

FOR THE RACER IN YOU

# SLOT CAR

MAGAZINE

INTERNATIONAL

## Thunder Slot

Lola T70...  
Giovanni Montiglio  
unveils the super-  
fast classic sports  
car we've all been  
waiting for!

## Pride & Prejudice

Brett Jürmann and  
the 1968 Ford  
Mustang Programme

## VIPER

Andy Player studies  
the new HD kid on the  
block and interviews  
Dan Cronin

## Rally Group A

Hub Habets  
deciphers the

history of Group A  
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- THE NEW LOLA T70 -



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LOLA T70 MKIII J. Surfess / D. Hobbs  
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# Champagne or Cherry Cola?

## The Thunder Slot Lola T70



### Marc Abbott's View

It's been a year since we first heard that Giovanni Montiglio had announced Thunder Slot, with the plan to design and produce the Lola T70. Hopefully, by the time you read this, the first two models should be in your local slot car stockists.

We have had sneak previews of the design evolution over the past months and both of us in the Slot Car Magazine studios have been very eager to get our hands on the finished product. Our first track test was a few weeks back, but Giovanni had been race testing his ideas for months prior, just to make sure everything was perfect. An initial test car we got our hands on proved to be very promising and was already setting times close to the best standard Slot.it and NSR cars of the same historical time period.

Then a box arrived with the first of the finished cars... and boy do they look nice. Sometimes you just get a feeling even before you drive it that it's going to be good.

The car comes with period-style wheels (six spoke with the large knock-off wheel nuts) and tyres to match. The colour finish and tampon

printing are up to scratch too and placing the car on a set-up block shows that the model sits low and menacing.

Even the model engine has the word Chevrolet etched into the cam covers. Maybe the only lacking piece of design is the bland gearbox area around the back, although the exhaust pipes travel all the way up the silver engine deep inside the body! (See Ric's retort to this in his appraisal).

Placing the original test car against the finished body does reveal subtle changes as Giovanni has perfected the look over the months – the inclusion of the front winglets being one. The driver inside looks good too, he's seated on a fairly lightweight interior which will aid the centre of gravity.

Driving the car is pure joy right from the first turn of the wheel. It simply works... Ok, you know that you're going to start playing with the

chassis screws to better the set-up, but rest assured this is a proper club racer's car (and it's good-looking enough for the collectors too).

Looking at the chassis reveals a selection of screws that competition drivers are coming to expect on race cars: You have three body-mount screws: two at the front and one rear (see image). On one of our cars these are actually Allen screws – M2.5 size. The other sported normal Phillips-type... so it will be interesting to see what the factory finally churn out as standard.

The motor pod is supported by five screw mounts: These can be fine-tuned with suspension, which Giovanni has taken great pains to design – Our examples didn't come with this as standard, however, when it does appear, and we presume the handling improves, this will be a certain contender for a dominant race win!

Just behind the guide area are a series of holes to support more grub screws. Using standard type Allen screws this time (still M2.5 size) you have the ability to adjust the axle height up and down. On modern slot racing cars this is a must, to achieve the perfect smooth drive. However, you'll also notice that when looking at this area from the inside, it's been designed for independent front axles – something we can't wait to try.

Oh, and to cater for anyone that prefers magnet racing, there are three magnet positions. Our cars weren't supplied with these, but they are going to be bar-type. There are two positions in front of the motor and one right below the rear axle. We hope the "pull" of these magnets isn't too great as it would surely take all the pleasure out of what a race car is all about.

Eagle-eyed readers will also note the slight angle of the Mabuchi-type motor compared with genuine side-winder design – most people we showed the car to didn't notice until it was pointed out.

OK, what's it like on the track? In standard form and period tyres it's more than adequate - well that's an understatement... it's very good. Giovanni, however, had also supplied us with one of his test cars (as mentioned earlier) and he had been experimenting with different size tyres and compounds.

We were taken by surprise by the power of the motor in this car and were certain that it was more powerful than its Slot.it counterpart.

We pulled the red car apart and fitted the orange endbell 21.5K Slot.it motor inside and ran comparison laps between it and the yellow car fitted with the Thunder Slot motor.

Obviously both cars had to be adorned with the same spec of tyres (fronts, Slot.it zero grips and rears Slot.it E1s) so that we could see exactly what the difference is. We fettled both cars to achieve best grip by adjusting the motor pod and chassis rock and also ran the tyres in.

