

An E-Type Jaguar, for a very special person

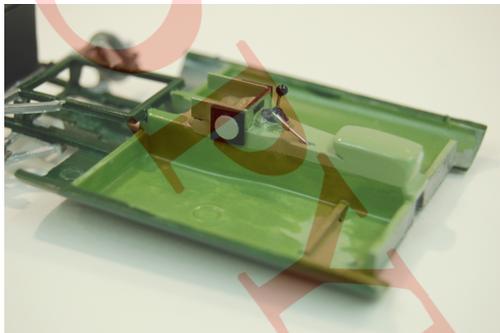
The Introduction of the E-type Jaguar caused sensation in 1961. To this day, the car's fabulous looks, immense power and good handling continue to make this a very desirable sports car, both for the collector and for pure driving pleasure. The car was unveiled at the time when road racing at Le Mans for instance, captivated all would-be sports car owners. The E-type replaced Jaguar's XK150 and mirrored the Le Mans winning D-type racing sports car. Contemporary cars such as those made by Ferrari and Aston Martin were far more expensive and not necessarily superior in terms of performance.



This 1/32 scale model began life as an Airfix model and was transformed into a detailed replica of a 1967 series 1.5, 4.2 litre roadster, owned by my boss and work colleague Ian, whose car is one of 1100 limited edition right hand drive roadsters. Ian's love for his own car, prompted me to build a replica on which I could lavish detail in an expression of gratitude and respect for his forthcoming retirement. The series 1.5, 4.2 litre roadster was the fastest version in production, reaching 152mph due to the larger engine (as opposed to the 3.8 litre Jaguar engine in the series 1 car) and having the lightest body crafted in aluminium. Stopping power was provided by disc brakes all round. The later models were somewhat compromised with the additional weight of components added in the name of increased safety.

Being a curbside model measuring only 13cm long by 5cm wide, I concentrated on providing all the external and cockpit detailing that one could see and identify as the car personally owned by Ian. Following a summertime photo shoot during which I became familiar with and appreciated the beauty of the engineering and design, I assembled sufficient material to begin construction in secrecy. A new camera provided the cover I needed and the experience was capped by a fabulously memorable drive in the car, as passenger I hasten to add. The experience reminded me of my first auto-love (Formula One cars of the 60's and 70's), being minimalist in refinements and the sensation of no-nonsense transmission of power and direct handling response and feedback, even through to the passenger. Having experienced ownership of only modern cars with all their safety and comfort priorities, the E-type Jaguar came closer to informing me of how a purebred racer should begin to feel. My father owned a series of MGA's, this recent E-type Jaguar experience bringing the nostalgic reminders flooding back.

My initial approach was to present the bodywork as shiny and as smooth as possible, in order to disguise the scale of the model and enable the superdetailing to sit comfortably, assisting the general appearance of the model. So, after a light primer coat (Halfords automotive Acrylics used throughout, with detail painting using enamels), blemishes were revealed, filled and sanded in typical fashion. There was a fine plastic ridge running along the length of each front wheel arch along the length of the bonnet, finished in chrome on the real car. I preserved this and after giving the car its top coat of Rover Brooklands Green (approximating to Jaguar Racing Green/ British Racing Green), I polished out all surface imperfections including those longitudinal bonnet ridges, revealing a pair of fine grey lines, which after lacquering the body, gave a good impression of those chrome strips, accentuating the elegant lines of the bonnet.

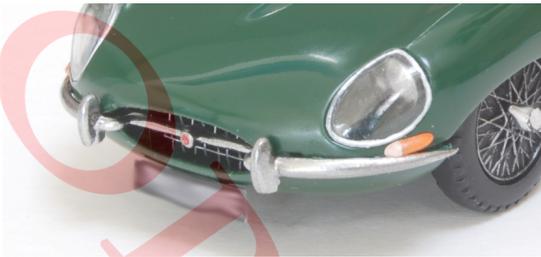


Next, I concentrated on the cockpit and re-made the transmission tunnel, correcting the basic plastic form with additions of Milliput. This enabled a central elbow rest to be fashioned with a place for a scratchbuilt handbrake lever made from various diameters of steel tube and wire. The gear lever was enhanced by addition of stainless steel wire below the gloss black gear lever knob. I decided to concentrate effort on the rather basic dashboard by replacing all the dials with photo reduced copies of those from similar cars. All the dashboard lights were replicated (including the tiny direction indicators) and the sliding ventilation controls, the latter represented by bare metal foil.



Detailed painting and careful variance of satin/gloss and matt blacks provided definition in places such as the passenger glove box etc. Small replicas of the radio and speakers provided accurate details, present in Ian's own car. I drilled out the steering wheel spokes and using Alclad Chrome lacquer, finished this item as well as possible, finally providing an indication of a Jaguar emblem centrally. The wood-effect steering wheel rim was completed with enamels.

