BUiLD A PAiR

GROWING UP during the late 1970s, I always turned to look whenever a 1970 or 1971 Cuda drove by. I especially loved the look of the 1970 models at night, with their distinctive front marker lights tucked up in the grille area.

Mopars in scale always appealed to me because of the orange engines, painted engine bays, and bright factory colors.

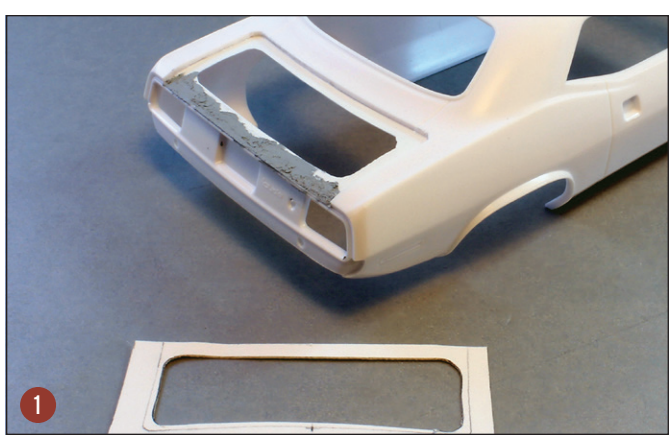
When I saw the test shots of Revell's new 1970 kit, I couldn't wait for the release date! I always wanted a nice, modern kit of an early-1970s Cuda or Challenger in 1/25 scale, and immediately picked up two examples as soon as they were available at my local hobby shop.

With two different hood and bumper treatments in the kit, I knew I wanted to build factory stock examples using both.

I wanted to build one as a tough street racer, with the other one more of a gentleman's muscle car.

Using Tim Boyd's review in the April 2014 issue, many Internet reference pictures, and some parts-box treasures, I started my detailed builds of Revell's kit.

I had a few small hurdles to overcome, but overall it was fun, and I plan to build a few more versions in the future.

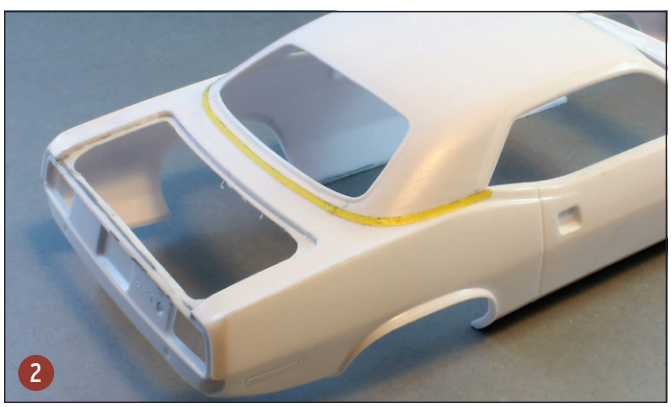


I wanted to open the trunks on both cars for a little more impact on the contest tables. After cutting open the trunk, trim some sheet styrene and glue it to the body. I find it easier to then file the opening to the correct size this way. The putty fills the seam between the trunk flange and tail panel.