Over a lap of Nascot Wood Club circuit the Thunder Slot motor had an advantage of approx. 0.3sec every lap. Both cars were exactly the same



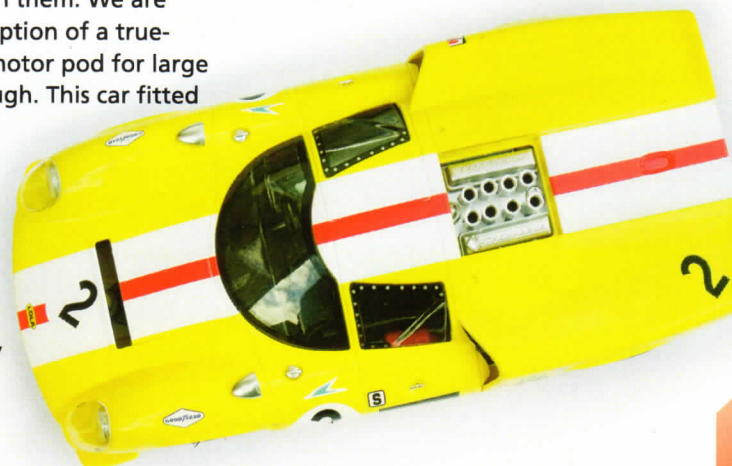
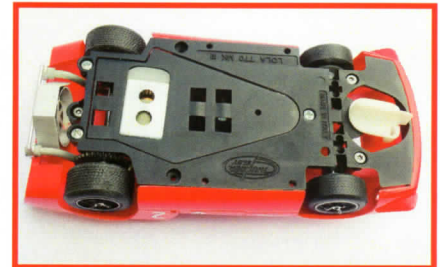
to drive, yet the Thunder Slot motor had more punch on acceleration, allowing it to get to its top speed quicker.

OK, we thought, let's get sneaky and try a Slot.it 30K red endbell motor against it...

A slight gain on the Thunder Slot motor, but only by another 0.1sec. It does seem that the motor Giovanni has sourced is a good one. Of course if we were to do this in a controlled scientific manner, we'd have to take a selection of results from maybe ten-odd motors from each brand, but it was obvious to us that the motor, combined with its slight angled position, had an advantage. If you consider that cars of this type circle the track in just over nine seconds, once the race is completed you're going to be a good distance ahead.

Getting back to the chassis, you'll note that there is a grey or a black variety. This offers either a soft or hard ride. Personally, we couldn't feel any difference in them. We are excited by the option of a true-thoroughbred motor pod for large can motors though. This car fitted with such a can in anglewinder format is certainly going to be awesome!

If you're into cars of this era, we can't see any reason why you wouldn't want one...

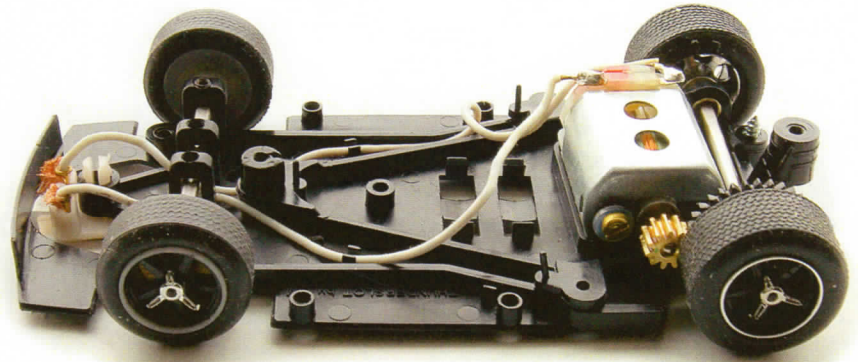




**Ric Woods' View**

It is finally here. From the first few parts and test body mouldings seen at Gaydon last May, it will have taken pretty much a year for Giovanni Montiglio's plans to come to fruition. I will say right now that I think it's been worth the wait...

I've been looking at the yellow car, as driven to 6th place in the 1968 BOAC '500'. This particular vehicle was chassis number SL73/101, which, as the serial number hints, was the first T70 MkIII coupé ever built. Those good looks came from the pen of one Jim Clark (no relation) and SL73/101 was fitted with a 5-litre Aston Martin engine with an eye to joining a sister car at the 1967 edition of Le Mans. As it turned out, the 24-hour classic was a bit of a disaster for the Lola-Astons, our car retiring with a cracked crankshaft damper and the sister car burning out a piston after only three laps. The car was then re-engined at the factory with a 6-litre Chevrolet, (which had a 40 bhp power advantage as well as being lighter) and sold on, ultimately ending up in



Jo Bonnier's hands at the start of the 1968 season.