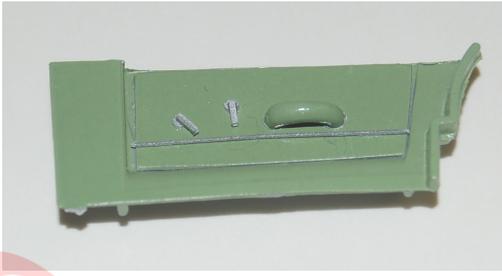
The front view included the classic bonnet opening via grill to the water radiator. In the original model, little was made of this area. However, by adding a suitable mesh to replicate the radiator stoneguard and then placing diverter panels to direct air onto the radiator core, I found these very effectively enhanced the front of the model. In this way, the character of the car was reinforced, only to be improved further by spraying the quarter bumpers with Alclad Chrome, which in turn were connected by a chrome bar with central Jaguar emblem. The suggestion of the latter (so tiny in 1/32 scale), was brought about by a small amount of detailed painting with enamels. Alclad Chrome improved the headlights behind their covers, the rims of which were hand painted.



The windscreen was well represented and to improve the look, I masked the clear glass in order to spray the surround in gloss black acting as the necessary base paint for the Alclad Chrome lacquer, representing the surrounding trim to good effect. A black permanent marker was used to indicate the rubber edging for the glazing.



Behind the windscreen, I built a fine stainless steel wire frame exactly copying that which in the real car supported the rear view mirror and sun visors, the latter being made from carefully trimmed and sprayed Tamiya tape. This aspect along with the scratch built windscreen wipers and screen washer nozzles, considerably busied-up this important area of the model. Photocopied scale replicas of Ian's Jaguar Owners club badge and Tax disc were a helpful finishing touch. Within the cockpit again, elbow rests which served also to help one to close the open doors, were made from Milliput. Trim was applied to the inside of the doors and rebuilt door openers and window wipers were made.



The carpeted area of the floor etc was brought to life using Ford Highland Green gloss acrylic paint, having first dusted the otherwise smooth surfaces with a small amount of icing sugar. This application of this particulate material brought to life the floor and the carpet mats made from plasticard. Seat belts were scratch built and laid across slightly weathered seats, the latter also in Ford Highland Green acrylic representing the Connolly hide used to fit-out the leather interior within Ian's car.

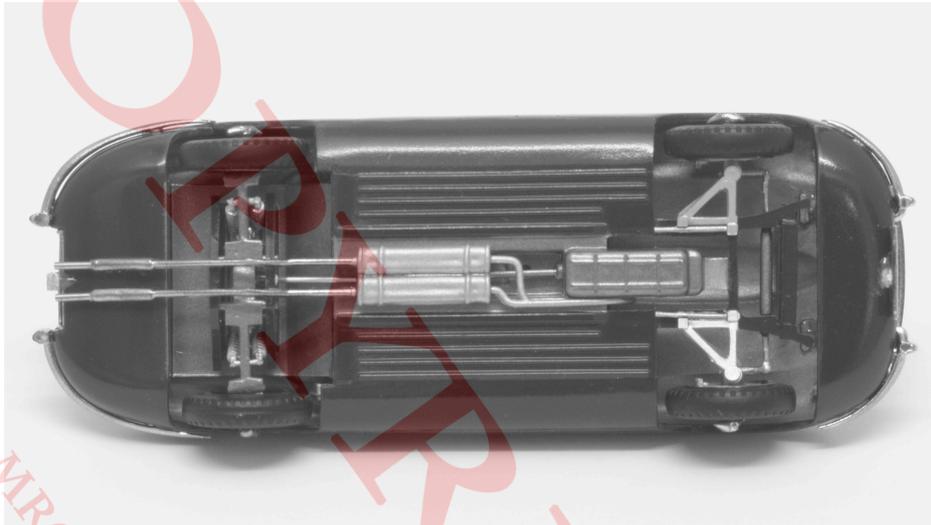


The area representing the stowed soft-top, covered by a tonneau-cover was completely absent in the original model, perhaps because a hardtop version was an option. I found that by pressing Milliput into the appropriate area, a mould of the bodywork under such a tonneau-cover resulted. Upon this, Milliput was built-up and hand moulded to look natural and then sanded and filled until a satisfactory finish was obtained. This separate piece sprayed with satin black acrylic paint, could then be placed to fit exactly on the rear bodywork behind the cockpit and look just as if it had been rolled back on a summer's day. Marking the edges with a pale marker provided a finishing touch here, looking similar to the light green beading on the original, which unites and seals the separately tailored sections of black canvas.

The rear aspect of the model was enhanced with Alclad Chrome by spraying the light fittings before clear Tamiya oranges and reds were handpainted in. The rear quarter bumpers were similarly treated and some fine solder served to appear as the trim around the rear number plate recess. A Jaguar E-type 4.2 symbol was photoreduced in silver on self-adhesive vinyl by a work colleague and applied to the boot.



Underneath the model, all that was visible, was made and painted with accuracy, the prop-shaft being replaced by stainless steel rod and the twin pipe exhaust tail pipes were removed and in their place steel tube added, such an improvement!



A reversing light was fashioned from Milliput and then it was time to affix the wheels. I had simply sprayed these Matt Black before applying dry-brushed aluminium enamels very carefully to highlight the wire wheels. The knock-offs (hubcaps) securing the wheels, were a little weak in construction/style in the kit. Therefore, I added a little resin to build them up and sprayed them with Alclad Chrome to improve them.

The final touch was to make and apply Ian's own number plate. This came courtesy of my PC (one of my twin sons Thomas, was more able than I to produce white alphanumeric on a black background), a photocopier and plasticard. Again, details like this are able to elevate a model enormously.



Final presentation was best executed with a one-off acrylic case on a black base made by Display Solutions Ltd. I had a small plaque engraved and duly presented my labour of love to a delighted Ian in January 2007.

