

SNAPSHOT

HOW TO PAINT A SCALE MODEL CAR EXHAUST

WHETHER THE SUBJECT IS NEW OR OLD, a little creative painting can bring some life to this part of almost every car and truck.

By Mark Jones



1

Here are the parts for the Tamiya 1/24 scale Nissan 240ZG kit exhaust, including the manifold, Y-pipe, main section with muffler and resonator, and the chrome tip. Clean up the parts, but be careful not to remove mold lines that are meant to replicate casting lines, like on this manifold. The pipes, muffler/resonator, and other extruded and formed pieces should not have seams.



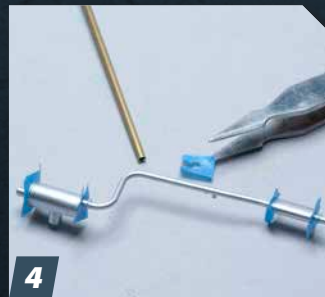
2

The parts are ready for paint. I drilled the chrome tip with a pin vise and sanded off the seam around the circumference. A reamer helped to get the final size of the exhaust tip's opening, so the drill diameter for the starter hole was not critical. In many cases, I would assemble the two exhaust pipes, but these had good, positive fits, so it will be easier to paint the parts individually.



3

I airbrushed all the parts, except the manifold, Tamiya Silver (No. LP-11). The manifold received a base coat of Metallic Gray (No. LP-61) with some baking soda added for texture. I used a mortar and pestle to grind the baking soda into a very fine powder. I transferred the baking soda into the airbrush cup with a spatula, making a mix that was 15% baking soda and 85% paint.



4

Mask the ends of the muffler and resonator (if there is one). I sharpened the end of a length of brass tubing the same diameter as the pipes to help the mask fit better around them.



5

Thoroughly mix thinned Tamiya Smoke (No. LP-67) with baking soda, about 25% powder to paint. Airbrush this mixture unevenly onto the pipes. Follow with a light coat of Flat Clear (No. LP-23); allow to dry; peel masks.



6

After an hour of drying, apply Rub 'n Buff Silver Leaf to the pipes, muffler, and resonator with a paper towel to highlight raised detail and accentuate the textured pipes. I brush-painted the muffler and resonator inlet tubes silver. Note: I rubbed some of the paint off the raised edge of the muffler and the black plastic is showing through, so that will be touched up later with a brush and paint.



7

Brush-paint the clamps metallic gray and apply black Tamiya Panel Line Accent (No. 87131) around them for more contrast. Also use the Panel Line Accent where the Y-pipe comes out of the the muffler and resonator. Replace the chrome tip's plating with Bare-Metal Foil and paint its inside circumference flat black before gluing it in place. Now the exhaust is ready to install! **FSM**