



The Schumacher Fireblade 2000

Best of British

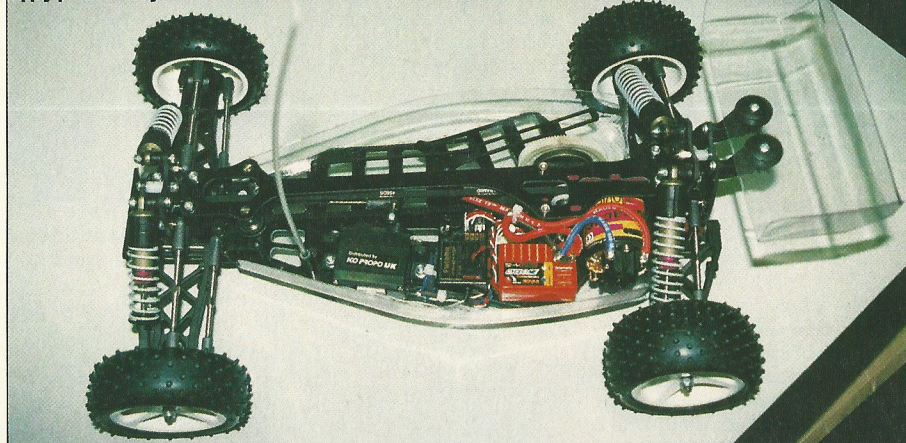


RRCi visit Schumacher Racing Ltd

When I arrived at the Schumacher factory I was greeted by Tim Walden who was my guide for the day. I quickly got up to speed on how Schumacher Racing had developed into the company I was to see in action.

The company was founded by Cecil Schumacher in 1978. Cecil was an automotive engineer who had worked for, amongst others, Cosworth where he had worked closely with Keith Duckworth. Fascinated by his son's new hobby of R/C Model Cars Cecil looked for ways to improve the performance of his cars. Cecil decided that he could best improve them by designing the first differential unit and the first Schumacher product was born. It was not long before complete cars were on the menu with the first complete car launched in 1982. This was a 1/12th circuit racing car that was very successful, winning the European championships in 1985. The products continued to succeed and the 'CAT' or Competition All Terrain - first appeared in 1986, the design was obviously pretty effective because an unknown Japanese driver by the name of Masami Hirotsuka won the 1987 4WD World Championship with it!

Apply paint to body and Rock and Roll



A steadily increasing order book helped to make the decision to move to more suitable premises which the company did in 1989. Tim Walden joined Cecil in 1986 strengthening the management team, particularly on the Sales & Marketing side of things. The company now employs around 25 people at the modern premises occupied by Schumacher on the Moulton Industrial Estate just on the outskirts of Northampton. Schumacher prides itself on its

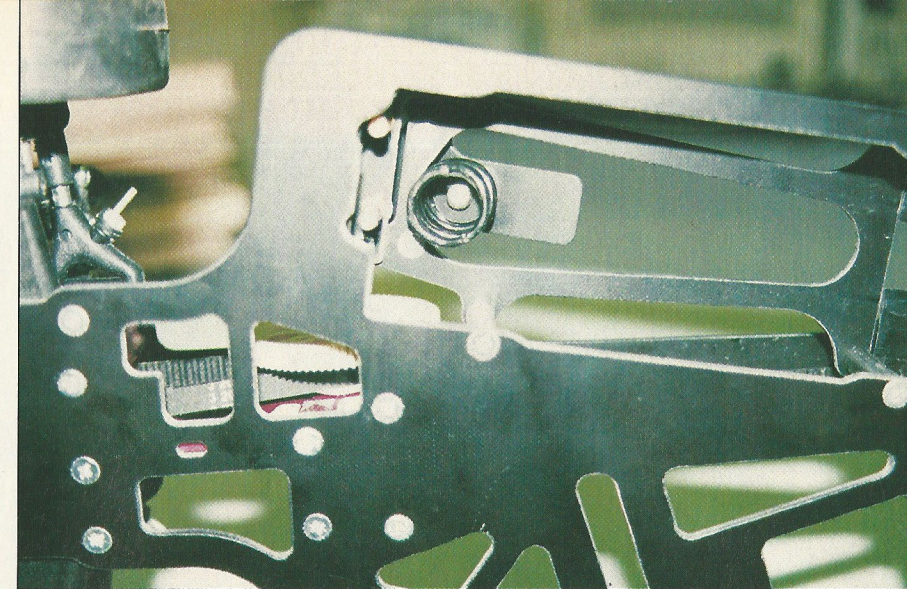
reputation for innovative, race bred design and continues to compete at the highest level throughout the world both directly and through its distributors. Schumacher Inc. in the USA ensures that growth in the New World matches that of the old. Schumacher has expanded steadily and now produces a range of cars, both IC and Electric, for delivery throughout the world. Cecil joined Tim and I for a brief lunch before Tim gave me the guided tour of the factory and R&D facility.