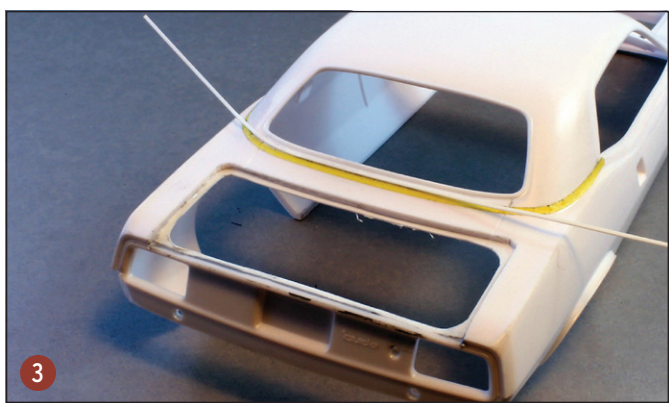
OF CUDAS

Street racer or muscle car? Why not both? Here's how

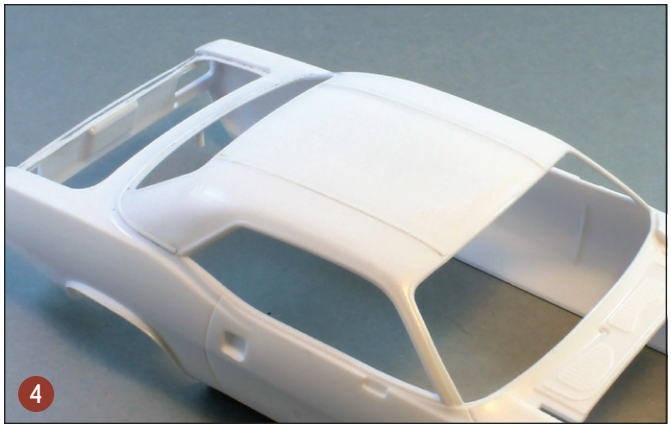
by ROD MASKIW



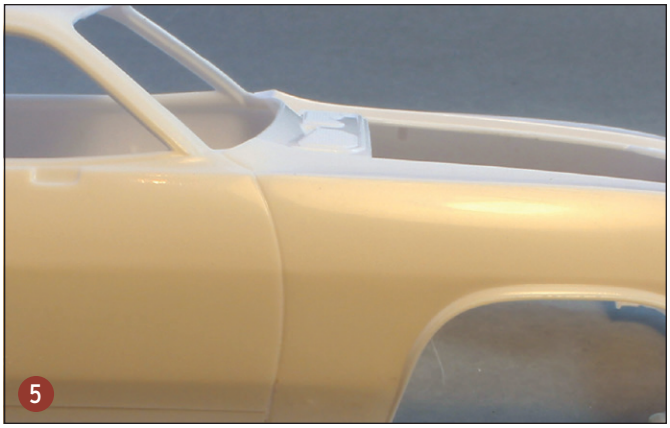
This view shows the trunk flange trimmed and filed to fit and the puttied seam sanded. I wanted to build one of the cars with a vinyl roof. The tape acts as a guide for applying the chrome trim around the bottom of the roof.



.010" x .030" styrene strip is used for the trim. With the tape as a guide, carefully apply super glue a little at a time, and work your way around the roof, starting at the center. The thin strip is flexible enough to make the corner in this example.

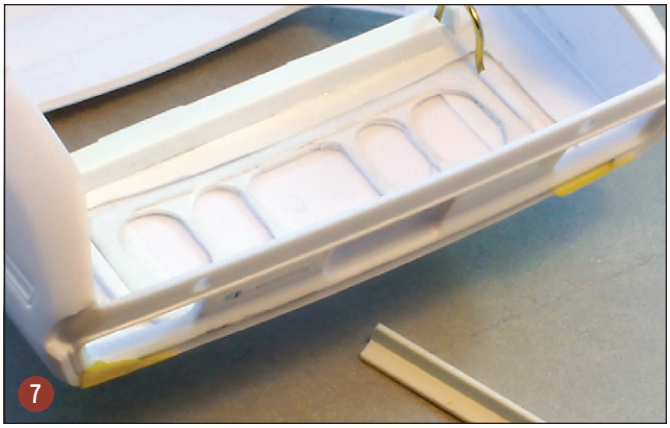


The same styrene strip was also applied to represent the seams of the vinyl roof. I like to gently sand them down after the glue sets up, to soften the look after paint.

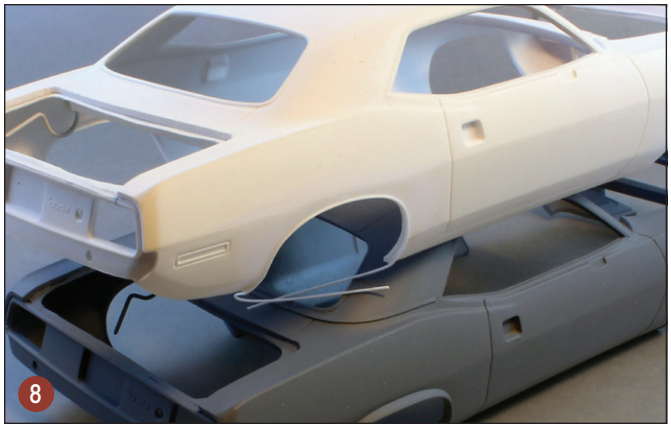


If you decide to not use the kit's rocker moldings, be sure to scribe the vertical seam separating the front fender from the door.

