Speaking of those fender side skirts, have you ever seen a car that makes these look so good? If you are going to say the Bugatti T57 or Delahaye 135M, guess what? They're also designed by Figoni & Falaschi so they're in good company! The teardrop motif is clearly visible in these fenders and as you can see from other pictures here, continue into the shape of the side windows. These skirts are actually removable by unscrewing a couple of small screws from underneath if you so desire. I'm happy to preserve this look, so didn't see the need to bother.



The chrome continues onto the bonnet where the side vents are surrounded with it. For me, it adds that extra element of movement whilst stood still by forcing the eye to follow the metal to the taper purposefully pointing forwards. These vents are real too – no mesh needed here, but they are cut right through the metal.



Doing a 180 it is now time to lift that sculpted bootlid and start revealing the secrets this beautiful body has been hiding from us. Now we really begin to see what makes CMC a head above the rest in terms of details and quality. There is a supporting rod either side of the boot to help keep the lid up. The hinges are nicely replicated and yet more tiny screws used to hold it all together. A fully detailed spare wheel is included in the boot (doesn't leave much room for luggage!) and those brown straps are real leather with photoetched parts. We can also see some carpeting around the wheel – note how whatever the wheel touches isn't actually carpeted to save it from getting dirty.



And yes, that spare wheel is fully removable and gives you the opportunity to admire it properly and with care. We'll have a much closer look at the wheels shortly, but you can begin appreciating the fine details already now.



Here is a closer look at the carpeted boot lining as well as some sort of cap – perhaps it is where the fuel goes in?



The metal windscreen wipers undoubtedly look good atop the windscreen – they didn't seem to turn from side to side and I definitely didn't want to push too hard for them to snap off due to heavy handedness! The waterproof windscreen surround isn't just painted on, but it seems like real rubber which is another nice detail.



One of the CMC Talbot Lago's best features is the sunroof. You might be forgiven for thinking that because it sits so flush with the body it can't possibly open, but you are wrong! It takes a bit of effort to push it down and back, but when you do manage it you get a great birds eye view inside the red leather cockpit. You can see the edges of the flocked rooflining and look how even the sunvisors are properly tinted!! Better yet, they move from side to side and up and down!!!




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Moving our attention back to the wheels and again CMC has replicated a tonne of details here. Firstly, thank you so much for putting the branding on! I always bang on about manufacturers missing this out for whatever reason so of course I must commend those who want to add that extra level of realism to their models for us collectors. The perfectly wired wheels feature a light alloy rim, stainless steel spokes and tyre valves plus removable two wing central locking wheel nuts. I did honestly try my best to get the wheel nuts off so I could take pictures of the brake setup inside the arches, but they were on too tight and I didn't want to snap them off. I did reach out to CMC about this and they admitted some models had theirs on too tight. Until another collector manages to remove theirs, please enjoy these beautiful images of the intricate wheels and notice how the spokes aren't just stuck onto the wheel hub, but rather are woven right through it! Can you imagine the time and dexterity taken to complete this task for 5 wheels per car! Kudos CMC!!






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Let's dive into that juicy red interior shall we?! Open those lovely suicide doors and you are greeted with sumptuous real leather everywhere. The gorgeous wood effect window surround perfectly complements the rest of the interior and the metal effect door handle and window winder are accurately represented too. The entire bench is one continuous seat upholstered in

real leather, plus there is another cool party trick in here – the backrest flips forward to reveal a fully carpeted luggage space.



Collectors might not have noticed this, but there are a couple of little pockets on the back side of the backrest – they look perfect for a little scale AtoZ atlas for those long drives across the continent!



The notched 4-spoke steering wheel sits proudly on the right hand side of the Lago (I believe all Lagos were built with the steering wheel on the right hand side – I’m British, so this is indeed the correct side!) and you can clearly see the shift selector for the Wilson 4-speed pre-select gearbox. This allows you to select the next gear you’re anticipating to use and only engages that gear once you drop the clutch. It is all mechanical, no electrics involved and allows you to keep both hands on the wheel when cornering and changing gears at the same time. It frees up floor space as well, because it is mounted on the steering column.



The instrument dials and switchgear are crystal clear. I think it looks oh so realistic and the attention to detail is second to none. Hats off again to you, CMC!