State of the Art R&D Department

The R&D department was one of the most sophisticated racing departments I have visited with a state of the art CadCam facility. I was able to look closely at some amazing technology for directly creating moulding tools from data held by the CAD system. This facility was comparable in its level of technology to that some of the full size GP teams. The tooling I saw being made should be up and running by the time you read this so watch out for a new Touring Car 'Star' from Schumacher. Now don't forget Tim you promised me the second shell off that new mould!

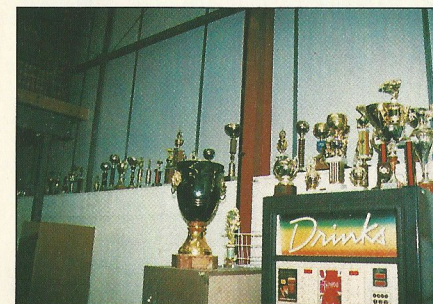


Three examples of the Nitro 21 Extreme ready to go outside Schumacher HQ



The trick battery compartment trigger for the successful 24 Hour Touring Car

an excellent training at Schumacher before going on to be superstars of the R/C Car world. As Schumacher prepare for another year of tough competition the emphasis has changed a little. This year will see the Schumacher team field some of the best 'Young Guns' around. Instead of investing in a limited program of events with an established, Schumacher trained, star - Schumacher will promote its own 'home grown' talent.



This is just a small part of the extensive collection of silverware amassed by Schumacher drivers

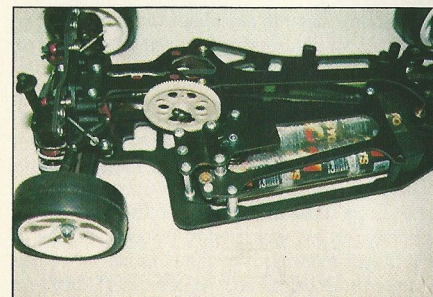
Factory Tour

A large proportion of the manufacturing is carried out in-house at the 10,000 square feet of factory space at Moulton. The factory is extremely well equipped with modern machinery. Much of the assembly work is carried out by outworkers with Schumacher employees carrying out checks on the sub-assemblies before final assembly in-house. During my visit it quickly became apparent that Schumacher operates strict Quality Control procedures. The spares back up was enormous with almost every component available for Schumacher cars past and present.

New Blood on the driving team

Phil Booth has the role of racing manager and when we chatted he was busy preparing an innovative rapid change battery system for a SST2000 that was to race - and Win - in a 24 hour race at Le Touquet in France. Phil told me that Schumacher was proud of its reputation for talent spotting. Drivers such as Masami Hirotsuka and Jukka Steenari received

The trick battery compartment trigger for the successful 24 Hour Touring Car



The line up was not confirmed at the time of my visit but I would expect the line up to include some or all of these drivers: Teemu Leino, Jon Leonard, Richard Barton, Steve Pole, Darren Foy, Ian Joyce, and Chris Wilkinson to blend a little bit of experience and provides a bench mark for the other guys.

The successful BTCC championship for touring cars will continue in 1998 with Schumacher control tyres keeping drivers costs down.

Product Range

The current Product range caters for all levels of the hobby. The Wildcat electric cars are very robust, indeed almost unbreakable, and we can recommend them for newcomers. The Club 10 models have been revised to 'Turbo' guise to indicate that they are now fitted with a full ball race set and Schumacher's lat-

est product. The Turbo speed controller is a high frequency FET speed controller with infinitely variable forward and reverse. I can vouch for the fact that it produces a very smooth controller having tested it on my visit. It is worth noting that it is an exact fit as a replacement for Tamiya mechanical speed controllers. The Nitro 10 range has also been overhauled with a new Thunder Tiger .21 size IC engine option. The Nitro 21 Xtreme boasts 2.1 BHP! I had the opportunity to have a little play with a Stadium Truck Xtreme while I was at the factory and it is amazing. On dry tarmac the Xtreme was capable of pulling wheelies on demand and waving the front inside wheel in the air on high 'G' turns. This car is a complete animal, just my sort of motor. I was not at all keen to let go of the review car to Jon 'Rotors' Tanner. You can read elsewhere what he thought of the Xtreme. Club 10 and Nitro 21 Xtreme can be bought as an Off-Road buggy, Stadium truck or Touring car.

The well known Fireblade, Cat and SST models complete the range along with a whole raft of 'Speed secrets' tuning parts. The range is so comprehensive that we suggest that you get hold of a copy of their excellent catalogue. RRCi would like to say thank you to Tim, Cecil and everybody else at Schumacher for an excellent day. Now let's see what Jon thought of the Xtreme.

The Nitro 21 Xtreme - I tried to break it but it just came back for more!