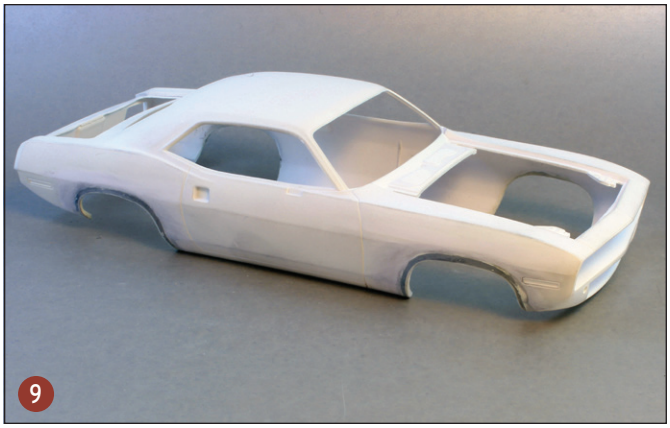
I like to make trunk hinges as two separate units, to allow for side-to-side adjustment when installing the lid to the hinge. Drill some .060" square rod to receive the brass hinges on the trunk. Brass tubing is epoxied to the body, with the trunk positioned with tape.



I always try to make prototypical inner trunk panel detail. I cover the brass tubing with some styrene angle for a neater appearance and for greater strength. The hinges are not coming off too easily!



After looking at reference pictures, I noticed that the kit's fender flares were much too wide, so I sanded the flares flush to the body and superglued .020" styrene rod around the openings. You can see the difference with the fenders shown on the unmodified lower body.

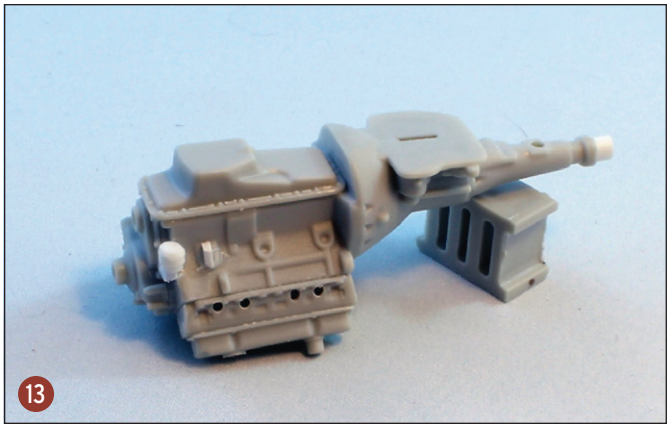


After a few rounds of applying putty and sanding, I had better scale representations of the fender flares. I applied masking tape around the flares before applying the putty to avoid making a mess of the surrounding body areas.

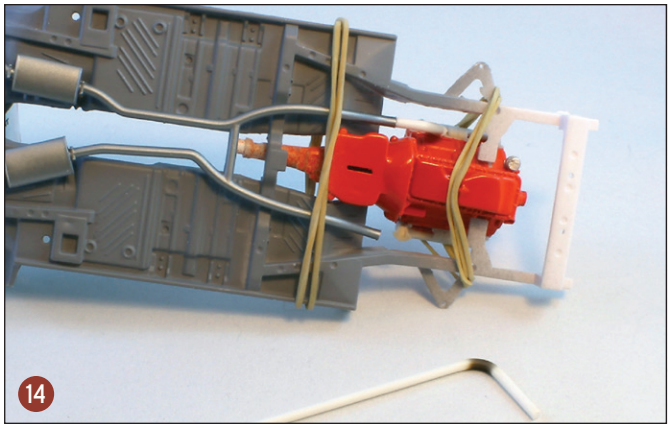
Hood latch assemblies on Mopars are visible when the hood is open; they are painted body color. I decided to drill and file open the kit part for an extra bit of detail. You can see the improvement in appearance compared to the part on the right.

I wanted to have one of the cars rolling on steel wheels with dog-dish hubcaps. I found a set of wheels I liked in my parts box, and filed them down to the correct width. The modified wheel is in the center, with the Cuda's wheel to reference the width.

