

MARVELOUS Mini



Building Tamiya's Morris Mini Cooper 1275S Mk. I

by ALEX KUSTOV

THE MINI COOPER certainly caught the world's attention during the 1960s with its innovative design, styling, and incredible racing success.

The Cooper S Mk. I came with the 1071cc A-series engine from 1963-64, and 75bhp 1275cc engine was introduced in 1964. A 970cc Cooper S joined the range in 1964 as a "homologation special" so that the Cooper could compete in the 1000cc racing series, but this variant only stayed in production for one year. In 1967 the Cooper S received the

Mk. II Mini improvements in line with the rest of the range, but for many enthusiasts the Mk. I Cooper S is still the performance Mini.

After seeing a remake of *The Italian Job* recently, I remembered a Tamiya Mini kit that was gathering dust in my closet. I decided to build the little beast, and make it somewhat similar to the one used in the movie. I liked the color and the white stripes on the hood, but I didn't really care about additional driving lights or the correct wheels.

It was impossible to build the kit just "box-stock," so I added some bells and whistles to it – just enough to personalize it and make it a bit more realistic.

I enjoyed building this kit a lot, even though it was not up to the standard set by recent Tamiya kits (it's an older release). The kit is fairly easy to assemble, and it would make a great first (super) detail project.

This car can be built in hundreds of different variations, and is recommended to all modelers. ■



Most of the body and interior parts were molded in white plastic, which was a bonus because I had already decided to paint my model red. The chassis was cleaned, sprayed with a coat of Tamiya white primer, and then the engine bay area, wheel wells, and sides were painted red. (I used leftover Tamiya Italian Red TS-8)



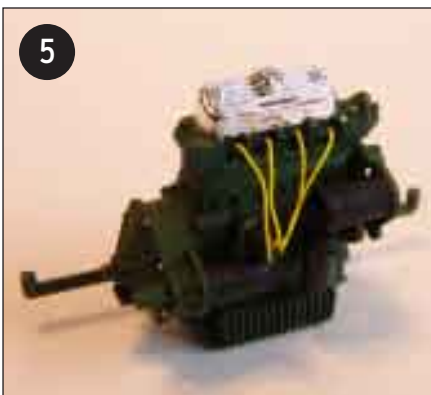
After the paint dried, I masked the wheel wells, sides of the chassis, and part of the engine bay with Tamiya masking tape, according to the instructions. The tape was carefully smoothed with a burnishing tool.



The chassis is painted with a 1:2 mix of gloss/flat black Tamiya acrylics. I removed the masks almost immediately after painting to allow the paint to smooth itself a bit at the edges - flat paint dries fast!



As usual, I separated parts by color, cleaned all the mold lines, and mounted them on wooden dowels with double-stick tape. The engine parts were painted with a mix of greens; body panels with TS-8; and others in different shades of black.



I wanted to build this model box-stock, but when the engine block was put together, I couldn't stop myself from detailing it. I drilled the distributor and cam cover, made plugs from black wire insulation, and wired them to the distributor with Detail Master yellow wire.



Then I cleaned the exhaust manifolds, painted them gunmetal, and glued them to the block. The whole assembly was dropped into the engine frame, followed by the front suspension and a steering rack.



The brake calipers were painted gunmetal. I also picked all bolts and nuts with different shades of metalizer paints. The distributor was glued to the block too.



8 The entire engine assembly was carefully glued into the chassis, the manifolds were attached to the exhaust system, and front suspension was fitted with shock absorbers.



9 The rear suspension was also assembled, fitted with shock absorbers, and glued to the chassis. The muffler is painted yellow (according to instructions) and drybrushed with metalizer to give it a metal (and somewhat duller) look.



10 This image shows the completed chassis. I drilled out the exhaust tip and painted the inside flat black. This little trick adds a lot of realism to the model.



11 All mold lines on the body were removed with sanding sticks, and the entire body was lightly wet-sanded with 1200-grit paper. After a coat of Tamiya white primer, I sprayed three mist coats and three wet coats of Tamiya Italian Red TS-8.



12 The roof and bonnet were also carefully cleaned and sprayed with a coat of white primer. The hood is painted Italian Red, and the roof with Tamiya's Pure White TS-26.



13 I polished the body with 3M compound, followed by Tamiya Fine Compound, and Last Detail model wax. The body looks great with its red/white paint job in this mockup!



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The wheels are molded in black, so I primed them gray and painted them with two coats of Testor's Model Master Aluminum Metalizer, followed by light burnishing to bring out the shine. I used a light coat of Tamiya TS-13 clear to seal the metalizer.



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The tires were washed in soapy water to remove mold-release agent, after which I rinsed, dried, and fitted the tires on the rims. I also drilled the rims with a #76 bit and installed valve stems made from thin, black Sakatsu wire.



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The interior looked pretty plain, so I decided to spice it up a bit. Most Minis had carpeting inside, so I decided to add flocking. The entire area to be covered with the flocking was painted with Tamiya XF-63 German Gray, using a wide, flat brush (brush marks will be covered by flocking).



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Then I applied Detail Master gray flocking, using white glue. After the glue dried, I used a fine, wide brush to remove the excess flocking. That's a big difference!



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The seats were cleaned, sprayed with a light coat of gray primer, and painted with Tamiya XF-63 German Gray. The central areas were masked with Tamiya masking tape and burnished.



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After masking, I sprayed the seats with a 2:1 flat/gloss Tamiya acrylic black mix, and carefully removed the masks before the paint cured. This left me with a set of nice-looking two-tone seats.



20 After the paint on the seats was dry, I glued a body-colored front-seat support in place, and installed the front and rear seats to the interior. Then I added the hand brake and pedals.



21 The dashboard was assembled from two pieces (black lower piece and red top) and detail-painted with a fine brush (silver trim and knobs). Decals were applied to the instruments. The steering wheel's spokes were drilled out, then the wheel and the column were painted and assembled.



22 I glued the steering column to the dashboard and installed the entire assembly to the interior. I also added a shifter and a few other small details.



23 As a final touch, I covered the ashtrays on the dashboard and near the rear seats with Bare-Metal Foil, and the chassis was complete.



24 I wired the instrument panel, added a wired ignition coil, master cylinder, air filters, capacitors, relays, and other components. The radiator hose was detailed with Bare-Metal foil clamps.



25 I used a wide brush to paint the inside of the body flat black. The inside of the roof was painted flat white and glued to the body.



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Window and body chrome trim was covered with BMF, and the panel lines were washed with red/black wash. I waxed the body, fitted the door panels and the hood, and snapped it onto the chassis.



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I painted the hood flat black from the inside, and fitted with the kit-supplied hinge. Then I added a chrome hood emblem, but it still looked plain, so I decided to add white stripes to complement the roof. The stripes were made from two layers of white decal paper (a single layer would not cover the red paint completely).



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The door panels were detailed with Bare-Metal Foil, and window trim and latches were painted Tamiya's semigloss black X-18.



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This model is so small that I had a hard time believing it was 1/24 scale; the wheels look like 1/43!



I had some fit problems in the hood area, but nothing serious. Finally, I added the lights, grille, and other chrome work. Overall, this is a great little kit!