

## 1/18 CMC Mercedes W25, 1934

The Mercedes W25 competed at the beginning of the 'Golden Years' 1934-1939; across this period, the German Mercedes and Auto Union cars dominated so many of the victories in Grand Prix racing that others such as the Italian manufactures (Alfa Romeo, Maserati etc) found relative safe haven in the voiturette class for smaller cars. The hitherto Formula Libre of *pre*-1934 ended with the adoption of the 750kg Formula in 1934, where each Grand Prix car had to weigh under 750kg.

CMC's masterpiece, models that first Mercedes offering under the new regulations, the W25. The only problem was, that the car weighed 751kg the night before their first race (Eifelrennen, Nurburgring) and disqualification from entry was beckoning. The cars, proudly presented in Germany's national colour, underwent an overnight transformation to become the first of the 'Silver Arrows'. Driver, Manfred von Brauchitsch had joked that the only way they could further lighten the cars was to remove the white paint from the bodywork. Seeing no other way to reduce their weight, team manager Alfred Neubauer immediately ordered the painstaking stripping of paint from the cars overnight and had them finished in a thin coat of aluminium paint before reweighing next morning. Fortunately, they weighed just less than the 750kg and von Brauchitsch went on to win the race with an Auto Union (Hans Stuck) second, the rivalry being set for the next six years.

Thereafter, the Mercedes W25 was modified and raced during 1934 (four victories), 1935 (eight victories) and during a disappointing 1936 season the W25C gave rise to the W125 (CMC, M-031), so successful in 1937.

The model as presented by CMC could be described as a rather uninteresting and early Silver Arrow, not as flamboyant as the later ones; thus the model could be overlooked, its simplicity overawed by the other race cars covered so far in this series. Not a bit of it! This model is stunning, my personal favourite in fact and represents that *first* Silver Arrow; how could one even contemplate a partial collection containing the wonderful W125, W154, W165, not to mention two mouth-watering Auto Unions of the Golden Era 1934-1939, without owning a Mercedes W25? The model has so much to commend it from its simple design reflecting in some ways 'Art Nouveau' which radically departed from the rather staid designs of the early 1930's. This was the time during which the two German teams took the new science of aerodynamic design seriously and came up with truly slippery shapes to enhance their ever improving application of mechanical engineering. As a result, they dominated the next six seasons until WW2 broke out in 1939. Then, some of these beautiful machines had to be spirited away to safety, until after the madness ended.

This is a later CMC creation from 2003 and as such, rejoices in all the latest skills and applications of mass production miniatures. The model contains over 610 parts and weighs nearly 0.7kg. It is a substantial model and is excellent value for money, enriched by the quality of the craftsmanship. This racer reminds me of the American Miller cars, which raced on the board speedways in the 1920's. The model's sleek

perfection is evident in its bodywork, beautifully polished and blemish-free. The louvered body panels are of an open-type in both the engine cover and lower chassis panel inserts, through which a gem of an engine can be glimpsed. The fairings around the wheel axels are accurate without any compromising rough edges or joins leading one on to the underside where the workmanship is of equal high quality. Here, there are more louvered panels inserted into the undertray around the engine and other slots through which hot air could escape, I would imagine. The cockpit is faithfully modelled with a turned-aluminium effect dashboard bulkhead (stainless steel in the model), plenty of detail gauges and levers, the pedals and a very good-looking steering wheel. The upholstered seat, gear lever, handbrake, dashboard and aero-screen add the necessary detail to provide vital variation in materials used, reflecting the original. Atop the head fairing above and behind the driver's shoulders is an opening fuel cap with chromed cap within. Alongside the cockpit on the left side is a gorgeous chromed exhaust pipe, elegantly following the curve of the car until it finishes with a bevelled end, near the tail. Two small restraining straps and a short section of brush metal effect next to the cockpit opening lend further refinements of detail to convince the eye of the quality design and execution, in this model. The latter feature replicates the short stretch of heat resistant material on the exhaust closest to the driver, a form of implementation of yesteryear's Health and Safety no doubt.

The wheels are superb and reflect the later manufacturing techniques and aspirations; finest wire wheels and aluminium rims with tyre pressure valve have the additional feature of removable spinner and wheel to reveal the brake drum. The stub axel assembly includes an inner peripheral copper drilled ring revolving on the inboard fixed brake drum, which itself incorporates two photo-etched drilled plates (small stickers in other models), replicating the inboard cooling vents. So in such an unassuming item as the wheel, CMC have painstakingly reproduced technical detail for the appreciative model collector; and there's more, with 'period' raised relief on each tyre wall, namely Continental Ballon (of German manufacture), as well as the other numeric identification of the tyres. The spinners are two-piece, with a highly polished chrome central cap complete with Mercedes logo in relief; such detail in such small parts, amazing! It's the aggregate of all this detail that genuinely impresses one and makes you feel you have real value for money.

The radiator grill is once again a place of great interest being so obvious and a main part of the model's overall 'look'. Here again, CMC have been careful to reproduce this with perfectly parallel fine wire vertical grills and a visible main radiator core with supercharger inlet grill on the right.

The engine cover is held in place with six beautifully replicated, chromed smooth engine cover latches, which require to be carefully lifted and turned, as were the originals. This engine cover is thin, gently raked forward revealing an equally appealing forward angled engine bay. Within, is a jewel of an engine, replete with detail representing the hardware and plumbing around this supercharged straight eight, 3.3litre supercharged power unit. The varied colours and textures of these materials brings a pleasing busy look and educates one as to the double overhead

camshafts, the central chromed water pipes taking hot water from each cylinder in turn to the radiator ahead. The high tension leads safely contained in a tube running along the top of the engine bring individual charge to the spark plugs, with the bundle emerging from the magneto on the right side of the firewall where a chassis plate is neatly reproduced alongside an oil tank with chrome cap. Now's the time to use a small Maglite to allow your eyes to discover fuel lines, oil pipes, fuel pumps, fuel filters and more besides, deeper within the engine bay flanked by huge chassis longerons. To satisfy further technical curiosity, one appreciates the steel engine brace tubes fanning out over the engine, no doubt supporting the radiator etc. These lend a certain style to the opened engine bay as well as provide plausible structural requirements, not apparently necessary in later Mercedes Silver Arrows.

Final thoughts concern general styling by CMC on this great racing car of 1934. You will have noticed that there are no wing mirrors. The car certainly raced with mirrors in 1934, though to be precise all the pictures I've seen, show only one nearside usually rectangular mirror, although for that first von Brauchitsch victory, the car ran with a conical round mirror nearside. CMC surely meant this model to represent the legendary white to silver 1934 car and its 3.36 litre engine, which was superseded in the W25B of 1935 with a 3.9 litre engine. That being the case, the Mercedes logo above the radiator is typical of the 1935 car, with the 1934 car running with a small Mercedes badge very similar to the fine example CMC have placed on the quality steering wheel. There are a number of what may be press release photos of the time illustrating the W25 and none of them include the wing mirror. Even relatively recent colour photos of a W25 discovered before restoration show it lacking a wing mirror and so I guess this is where CMC's inspiration originated.

However, what a fantastic car and truly magnificent model; its qualities far surpass an initial superficial inspection. Being packed with CMC enthusiasm and passion for detail, this model makes one eager to acquire all CMC's superb value for money 1/18 range of cars released post 2003, be they my favourite Silver Arrows, or other genre of cars!