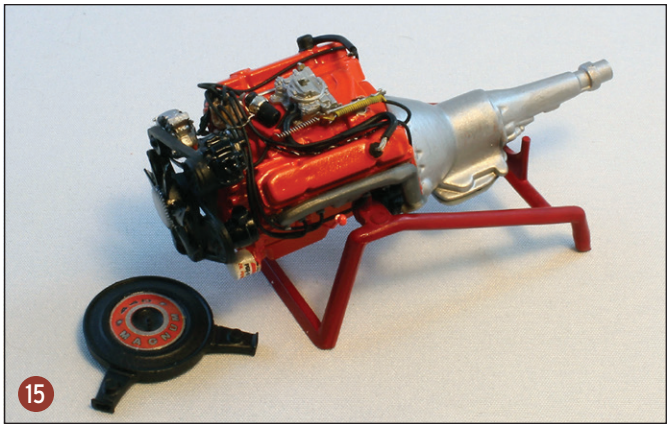
Here are both wheel sets, painted and ready for installation. Valve stems are made from 30 gauge wire wrap. The tires are the correct F70 Ploygass GT versions from the Round 2 tire pack. The hubcaps were purchased from Missing Link.



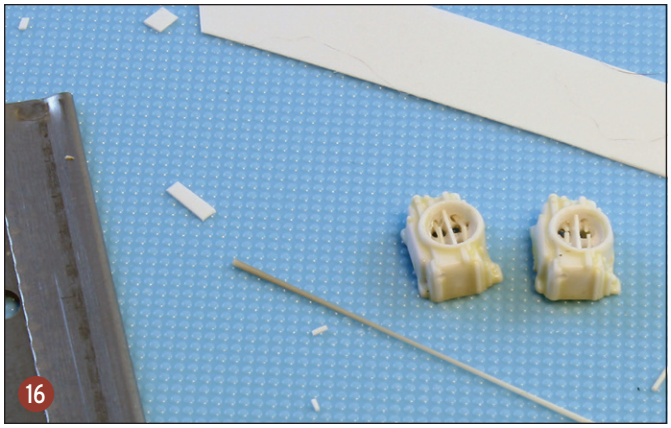
I really wanted to use the twin scoop hood in the kit. My research showed that some Hemi Challengers used this hood, but not Cudas. I decided to use the 440 engine from the AMT 1971 Charger in one of the cars. This way, one of the cars could have an automatic transmission and air conditioning. I made new engine mounts, extended the transmission to fit, and made a fuel pump. These are shown in white plastic.



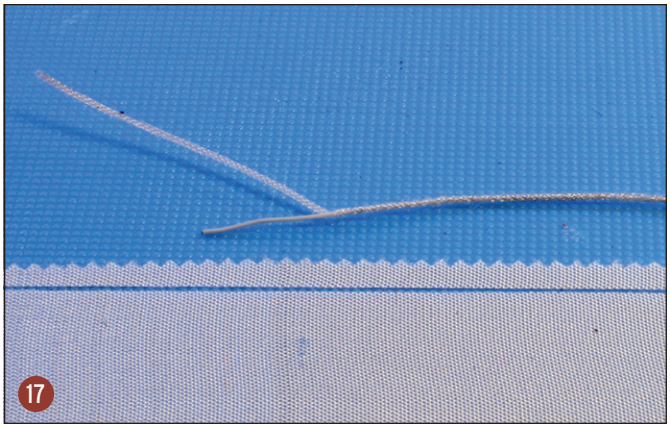
To use the kit's exhaust with the 440 engine, some tweaks were required. Approximately ½ inch was removed from the front of the pipes. After mocking up the 440 engine, I heated some .080" styrene rod to make bends and trimmed to fit. I'm not sure if the Hemi exhaust is correct for the 440, but it works for this application.



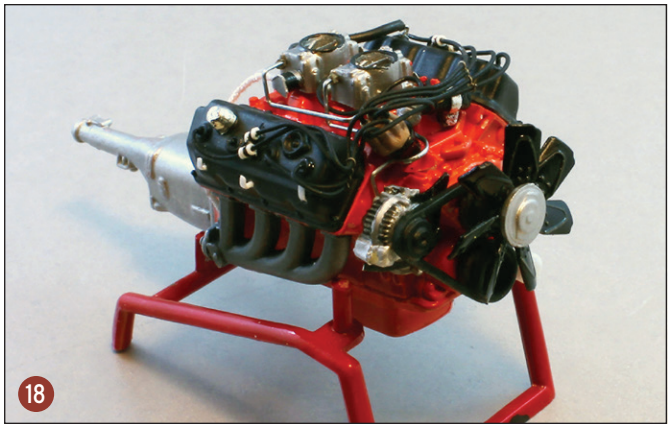
With paint-detailing and some small wire and patience, a lot of scale details can be added to modern kit engines. Different diameters of black wire were used for all the ignition and vent lines. Invest in a quality pin vise and drill bits if you want to add detail to your engines. The 440 is ready for installation.