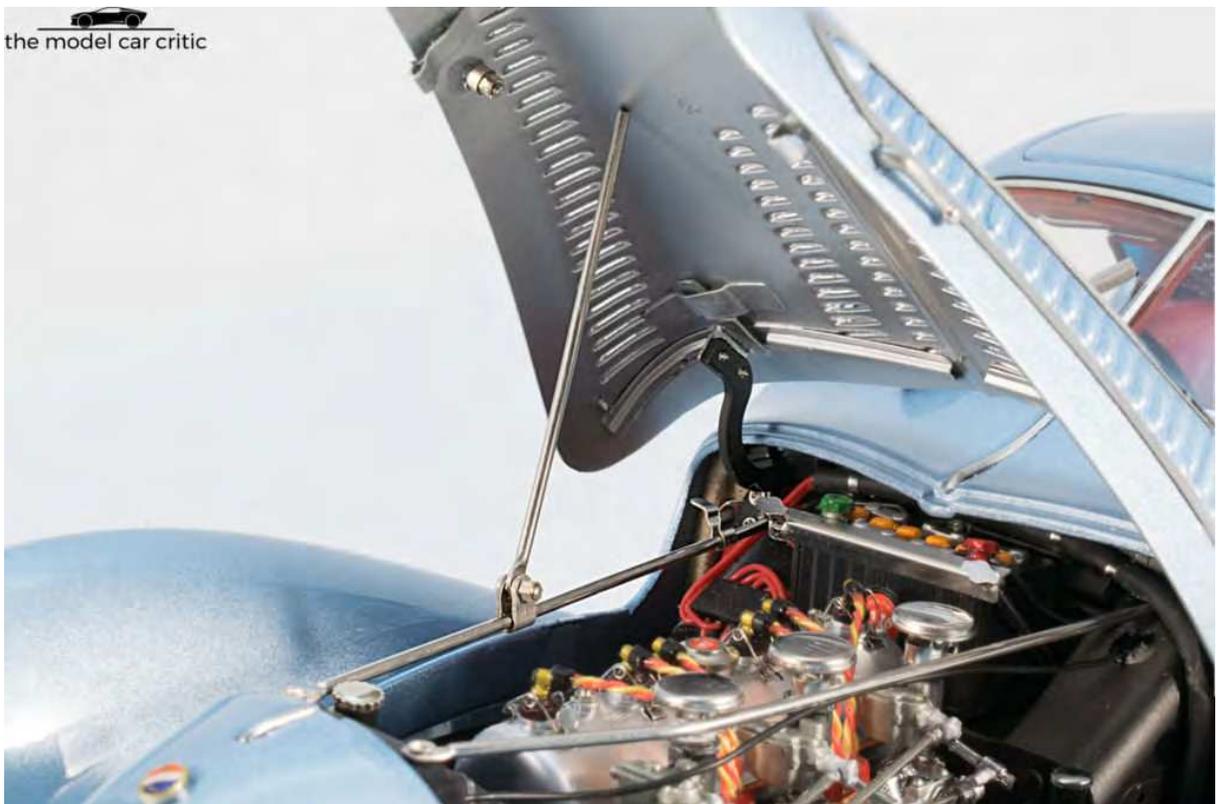
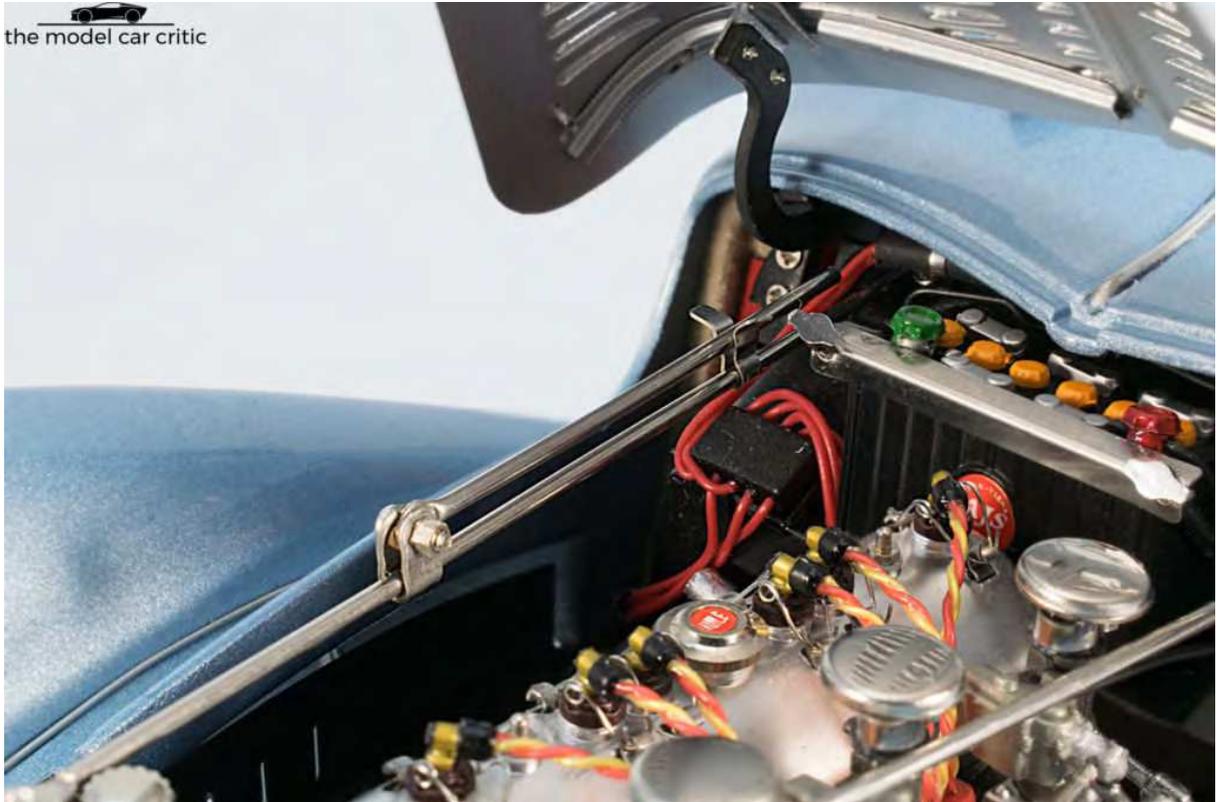


