

THUNDER

UNDER THE BONNET



Thunder Slot... Unless you've been asleep over the past two years, you'll know of one of the slot car world's newest kids on the block. So let's lift the bonnet on Giovanni Montiglio's dream and see what makes this particular design of engine tick over and then roar...



Gaydon provides an ideal opportunity to assess the progress of Thunder Slot. Company principal Giovanni Montiglio arrived in 2015 with a few prototype parts, a couple of body mouldings and a plan. Last year the plan had become the ready-for-production Lola T70 coupés and this year we'll see the progress on the Spyder versions, as well as the ever-expanding range of tuning parts for

the already very effective chassis. That's the 'public' face of Thunder Slot, but what goes on behind the scenes? Let's start at the very beginning (a very good place to start).

Eleven years ago, Armando Bizzotto founded Logigrafica, a company that specialized in tampo printing onto plastic parts, including slot car bodies. There was already an interest in the car industry at Logigrafica (especially given that

various aspects of it were at the centre of its business), as well as a particular interest in modern and classic cars; over time this turned into a desire to produce a finished article rather than just components. Logigrafica had a head start with some of the best tampo technology around, as well as many friends and contacts in the slot racing world, including top chassis designer Giovanni Montiglio! It all fitted



together very nicely, thank you and Thunder Slot was born, working in premises on the outskirts of Brescia. There might well be a familiar ring to that name; it's where the legendary Mille Miglia started, thus providing more racing DNA in Thunder Slot's background.

It is very easy to get carried away and start visualizing an enormous factory, where rows of dedicated workers are turning out little Lolas by the container-load, plastic in one end and a slot car coming out of the other. Don't be too surprised to learn that this isn't the case. There is a certain inevitability regarding Far Eastern involvement in slot car manufacturing these days, and Thunder Slot is no exception. This was confirmed by Giovanni when we asked for a brief overview of the production process.

'I don't think here at Thunder Slot the job is very different from other firms. Once the racing car to be reproduced is decided, I start working on the project of it with a graphic pc program. Whenever it is possible I'll start from a bigger scale static model (the Lola T70 MKIII comes from a beautiful Tamiya 1/12 model), which I'll use for all the dimensions scaled down to 1/32. This job takes some six or seven weeks and once I'm satisfied, I send the 3D drawings to our supplier in China.

Meanwhile and in parallel I proceed with the drawings of the chassis and motor mount, according to the kind of motor, gear, pinion and the wheel size. Obviously this calculation is not related to one car only, but it has to be in common with the category where the model will be raced.

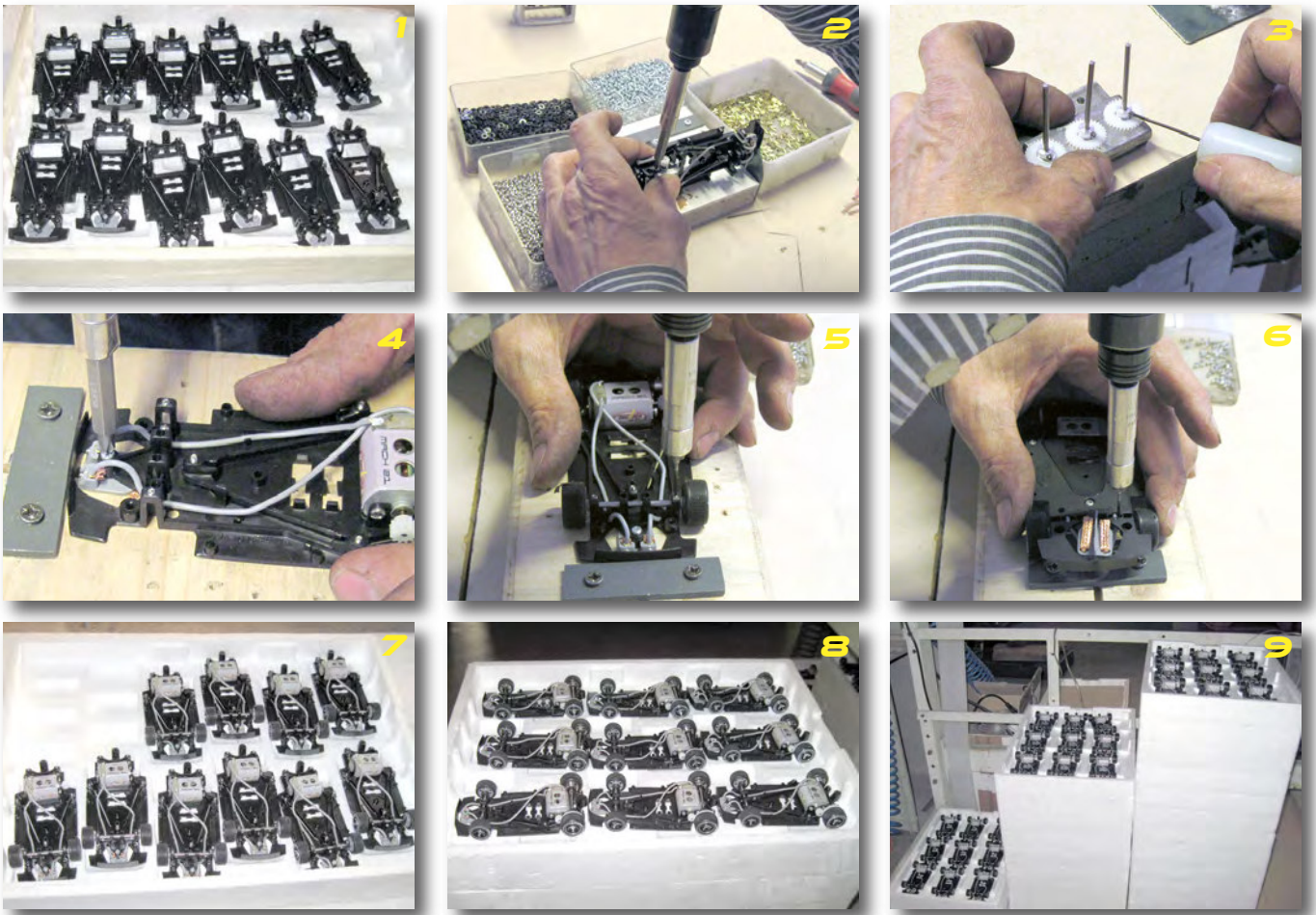
The early body samples arrive – after a sort of continuous comments exchange between me and the Chinese technicians – to give us the possibility to evaluate if there are any modifications to be embodied. If so, there will be another wait for the second and definitive sample to be supplied.