I wanted to display the Hemi engine with the shaker scoop removed to show engine detailing. I drilled the kit's carburetors and added some inner detail with styrene rod and sheet. The carburetors were then separated for accuracy.



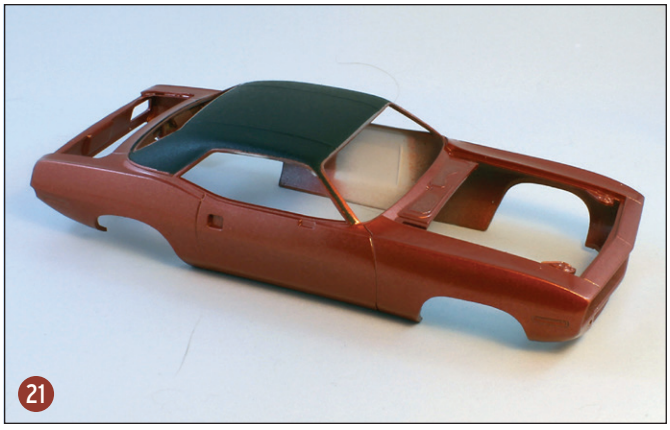
Street Hemi engines have an insulated tube running from the right-hand exhaust manifold to the choke on the rear carburetor. To add this detail, I wrapped a thin strip of medical tape around a length of 30 gauge white wire. Skim a thin coat of super glue on the ends to keep it from unraveling.



The street Hemi is almost ready! The white clips along the valve cover retain the alternator harness, and still need black paint. Some scrap plastic was used to make the choke, and the insulated tube was routed to it. Fuel lines, ignition wires, and a scratchbuilt alternator bracket are also visible.

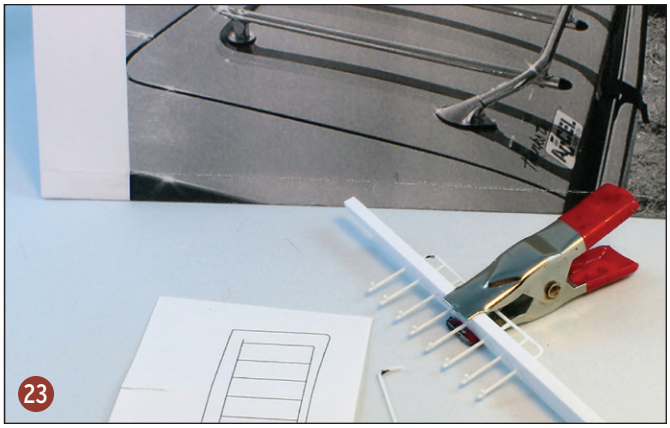
Kudos to Revell for including accurate underhood details such as these wiper motors. I added some colored Detail Master detail wire to them, and painted them to match reference photos. I replicated the coating on the motor body with thinned Tamiya Clear Orange over Bare-Metal foil.

There are many different techniques for making vinyl roofs. I prefer to spray a thin coat of Krylon suede paint on a painted body. I then airbrush my choice of color to complete the job.



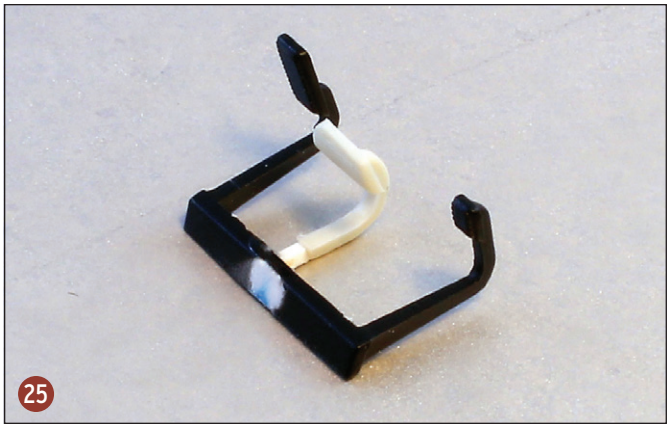
To my eyes, the completed vinyl roof has a nice scale texture. I like to mix a little silver with semigloss black to give the roof's appearance a slight sheen.