The leather-wrapped handbrake and piped carpet are also perfectly represented in scale form and you can make out the pedals in the background here.



If you thought the interior was good, sit down and prepare yourself for the visual treat that is the engine bay and undercarriage. They say “a picture speaks a thousand words”, so I’m going to

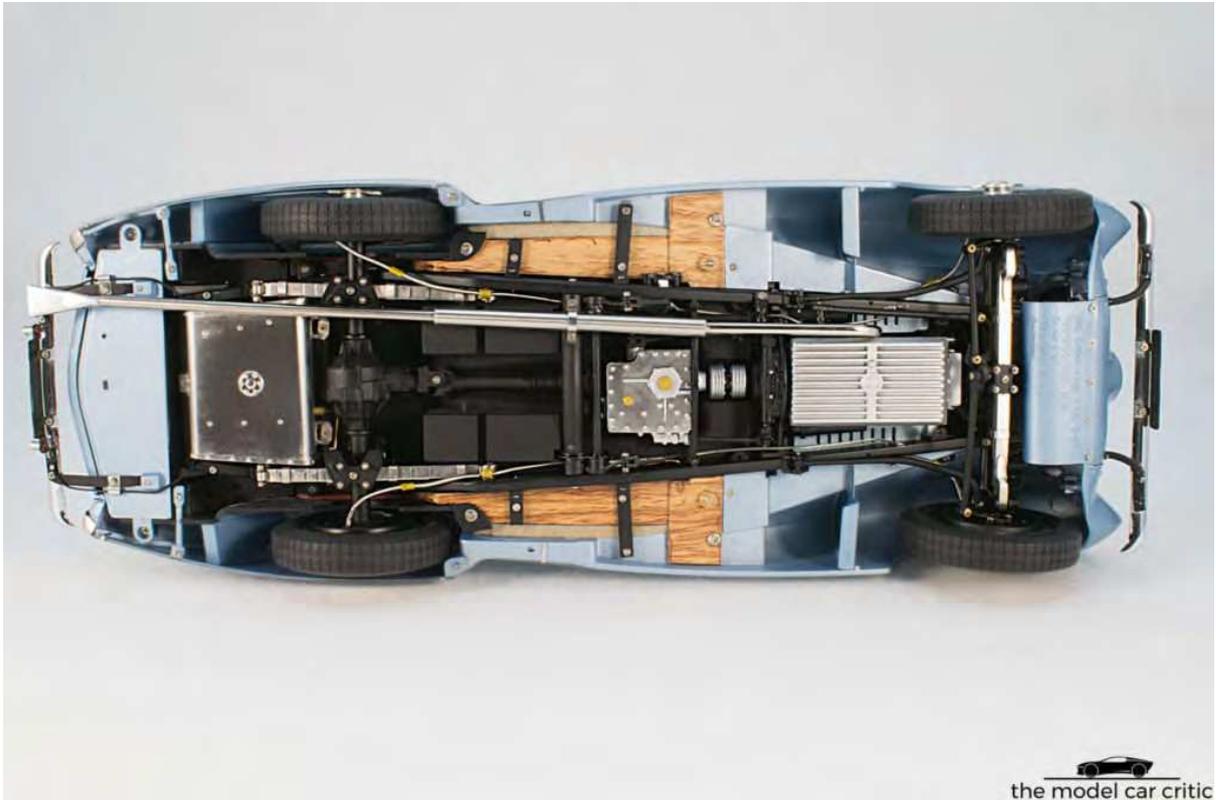
allow the pictures to do all the talking and show off the immense onslaught of details, such as the cabling, battery, wiring and right down to the little butterfly clip that holds the bonnet support in place. This is where your money goes in a CMC model – simply exquisite! Feast your eyes.....