The T70 coupés became the thing to have in the national Group 4 class, although the big international wins, with a couple of exceptions, eluded it. It had power and speed, certainly, but the reliability in the longer races was lacking. 1969 saw the introduction of the MkIIIB, as modelled by Fly, of course, but this updated version still struggled in the more punishing events. Happily, SL73/101 is still alive and well; now

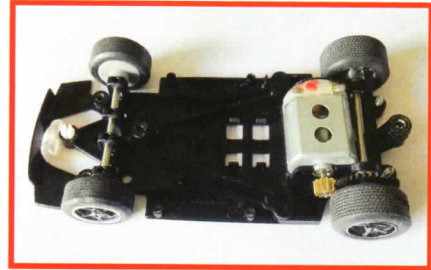
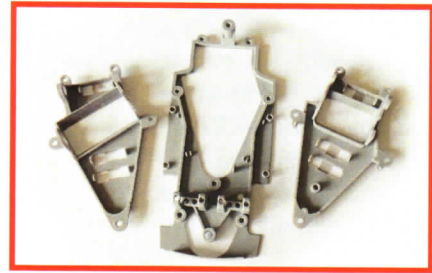
restored to its original Aston Martin power and livery, it makes appearances at classic shows and racing events.

I must admit I was expecting less of Thunder Slot's first car. Given the amount of time that has to be devoted to getting everything right in the mechanical department, I anticipated that at least the initial releases would suffer as a result regarding body detail. But no, there are nice separate door handles and filler caps, tiny taillights and, as Marc



## – LOLA SPECS –

- **Motor:** 21500 revs at 12 V. 180gcm torque
- **Gear and Pinion:** Made in (special) nylon – gear fixed by 4/40 standard screw. Standard equipment ratio 11-32
- **Motor Mount & Chassis with up to 5 fixing poles** (standard equipment 3)
- **Chassis has the option to have up to four 2.5 mm. screws** (two each side) to set the body-rock
- **Chassis has the option to have independent front wheels** by means of two half-shafts
- **Front axle can be set by up to 8(!) 2.5mm screws** – for a standard axle 4 are adequate.
- **Rear rims are machined in aluminium** – dia. 14.5mm, fixed by 4/40 Allen screws
- **Front rims in lightened nylon** – dia. 14.5mm, push-fit on the axle.
- **Motor mount adjustments do not require body removal.**
- **Cockpit:** It's a mixture – the base is matt Lexan whilst the top part of the driver, the fire extinguisher and the gearshift are a more solid plastic
- **The weight of the complete body is 17 grams.**