Wayne Farmer donated the rear spoiler and roof slats from the Monogram 1971 Cuda kit. A little cleanup and putty was required before painting the parts semigloss black.

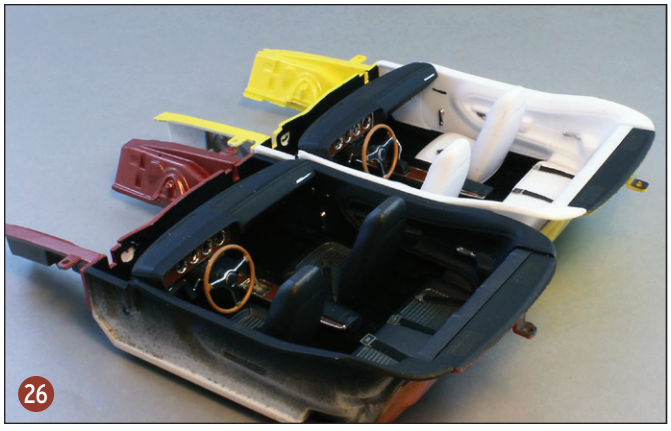


I wanted to add the optional trunk rack to the luxury model to help it stand out from the Hemi car. I had to make mine from .020" styrene rod, because I have no soldering skills. I drew up a scale pattern based on reference pictures. The rod was bent over a small nail heated with a lighter. The parts were clamped and "welded" with liquid glue.

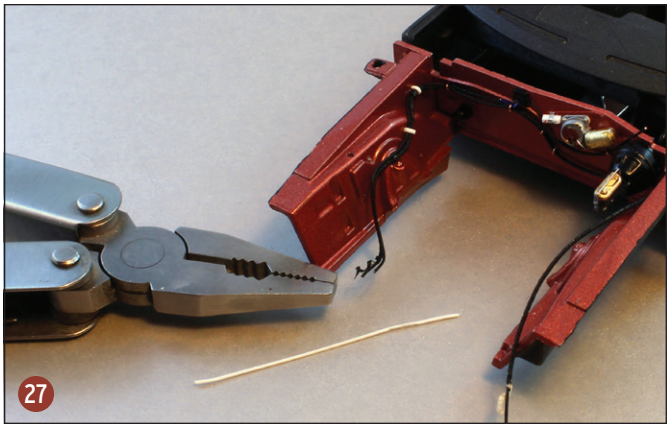
The completed trunk rack was sprayed gloss black, then airbrushed with Alclad chrome. I was pleased with the final product, but I'm sure one made from metal would be even more convincing.



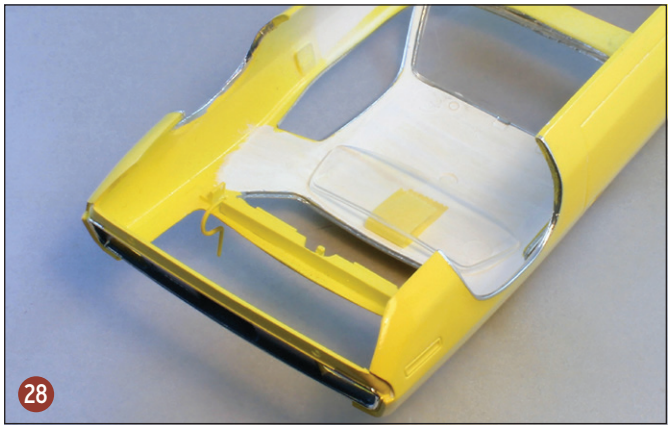
The pedals had to be reworked for the automatic-equipped Cuda. The brake and clutch pedals were replaced with the brake pedal from the AMT Charger kit, as shown in white.



