

## Lotus 49, 1968

### Introduction

This Lotus 49, the first Grand Prix car to carry commercial sponsorship won a very important Formula One race, namely the 1968 Spanish Grand Prix at Jarama. Previous to this, race cars had sported a few stickers in recognition of the suppliers of some of the consumables such as oil, fuel and tyres; but now the flood gates would open to all would-be commercial sponsors, following Lotus boss Colin Chapman's bold move.

The driver Graham Hill, victor at Jarama raised team Lotus spirits a month after their star driver Jim Clark had died in a Formula Two race in Germany. The depleted team prepared and raced the car without their team owner present, for Colin Chapman was still too upset to attend.

### The model

This 1/12 scale model was essentially a scratch-build, taking the Tamiya base kit to supply wheels, tyres and an engine block from a later car. The year long project required a 1000 hours to build and involved some subcontracting-out of specialised parts such as the windscreen, gearbox and decals. Over the greater part of the year, *all the parts* were handmade including the monocoque with fully opening panels, suspension parts, detailed brakes, forward monocoque/footbox and the super-detailed engine components. The cockpit included a hand made leather seat within a new inner monocoque, rebuilt instrumentation panel

with instruments all fully wired in via a corrected inner cockpit rim around and behind the dashboard, suspended pedals, a 20-part gearlever mechanism and removable steering wheel etc. The underneath of the car was complete with electrical wiring, along with water, oil and fuel plumbing details.

Research was made possible following the kindness of the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu. Having studied the unique ZF gearbox and bringing together photographs, dimensions and drawings, a one-off pattern was commissioned from which resin casts were made. Most suspension parts were remade and new uprights and front rockers were later cast in resin. I shortened the windscreen and had a vac-formed improved screen made and then designed a new range of decals, later skilfully drawn on a computer and printed professionally by 'Roger'. The resin casting items and windscreen vac-form were carried out by 'Brian'.

The completed model fits well between the iconic British Racing Green 49 that won its debut race for Lotus with Jim Clark at the wheel and the Gold Leaf Team Lotus 49B, which was to become the Championship winning development of the original car.