

CMC's 1/18 scale Mercedes W154

For the years 1938/1939, read Mercedes W154 and the Auto Union D-type. Gone was the restriction of the 750kg Formula and now a sliding relationship between engine capacity and weight was on offer. Both teams chose 3 litre supercharged V12 engines, with Mercedes being dominant in 1938 and also winning the European Title in 1939 (Hermann Lang). Rudolf Caracciola took the European Championship for Mercedes in 1938, although Auto Union was a winner in both years, notably with Tazio Nuvolari in 1939. Round four, the German Grand Prix of 1938, provided the sensation of Motorsport and politics when Britain's Richard Seaman won, after Manfred von Brauchitsch struck refuelling trouble in the pits at the Nurburgring, both driving W154's. Dick Seaman had driven the W125 in 1937, but the German Grand Prix was his first for Mercedes in 1938.

The car modelled here was the 1938, French Grand Prix winning car, driven by von Brauchitsch. W154's came second and third at the hands of Caracciola and Lang. It is also possible to purchase models with race numbers costing just a little more. I chose not to, though these are available in limited runs. The lines of the car I find appeal to me more without race numbers applied and certainly CMC's rendition of the Mercedes W154 is stunning. In essence, the W154 was a lower lying version of the W125 of 1937 (though with a slightly shorter wheelbase) and therefore has an even more purposeful racing appearance to it. Viewed from specific angles, as if one was in the pits, or trackside, this model is wonderfully powerful and its imagery with large rear wheels is especially

appealing when viewed from three-quarters rear emulating the foreshortened photographs of the car disappearing from view on the racetrack in 1938.

Once again, it is impossible to speak too highly of CMC's attention to detail in the overall execution of the shape, the beautifully finished and polished bodywork, the magnificently detailed wheels with fine wire spokes and spinner. Then there's the cockpit, blue fabric seat, dashboard detailing (including turned aluminium dashboard bulkhead), the radiator grill and the detail visible through its almost sculptured 3-D shape. The underneath is flawless and the detailing with screws and other stainless steel fittings (such as fuel tank sight glasses) is mouth-watering, a really fine model. Not surprisingly, it is excellent value with its hand assembly from more than 530 parts.

Naturally we are impressed, but importantly as the great Gerald Wingrove would say, it's the overall appearance that matters most and its ability to make you feel you could be looking at the real car. In this, CMC have succeeded in my opinion, even though I suspect the model is an early subject for them. Though one never noticed it, the louvers are not yet of the open type, the wheel rims appear to be made from plastic, the bonnet catches are of a non-operating fixed type, the bonnet itself slots in at the front and has a ball bearing to allow it to securely locate the rear edge, the exhaust pipes are of plastic, the engine is marvellously detailed throughout, though using limited media for its super-detailing. None of these factors detract from the overall concept and the model is a real winner alongside its stable-mates who were probably manufactured later, as CMC

applied an ever-increasing level of R&D to their other 1/18 Silver Arrows. Watch this space!

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