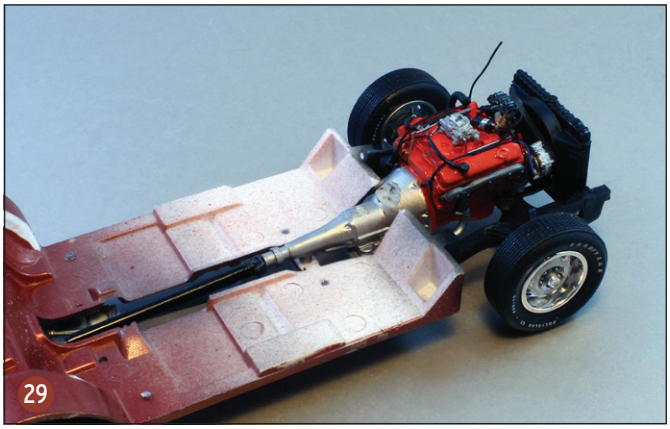
Both interiors were paint- and foil-detailed. I decided to foil the center consoles and instrument panels, then paint the woodgrained areas. The black interior also has silver paint mixed with black to help the vinyl appearance. Photoetched seatbelt hardware and black flocking finishes them.



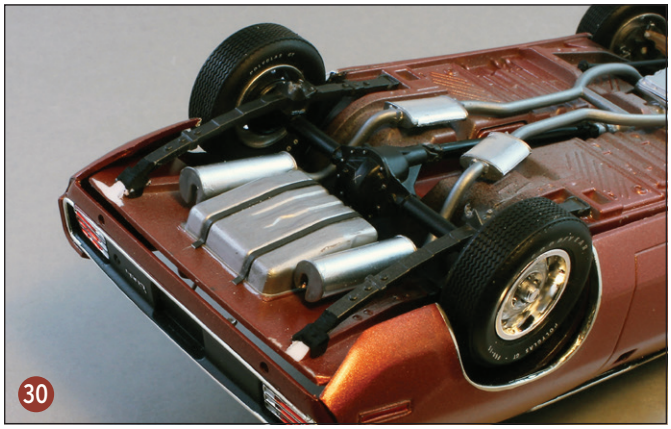
I added simple wiring harnesses to the engine bays of both cars. The white tie wraps used on Mopars were made by heating and stretching sprue. The stretched sprue was then crimped and folded through holes drilled in the inner fenders.



Here's a tip to install glass: Position the glass in the opening, and apply tape to the top edge. Apply your adhesive of choice to the perimeter of the opening, then carefully rotate the glass back into the opening, using the tape as a hinge.

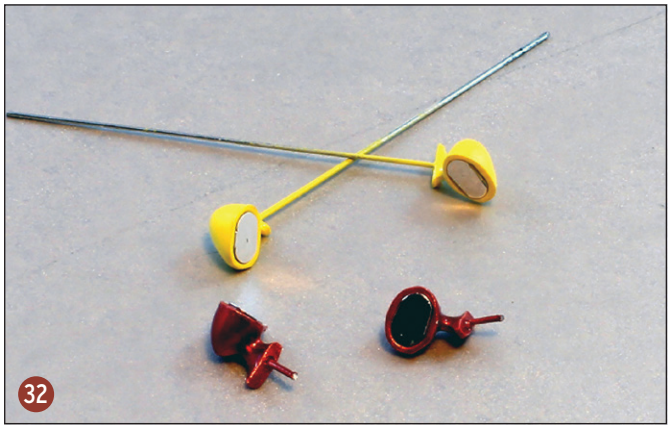


The modified 440 engine fits almost perfectly in the Cuda. I had to grind away a notch in the top of the automatic to clear the transmission tunnel. The minor surgery is hidden in final assembly.

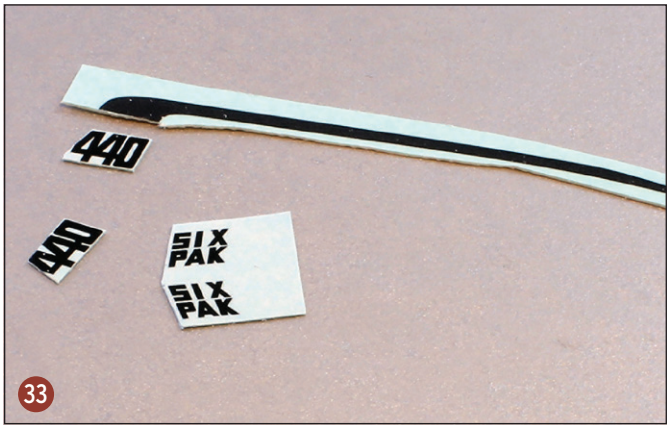


As nice as the kit is, there is an interference problem fitting the rear bumper panel. File or grind the rear spring shackles for clearance if you want the panel to fit flush with the body. I also had to chamfer the rear edge of the chassis pan after this photo was taken.

