

INSIDE


Replicas From Behind the Iron Curtain

THE

DIECAST

AUD\$14.96
NZD\$22.95 (INC GST)

MAGAZINE

ISSUE NO.29 

AUTOart Apex Replicas
Biante Classic Carlectables
CMC Conrad EMC Models
Minichamps Sun Star and
much more...

MANUFACTURERS'
CATALOGUES
- A 2013 Compilation



A Fine Car
HISTORIC HOLDEN

ISSN 1834-0547



29

Alfa Romeo Cadillac
Dodge Dubonnet
Hispano Suiza
Ferrari Ford Holden
and Terex



**Diecast
Surgery
and What's
Hot Online**

ALSO INSIDE

AUTO e MOTOCICLISTI
D'EPOCA
PADOVA, ITALY >>

GOLDEN AGE SPORTS CARS

CMC
Ferrari 312P

AUTOart
Alfa Romeo 33 TT 12



Produced by CMC and AUTOart

Words and Images by Matt Boyd

'Golden Age'. That cliché gets used a lot in sports. It seems that whenever a handful of standout performances happen to take place in a short period of time, fans and pundits rush to anoint it the 'greatest era in [fill in the blanks]'. Usually spirited – frequently pointless – debate then ensues, as proponents attempt to justify their personal preference for one era or another. That is precisely the scenario when we speak of the 'Golden Age of Sports Car Racing'; beginning in 1966, and continuing for a decade thereafter, when a mind-boggling procession of the most beautiful, most exotic, most innovative machines manufactured by

some of the most prestigious manufacturers in racing history, and driven by the most legendary racers, battled head-to-head in some of the most competitive, exciting, and memorable races on the world's most famous circuits. It was an impossible confluence of greatness, and yet it happened.

Forty years down the track the period continues to enthral sports car fans like no other. It should come as no surprise then that this Golden Age still inspires some of the most desirable replicas in the world of diecast. Which, in turn, was all the excuse we at *The Diecast Magazine* needed to take a look at two of the newest, and definitely the nicest,

models to hit the 1:18 market: AUTOart's 1975 Monza-winning Alfa Romeo 33 TT 12; and CMC's Sebring-winning Ferrari 312P Spyder.

Both these models rank in the upper tier of the premium 1:18 market, which for CMC, certainly, is well-established territory. The AUTOart Alfa is the latest in that manufacturer's range-topping Signature line, and for my money, the nicest yet. For all the similarities between these two replicas, the two model-makers are not traditionally direct competitors. So too in this case, given that the two subjects are separated by six years in technical development (which might as well be 26 by the look of them!) and more than \$160 in MSRP. But they would look right at home next to one another on any enthusiast's shelf, and each provides a lovely counterpoint to the other when examining their history and detail.



1:18

1969 FERRARI 312P SPYDER

CMC

Chronologically, the Ferrari 312P takes the grid first, arriving in 1969 after a year of Ferrari sitting out the International Championship for Makes (what the FIA used to call the World Sports Car Championship) in protest at the 3.0-litre displacement limit imposed on prototypes for the 1968 season that had outlawed Maranello's 1967 Championship-winning 4.0-litre 330P4. The FIA permitted up to 5.0 litres of displacement in the production-orientated 'Sports Car' class – dominated at the time by the Ford GT40 – but qualifying for it required the construction of at least 25 examples. Prototypes had no production requirement, but Ferrari didn't feel the P4 could be competitive with a 40% displacement handicap, and they couldn't afford to build 25 cars. After the year's hiatus they returned with the 312P.

The new sports-racer debuted at the second event of the 1969 season, the Sebring 12 Hours. Ferrari had only one 312P – number 25 – ready in time for the event, and they entrusted it to ace Mario Andretti who put it on pole. The 'barchetta' (open-top) bodywork was well-suited to the bumpy, 'technical' course with its mix of slow- and high-speed corners. Andretti, together with teammate Chris Amon from New Zealand, capitalised, finishing first in the prototype class and second overall behind the 5-litre Gulf Ford GT40. On big tracks like Le Mans with its Mulsanne mega-straightaway the

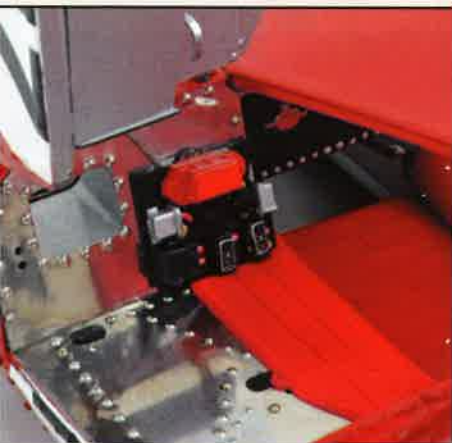
barchetta had too much drag, so a sleek hardtop 'berlinetta' version was brought out to keep pace on the straights. Ultimately it wasn't enough. Porsche had begun to sort out its updated 908/2 following Sebring; it matched the 312P on outright speed, and was more reliable too. Mechanical problems plagued the 312P throughout the season, and it captured just one more podium finish: a second place at Spa.

