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COACHBUILT COUPE

A TEARDROP TALBOT

Talbot Lago T150-C SS Coupe by Figoni & Falaschi



4107-FG

Produced in 1:18 by CMC

Article by Terry O'Neill

If ever CMC was destined to make a 'halo' replica car, this is it — and if my information is correct, CMC has been waiting a long time for just such a challenge. Its miniature-engineering prowess has now reached such a pinnacle of mastery and finesse; it has become feasible to tackle such a difficult motor car. The replica referred to here is the 1937 Talbot-Lago T150-C SS Coupe, with body by Figoni & Falaschi (item #M-145). Produced in 1:18 diecast metal and mixed media, this impeccable model is as true a representation of the real car as is possible for a mass-production model. What makes this car even more special is that only 16 of the original were made, so even if you had the means to purchase one (around \$3.5

million at last count), there would not be one available to buy. Therefore your only option is a museum-quality replica such as this one manufactured by CMC. But before we delve further into the history of itself, let's look briefly into the history of a very unique motor car, the Talbot-Lago T150-CSS.

Many cars have worn the dashing curves of 'goutte d'eau', or a teardrop shape, but only a few were distinguished by the special chassis that served as a foundation for their beguiling bodywork. The Talbot-Lago T 150-C SS is one of them. The T150-C began as a pure racing car, with the 'C' denoting 'corse' (Italian for 'racing'). The shortened SS chassis was thoughtfully designed by Vincenzo Bertarione, and

featured an engine tuned by Lucien Girard Auto Engineering. The chassis was rugged, and handling balanced and predictable. The inline six-cylinder 160hp engine drove through a Wilson four-speed pre-selector gearbox, providing outstanding performance and smoothness, and thrifty fuel economy. The T150-C had considerable competition success, coming third at the 1938 Le Mans 24-Hours, winning the Tunis Grand Prix, finishing in the top two positions in the Tourist Trophy, and sweeping the all-important French Grand Prix in 1937. With slight modifications, the same chassis formed the basis of the magnificent road car version, imbuing one of the most stunning automotive designs with great significance and a thoroughbred pedigree. Mounted on this excellent platform is the highest example of a coachbuilder's art. The 'Figoni et Falaschi' body styling is widely considered to be the definitive design of its era, displaying ideal



1:18

"The Talbot Teardrop Coupe represents what may be one of the finest examples of assembled form ever applied to the automobile"

--Strother MacMinn

proportions, alluring details and faultless forms. The Teardrop was the epitome of modern Europe, embodying the qualities of speed, aerodynamics and good taste. As legendary automotive designer and historian Strother MacMinn once said, "The Talbot Teardrop Coupe represents what may be one of the finest examples of assembled form ever applied to the automobile" — high praise indeed. All this success came after almost total obscurity, because in 1935 the original Sunbeam-Talbot-Darracq company was in deep financial trouble before being rescued by Major Anthony Lago. He founded the new Talbot-Lago company and immediately set about producing a line of exclusive and expensive sports cars. French coachbuilding firm Figoni & Falaschi adopted the *goutte d'eau* style to perfection, and produced awe-inspiring coachwork that still stands the test of time. Talbot-Lago continued to operate until

1959, when it was taken over by Simca. Now let's look at CMC's masterful replica, a true wonder containing more than 1488 parts. Although not actually modelled specifically on one single car, CMC's model appears loosely based on a T150-C once owned by millionaire media mogul and playboy Tommy Lee in 1939. Quality has its own 'feel', and you can tell from the weight of this model there is plenty of quality there. Its stunning exterior is painted in metallic grey-blue, a colour that accentuates its form and styling lines, bringing life to much of its voluptuous exterior. Every line on this car flows smoothly, including its two recessed front lights surrounded by

precisely fitted chrome stone covers that match the filigree front grille. Air cooling vents or *louvres* are actually opened up on the bonnet. A special tool is supplied with which to open the working doors by turning the handles. Once they are open, a wealth of detail blasts the senses. Door trim is finished in red simulated ribbed leather, complete with door handles,



window winders and arm rests. There's the mandatory timber dashboard, of course, complete with miniature legible instrument dials and switches, and magnificently reproduced steering wheel, pre-selector shifter and handbrake. The red tilt-back bucket seats' upholstery also has a leather appearance, and a luggage space behind is covered with fine red flock. There's even a headlining made from a very thin felt material, sun visors, and wonder of wonders a fully operational sun roof. Yes, this one actually slides open by pressing down and then back with firm finger pressure. I think it's a first on any 1:18 diecast model, so no wonder CMC is proud of this achievement.

The boot contains a spare wheel, held down with thin leather straps that can be undone to remove it. This wheel, as with the other four on the car, is made from machined alloy rims and stainless steel wire spokes and nipples. They can also be removed from the car by unscrewing the wheel knock-off wingnuts. The treaded tyres are made of real rubber and bear the Dunlop brand. The car has delicate bright metal trim all round, and photo-etched metal emblems where applicable. The engine bay is an amazing sight to behold with its six-cylinder replica engine and carburettors, battery, and all necessary electrical wiring, hoses, linkages and plumbing. A slim hinged steel support rod holds the bonnet in an open position for easier viewing.

When the car is turned over you get a good idea of how much importance CMC places on accuracy and detailing. The view from underneath shows a full chassis with individual leaf spring suspension, fuel line and wiring, pre-selector gearbox, drive shaft, and a straight-through exhaust system that must have sounded wonderful at full throttle. But it's also the unseen items that make CMC models so great. Tiny flaps open to reveal key locks or fuel inlets, a complete wireframe structure under the body, woodwork underneath on the chassis, and so on. It's just not possible to list all in one review, so it's over to you now, dear readers, to discover for yourselves the spectacular marvels and finesse of miniature engineering offered by CMC.

Do I have any gripes about this model? Well just one, a pet peeve of mine. Wire wheels are not left unprotected on real cars. They are painted usually silver or some other colour, or in some cases even chrome-plated. So why does CMC persist with unfinished bright steel wire spoke wheels? Surely it's not that hard to complete the job. That said, you cannot really go past the excellence that CMC achieves with its replicas. This marvel is available now for approximately \$750, so look, purchase, enjoy!