I decided to install the exhaust tips after the lower bumper pans were installed. This way, I could set the correct depth of the tips. File away the perimeter flange of the tips to insert them from the outside.



It's always a good idea to add reinforcing pins to small exterior parts when possible. And the pins make great handles for painting!



I was fortunate to have a Mopar decal sheet from Mike's Scale Speed Shop in my stash. I was able to combine the 440 Six Pack decals with the Revell hockey-stick stripes for my 440 version of the Cuda.

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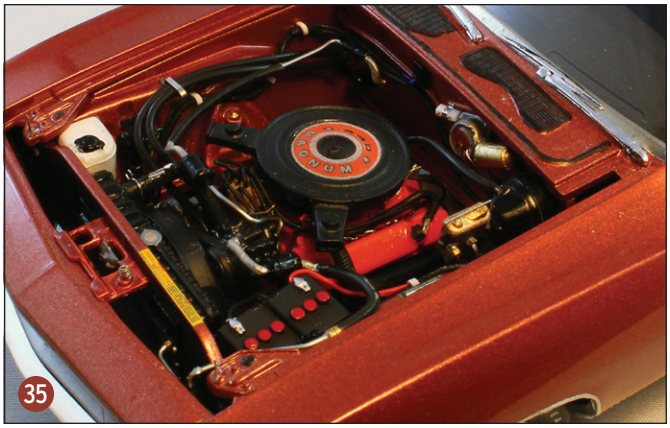
The combination of the two sets of decals worked out well for the 440 version. You can see the scratchbuilt jack, space-saver spare tire, and air canister bottle in the trunk.



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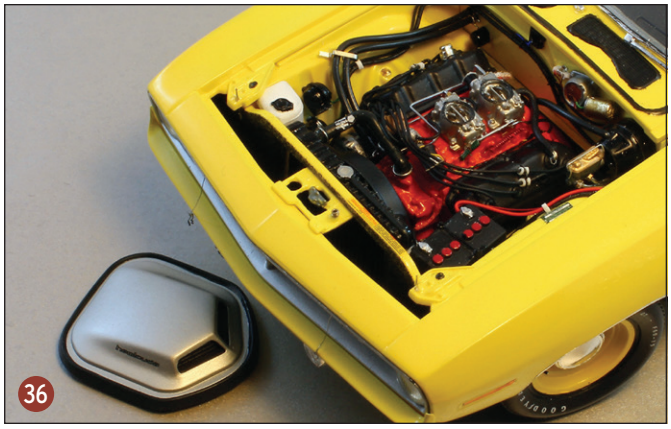
The AMT Charger's 440 engine fits perfectly into the Cuda. The molded-in air conditioning lines were removed and replaced with wire sized to fit the Cuda's engine bay. Thanks to Revell for including the underhood decals – a welcome feature!



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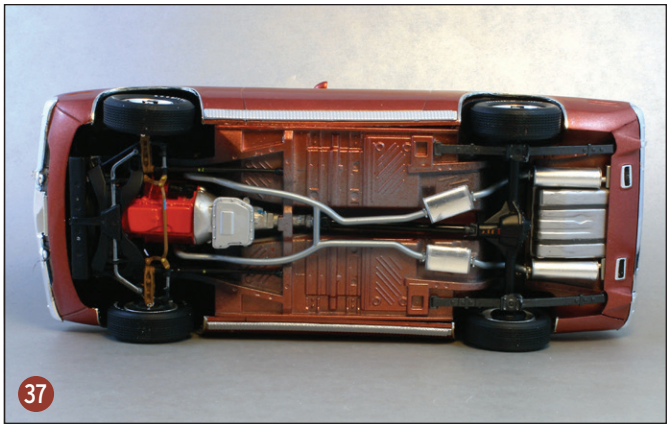
The big Hemi really fills up the engine bay. The kit's heater hoses were substituted with wire for realism. All big-block Mopars had red battery caps. Extra details, such as the battery cables, hood latch spring, and photoetched radiator cap, make for realistic engine bays in both cars.



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Revell did a great job on the chassis. Testor's Metalizer paint was used to replicate reference photos. Body color overspray on the primed chassis also matches some restoration pictures I've seen. Painting the entire chassis body color would also be acceptable to match a newly restored car. It's your choice!

I now have two versions of iconic Mopars to add to my collection. I really enjoyed building these, and already I have an urge to do a convertible. Now where did I put that razor saw?