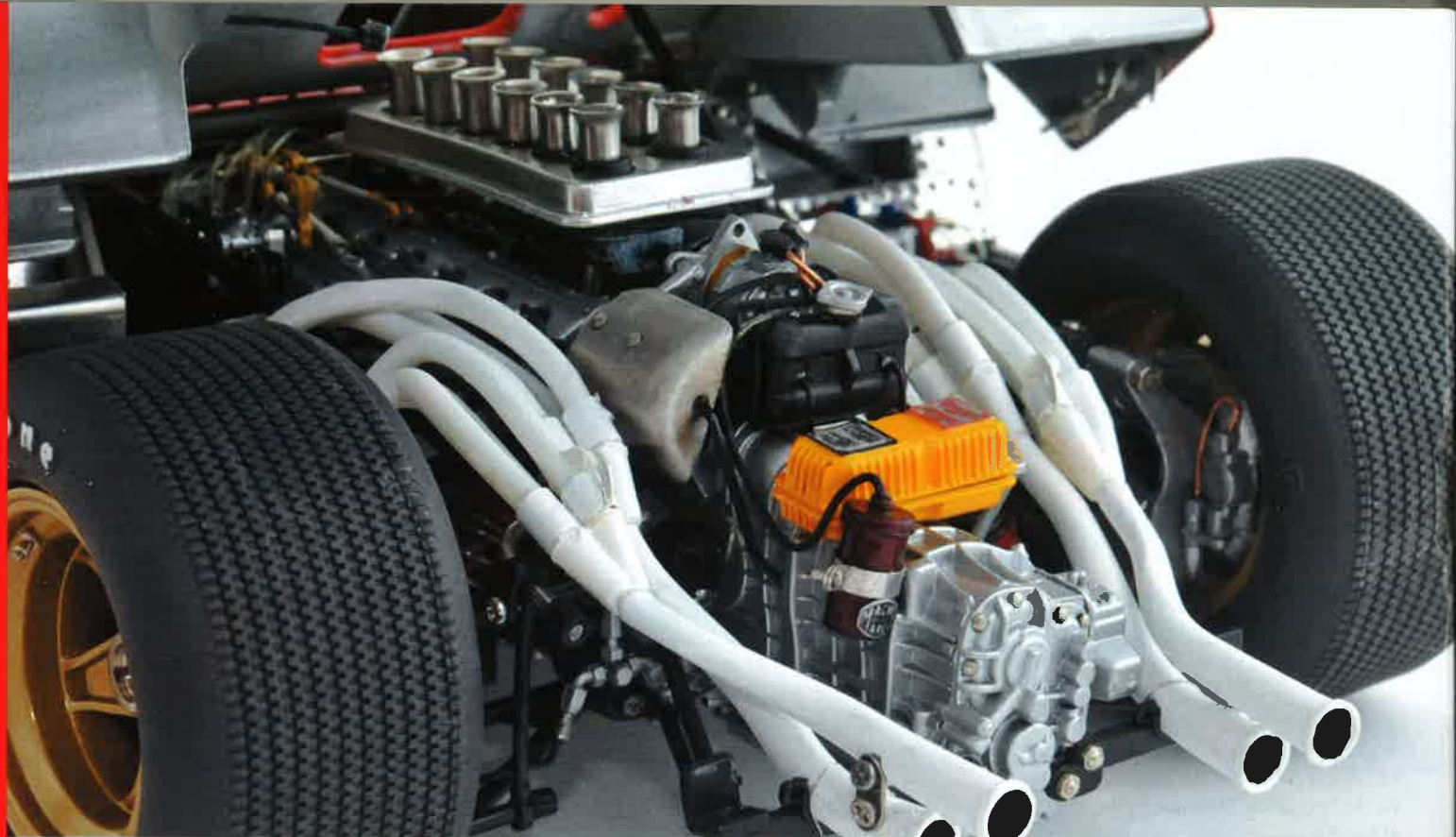
Although the 312P bore some visual similarity to the outgoing P4, that is deceiving. Far more than just a lower, wider P4, the 312P's chassis and suspension were derived from Ferrari's Formula 1 car. The P4 had featured a tube frame, but the 312P is a monocoque design, which saves nearly 114kg and lowers the car's centre of gravity. The body design owes much to Ferrari's 612P Can Am program. The long, low nose, wide stance, and sculpted flanks produced much-needed downforce and were a sign of things to come in sports car design. It also makes for a seriously beautiful machine – a fact CMC takes full advantage of with its 1:18 replica (item #M-095).

It can sometimes be a challenge to spot what makes CMC the best in the business (in my opinion at least), because it's often about what is *not* there – namely, flaws or compromises. It seems obvious when discussing a replica, but CMC's 312P looks just like the real thing. But when you go in closer,

it *still* looks just like the real thing. Even when I am close enough to put a nose-print on the voluptuous flanks, I still don't see the kinds of inevitable little manufacturing shortcuts or cost-saving measures we've all come to expect in a diecast replica. OK, I know this model isn't perfect, but I'd be hard-pressed to prove it. Sure, there may be the slightest hint of a glue seam on the front guard dive planes, but I'd wager the actual 312P had more visible weld seams.

