

CMC's 1/18 scale Auto Union D-Type

The dominant car in 1938 was the Mercedes W154 and a late season challenger was the Auto Union D-type, especially as driven by the legendary Tazio Nuvolari. Auto Union had a bad start to the year with the death of Bernd Rosemeyer during a Speed Record attempt and a disastrous debut for the Grand Prix cars in the French Grand Prix at Reims. Nuvolari started the season in a front-engined Alfa Romeo, debuting inauspiciously for Auto Union at the German Grand Prix in July. Auto Union didn't figure again, until Nuvolari delighted his compatriots by winning the Italian Grand Prix at Monza in September. Next-up, was the final Grand Prix of the year at Donington Park, in England. Pole-sitter Hermann Lang in a Mercedes W154 fluffed his start and Nuvolari immediately pounced, leading at the end of lap one with a ravenous pack of W154's just behind. At quarter distance, Nuvolari's V12 went off-song, so he pitted for adjustments, rejoining fourth. Nuvolari ran third after the halfway pit stops, after which he really got to work recording fastest lap and overtaking fellow Auto Union driver Hermann Muller and then Lang's Mercedes to win a very exciting race. The 48 year old 'Flying Mantuan' (Mantua, a town in N.Italy) had mastered the mid-engined Auto Union no '4' and weathered the political turmoil in Europe which saw the threatened withdrawal of both German teams from the Donington Grand Prix, before eventual postponement until later that month.

In 1939, small aerodynamic changes were made with an engine upgrade resulting in twin superchargers necessitating a ducted air intake on the right side of the bodywork, supplying the Solex carburettors. There were two wins for Auto Union in 1939 but still Mercedes dominated, Lang taking the European Championship crown.

CMC have yet again excelled with this weighty masterpiece described as a 1938-39 Type D on the box. The model is clearly the 1938 car, the limited edition shown here being that which Nuvolari drove to victory at Donington in October that year. This being one of CMC's later models, it shows exceptional detail, once one has got over the initial wow-factor!

The model is made from over 680 parts, is hand assembled and is crowned with a superb paint finish, as are the other models in the range. It is remarkable with its two removable engine and forward compartment covers, both louvered with the correct number of openings and secured by rubber ring fasteners. There's stunning detail in the engine bay, all relevant components well represented with a variety of materials to give a busy feel including chromed metal exhaust stack pipes. The single Roots supercharger is well plumbed and the only obvious failing would be the lack of six high-tension leads from their carrier tubes atop the cylinder heads. However, any good modeller can most likely rectify this along with a few other super-detailing jobs if they so wish (eg lack of a race number on the tail and the leather strap further securing the engine cover). The engine is a wonderful and faithful comparison to that of the C-type and to the Mercedes W-series

cars, satisfying one's curiosity with regard to engine evolution and the different way in which these two German giants of motorsport, tackled the powerplant.

The bodywork line seems right and leads forward around a well-appointed cockpit, with the detail we have become accustomed to. This bodywork is even more refined in the 2003 'Model of the Year' winning type-C car, but it is all there in this type-D. Massive chrome-molybdenum longerons are visible either side of the cockpit floor, robust chassis tubes being a hallmark of these cars, taking chassis surefootedness the whole length of the car. CMC doesn't want the discerning modeller to miss-out, rather that they would marvel, that even these details are present inside the model. The dashboard is once again spot-on and compares well with examples seen at the Goodwood Festival of Speed this year. Some cars had the tachometer centrally, but its unclear to me if this is definitive either way for either 1938 or '39. Mirror-glass in precisely formed wingmirrors lend authenticity along with the tilting aero-screen. Wood effect steering wheel and fabric covered seat and headrest educate us with the facts, in those minimalist days of 1938.

The forward compartment contains a chromed steering column, instrumentation cables and electrics, water hoses and the forward frame supporting the back of the oil/water radiator. The radiator grill is fine wired and impressive, each slat of the original being of a different radius. Through this grill, one can see the two-part radiator, the detail is endless it seems, the more you look, the more you see!

The wheels are typically stunning with fine wire spokes, accurate rims, though lacking the tyre valves of the type-C model but showing stamped indication of Right or Left (in German) and undo/tighten A/B. These markings are further perfected in the later C-type model of the earlier 1936/7 car.

Underneath, CMC continue their love of detail in representing the de Dion rear axle, radial cooling fins of the drum brakes and the Porsche torsion bar front suspension system. Underneath, the chassis is stamped 1938, indicating CMC's intention, in spite of the box suggestion that the model could be either 1938/39.

Again the best ever value for money in models of this type. The subject matter is mouthwatering, who knows what would have become of this mid-engined marvel, had the second world war not intervened.