Once checked, there is the green light for the production and this happens for the mechanical components as well.

We then supply the artwork for the desired liveries and here again once the finished samples have been received and commented upon, there is the final approval for the production line.

On our side here in Brescia area, we proceed with the production of all the mechanical components which are then converging in the factory (a





Above pics show various stages of chassis preparation before everything goes into mass production... all things must be checked and re-checked!

Below – Two test models, decorated by Giovanni, to make sure the “feel” looks right. If you’re at the UK Festival, visit the stand to see the finished product...

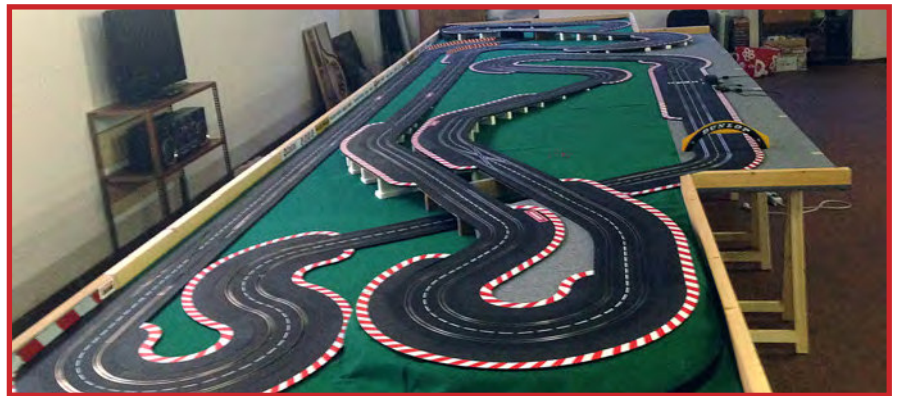


small one for the time being) where a pair of workers who are specialists in this sort of 'micro' assembly will put together the complete chassis ready to be installed underneath the finished body. It should be noted each assembled chassis is tested, before having the body installed, on a special test rig, which simulates the inertial effect of the car on a track. This is because we strongly believe in offering a guaranteed product.'

It's quite reassuring to know that your car will have been tested before you get it. I'll name no names, but there are manufacturers out there whose cars I wouldn't dare race straight out of the box, for fear of damage caused by loose bearings, loose wheels – in fact loose just-about-everything except the very tightly-attached body...

So far the Thunder Slot story has been a very interesting one. The trials and many tribulations of bringing a car to production from scratch would test the sternest resolve, but, judging by the end result, it must surely have been worth it. Our thanks to Giovanni Montiglio for the pictures you see here and for his help in putting together this article.

If you do manage to get to the 2017 UK Slot Car Festival (May 13-14th), Giovanni and the team will be in attendance, so why not visit the Thunder Slot stand and have a chat whilst admiring the new Spydors.



Above – Giovanni has had plenty of places to test his ideas through to production: (Top) Policar track, (Middle) Carrera Track, (Above) Ninco track. Bottom Left – A fan in the real world of classic cars with Thunder Slot logo. The Thunder Slot Team at the recent Nuremberg Toy Show.