I'll give you a minute to recover from that detail-fest, because the undercarriage is a similar experience. When you flip over 95% of model cars nowadays, you generally don't see much. It tends to be the area most manufacturers neglect. Not so the case with a CMC model. Like I've said before in this review, compare this model with some high end sealed resin models and I'd argue to say you're probably getting more than you paid for. Every single detail is there, from

the suspension and brake lines feeding each wheel, to the exhaust pipe, petrol tank, propshaft and wiring to the rear number plate lights. Heck, there are even some wood effect panels down there. The mind simply boggles at the incredible level of detail particularly the engine bay and undercarriage possess. As before I'll let the pictures do the talking.

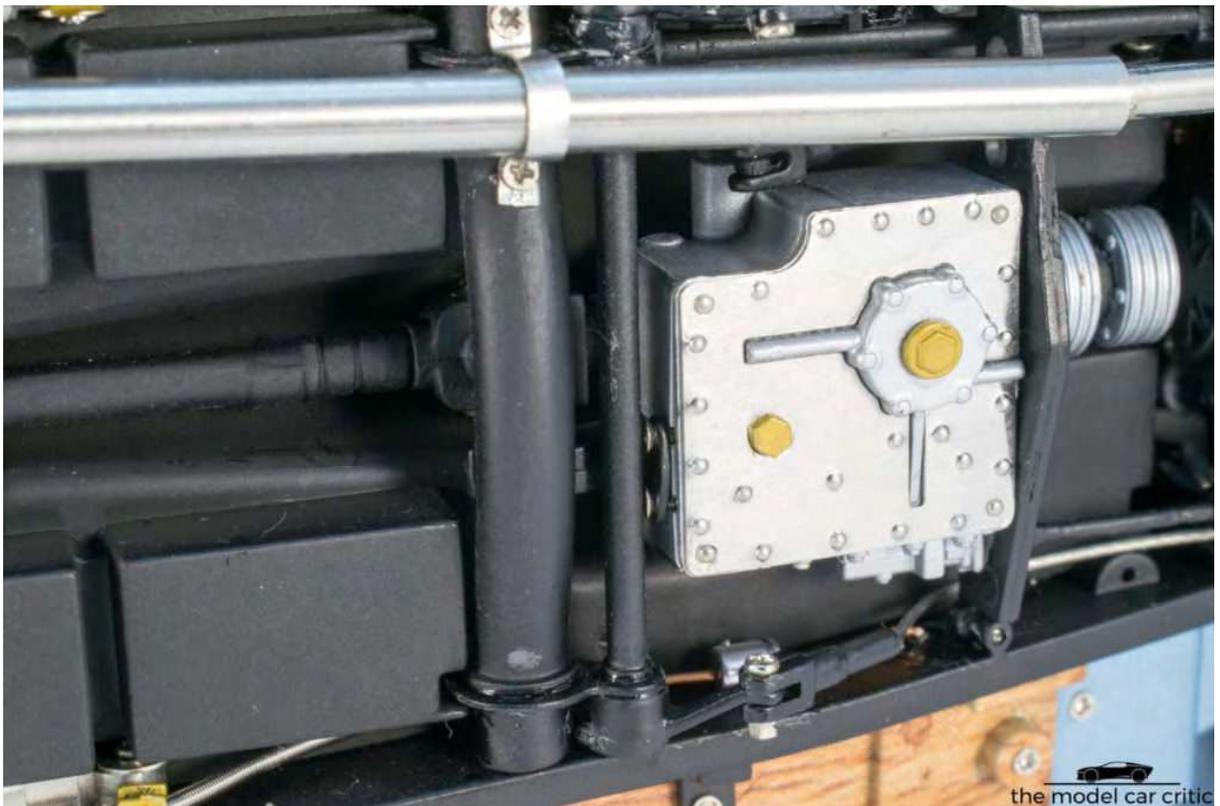



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I think one word can sum up this model – “WOW”!!! As I mentioned above, this is my first encounter with a CMC model in the flesh and I could never justify spending this much money on a single model car. Not that I could justify spending a similar amount on a sealed resin super/hypercar, although the thought has crossed my mind more than once just to add that latest and greatest car to my collection! I can now truly say that I get it, I really do. I understand

the fuss collectors make over CMC's models. I understand why some of their finest pieces have shot up over the four figure mark. It seems you really can put a price on quality. I usually end off my reviews to talk about how the model I've just reviewed compares to the competition, but I honestly can't think of any – not in subject matter or details and quality.

Thanks a lot for reading this review and I hope you enjoyed it!