CMC claims that the 312P comprises more than 1550 parts; I wonder how many of them are rivets, because they are all separate, and all perfect. Highlights for me include the functional bells and whistles: fuel filler caps that flip open, and an air intake scoop that is removable so you can see the gorgeous velocity stacks that feed the Lucas fuel injection system. At first I wondered how I was going to get the scoop pins to line up because the tolerances are so exact. Then I realised the rear pin is actually a spring catch that you can slide back to position the scoop, then let it slide forward to secure it. Well played CMC! The tiny service cover in front of the driver measures maybe all of 6.3mm – and it opens on scale hinges (of course) to reveal the reservoir fillers for the brake and clutch fluids. There's even a provided tool for the purpose. In fact, there are screws (and a screwdriver) also included in the packaging to hold the nose section bodywork in place,





but I don't bother with them. The fit is quite secure without them, and I like the option of removing the bodywork anytime to be able to swoon at the detail beneath!

The doors open by grasping the delicate loop handles on top. Don't pull straight up, though – these are functional latches! Pull them gently forward as you lift, and the doors glide open and stay open as if defying gravity. Beneath we see the stainless steel side pod/fuel tanks, plus some auxiliary gauges, switchgear and an electronics panel that is not visible when the doors are closed. The air ducts that pass from the front mudguard wells, through the hollow doors and back into the side-mounted radiators, are fascinating too. However, after much investigation I did find one minor quibble. The bright red seats are upholstered in real leather, but the hide texture is a bit coarse to be scale. I guess CMC doesn't genetically engineer its own 1:18 scale cows – shame on them!

By forgoing those body screws the nose section is easily lifted forward and up to reveal that F1-derived suspension, along with brilliant detail on the pedal box. Also visible are brake boosters with lines, more air ductwork covered by fine mesh, and lovely metal brake cooling ducts simulated by stainless steel springs. This is a trick CMC has used before to excellent effect, giving the look of corrugated metal ducts but without the flimsiness of foil or plastic. Extensive brake detail on the backs of the wheel hubs can be glimpsed as well, but the view gets even better when you employ the provided tool to spin the knock-off nuts to remove the wheels.

The chassis wasn't the only thing Maranello engineers lifted from their Formula 1 program. By repurposing the high-tech F1 V12, Ferrari was able to meet the 3.0-litre

displacement limit while making almost as much power as the old P4's 4-litre – better than 313kW! This was achieved thanks to a red line more than 2000rpm north of the P4's, which compensated for the lost displacement. For just three litres the engine looks mammoth in scale, due mainly to twin sets of three-into-one headers on either side of the engine and the 12 throats on the blocky Lucas fuel injection rig. The motor itself is buried underneath it all, although you can see a bit of the special F1 DOHC four-valve cylinder heads – the first time four valves per cylinder made it into a Ferrari sports car application.

Some caution is warranted when surveying this model's engine compartment. The broad, rear bodywork is *heavy* – it is the heaviest single piece on the model, and as such it has a tendency to roll when you attempt to lift the deck. Make sure you brace the model as you lift, and have the included prop rod handy; you'll want to brace it in the special little detent cast into the bodywork just inboard of the left-side taillight cluster. Once you've got it secure be sure to admire the superior detail on the rear-mounted gearbox and ignition hardware. If you so desire, the meaty rear tyres are also removable, but they're a little harder to work with because the nuts are recessed so deeply into the wheels and they lack the 'wings' of the front knock-offs. The supplied tool works well for them, though. If you want to see more of this fascinating powerplant than the busy rear section of the 312P allows, CMC will also be selling a stand-alone replica of the 312P engine in 1:18 scale (item #M-121) in coming months (see 'Shop Talk' in this issue).

It is a shame that the success of a machine as beautiful as the 312P turned out to be so short-lived, but during this era time and

technology were rocketing forward faster than these cars blasted down the Mulsanne straight. Enzo Ferrari sold 50% ownership of his company to Fiat during the 1969 season to raise much-needed capital to take the fight to Porsche, and used the funds to build the 25 cars needed to qualify for the 5-litre class for 1970. The resulting 512 was essentially a big-motored 312 with evolutionary revisions to its bodywork. That doesn't detract from the appeal of the 312 as a snapshot of its time; and the fact that legendary driver Mario Andretti piloted it to a class win on its maiden campaign only enhances collector appeal. It's prettier than the 512 too. Workmanship is every bit of what you'd expect of CMC, which is to say it reduces me to a drooling, gibbering fool as I am continually blown away by the detail and execution. Sure, you could live without one of these in your collection – maybe! But what a bleak, empty existence that would be...



1969 Ferrari 312P Spyder - Sebring Winner

SCALE: 1:18

ITEM NO: M-095

PRODUCER: CMC

MSRP: \$447