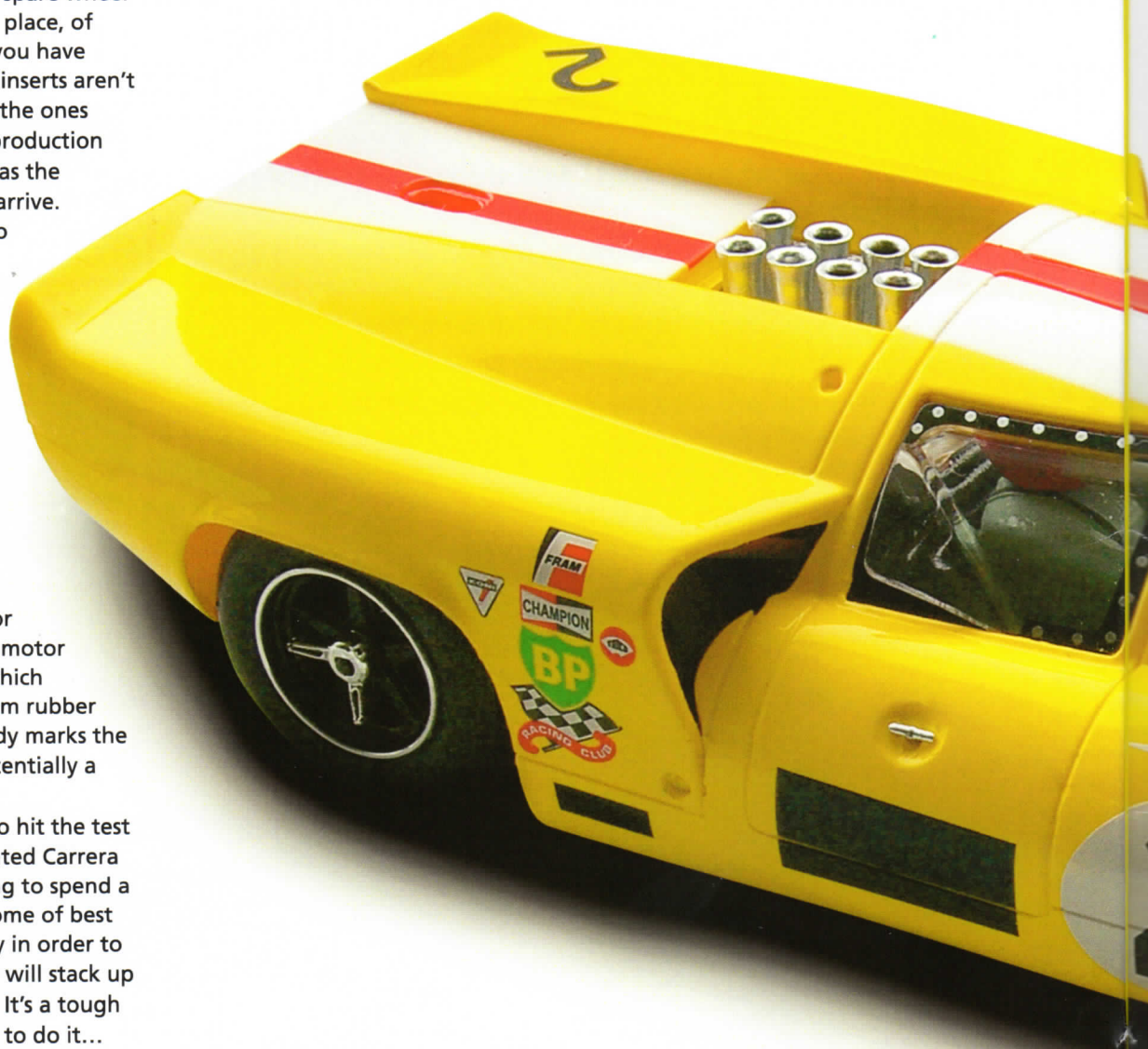


noticed, some pleasing detail on the engine moulding. Please ignore my colleague's comments regarding the gearbox, however. Where the gearbox appears on the Fly car, the aluminium well which took the regulatory spare wheel has been modelled correctly. The spare wheel itself is moulded and in place, of course. I hope most of you have spotted that the wheel inserts aren't quite correct. Fear not, the ones supplied with this pre-production car are a temporary fix as the correct ones are yet to arrive. Still, they don't look too bad, do they?

Marc has described the chassis in some detail, so I'll not subject you to that again, except to say that even the black chassis plastic is quite soft and gives the impression of being very durable, perhaps more so than the equivalent Slot.it car, for instance. That, and the motor being slightly angled which should see less drag from rubber and other debris, already marks the Lola down as being potentially a great endurance car.

Now it was my turn to hit the test track, this time my painted Carrera layout, my mission being to spend a few hours "ragging" some of the best RTR classics you can buy in order to see how the newcomer will stack up against the opposition. It's a tough job, but somebody had to do it...

At this point we have to mention NSR, where Giovanni previously plied his trade as a chassis guru, amongst many other things. The Montiglio-designed NSR Classics are perhaps the most obvious competitors to the new Lola and I am lucky enough to have a decent collection of stock-but-carefully-fettled examples to call on. I fitted the Lola with same well-oiled NSR Supergrips as the NSR cars, to get the fairest comparison. On the fast, flowing 50-foot circuit, the NSR Ford MkIV managed a best lap of 3.82 seconds. My fastest NSR classic has always been the Ford P68, which, true





to form, came up with a decently rapid 3.78. Then it was the Lola's turn. I was making adjustments to the body and motor pod float as I went along and the car responded with 3.83, 3.75, 3.66, 3.64 and finally 3.63 as I dialled it in. As Marc mentions, the motor is very punchy out of the corners—noticeably better than the three Sharks I tried and the chassis can be adjusted to get all that punch down on the track. I also wanted to try a Slot.it Ford Mark II. My own example is, for some reason, amazingly quick. You don't so much drive it as try to hang on. In an attempt to tame the beast, it's fitted with very soft Slot.it tyres, which do give more grip than the NSRs, though for a shorter period of time. The mad Ford did a best of 3.60, three hundredths better than the Lola, yes, but a much hairier ride! I have no doubt that over a longer race distance the Lola would prevail, given that it's much easier to get into a rhythm and stay there.

So there you have it. I admit I wanted it to succeed; the T70 is one of my all-time favourites and having some in the 'classics' stable is something I'm looking forward to. But on the basis of the car I have tried today, I can recommend it, hand-on-heart. The Lola should be available from April, the price from Pendle Slot Racing will be £53.95.

*All pictures Marc Abbott and Ric Woods, except main picture on pages 16-17 and all pics on 20-21 by Giovanni Montiglio*

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