

# VSRN-ONLINE

Vintage Slot Racing Newsletter

Greg Holland, Ye Olde Editor

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## From The Editor

The response to the first issue of VSRN Online seems to be quite favorable! I do appreciate all of the feedback and suggestions.

Next time we'll add some two more titles to the Magazine Gallery - *Model Car & Racing* and *Model Cars Illustrated*. Plus, we'll start to make it useful, by adding a searchable index with a few articles from the magazines you can click on to view. As always, your comments and suggestions are welcome. You can contact us at:

greg@vsrnonline.com

Keep It In The Slot !!!

## Letters To The Editor

Hi Greg

Good stuff, you have done a great job. When you make the pdf files, could you put the VSRN heading on the first page only. That way we don't waste paper and color ink by printing "VSRN-ONLINE Vintage Slot Racing Newsletter" several times. Otherwise one will have to select which pages they wish Adobe to print.

Also, try to keep most of the text in black (\$30 for a HP color cartridge, instead of 2 or 3 16D motors!) For those who don't have a scanner, Wal-Mart will develop film and put the photos on their web site. The photos can be downloaded to a computer using the username and password one can get when they pick up their developed film. That's how I got the photos on the <http://www.Topcities.com/Groove/rever> site. When viewed online, Wal-Mart also offers super hi resolution downloads for an extra fee. (I didn't op for that).  
Keep on revvin', Bill Shaw

(Ed Note: This month's issue will look more like the old VSRN, so you won't have the problem with the color logo on the top of each page. But the PDF output is an afterthought only, so I want to keep the work down to a minimum. I have made the text black this month, though.

Thanks for the tip on the Wal-Mart PhotoWeb site. But, without the password, you can only view them. Greg)

## Classic Manta Ray

By Ye Olde Editor

By 1964, the commercial slot car boom was really starting to take off. Cox had hit the market with their Ferrari and BRM F-1's, setting a new standard of excellence for scale appearing cars. "Scale" appearance was what the home enthusiast had been striving to achieve. With the advent of large commercial tracks, looks became less important, and the lust for speed naturally took over.

Sam Bergman, a wealthy young man from Kansas, noticed that people were paying to rent the heavy, slow, commercially available hard body cars of the era, and decided to create "a better mousetrap".

Classic's first product was a 36D endbell drive sidewinder frame, which was anodized a "flat" aluminum color, with "CLASSIC" stamped in block letters. Here's a shot of the lettering:



There is some question as to who exactly was responsible for the design of the chassis, as it was made for them by an outside company. In the book "Vintage Slot Cars" by Philippe deLespinay, he says that this first chassis was also used by BZ for their earliest cars. Gordon Saunders was an engineer on the staff of Classic at the time – it is possible that it was his idea. This first chassis had a flat vertical plate where the endbell of the motor went. This was part number 201. Also listed are a can drive chassis as 202, and a Viper inline chassis as 203.

Designer John Power was brought in to design the better "mousetrap" for Classic. This turned out to be the Manta Ray. Futuristically styled, it was a full fendered rip off from the full size bubble topped 1:1 scale show car of the same name, built by Dean

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Jeffries. All parts were initially manufactured by outside companies, and assembled at the Classic factory in Culver City, CA. The demand strained the abilities of these companies to deliver, especially the body maker. Lloyd Asbury of Lancer body fame, pointed out to me that the early orange bodies had very poor detail. At some point in time, Lancer was asked to take over body production. Lloyd redid the molds, and the difference is striking! Here's a look at some of the little details that are different:



Note the headlight and "grill" detail on the later Lancer blue body on the right, compared to the early orange version. Further back on the hood, there is also a seam and some "latches" that are much "crisper" on the later bodies. In addition, as far as I know, the "Lancer" made bodies only came in metallic red, blue and green. Here are some of these replacement bodies:



Note the headlight & emblem detail also. It's tough to see, but the original orange body had just a touch of metallic flake in the color. Repro paint jobs don't have this!

As I mentioned earlier, the early frames were bare aluminum. Shortly thereafter, the frames were anodized a light silvery gray, and the "Classic" name on the drop arm was switched to script. Here's a close-up of the most familiar lettering:



The part numbers were changed to 3295 for the endbell drive frame and 3295-1 for the can drive version. The anodizing on these frames seemed to vary in intensity quite a bit - from light to dark gray. The one used in my Classic Batmobile is quite dark. Here's a shot where I'm trying to show the variation in color:



The earliest version of the Manta Ray (officially listed on the box as Manta Ray GTX-1000) featured "German" rubber slicks on the rear, and conventional rubber fronts, on the familiar 6 spoke aluminum wheels. The motor was an endbell drive CM-250 motor (with the 600A style can bearing, a la Ruskitt 33 & Revell SP600). In addition to the bare frame, the first version also had a white Dynamic guide flag, and a press-on 20T brass pinion that was wider than the spur gear. Here's a shot of the earliest rolling frame:

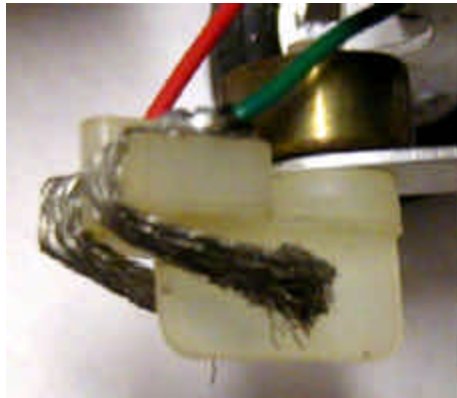


Careful inspection reveals that the axle spacers are white nylon on this early frame. 5-40 nuts were plated steel. The gears on this version look like this:

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Here's the early guide flag (purchased from Dynamic):



The second version that I know of featured an endbell drive CM-250 motor, but had the new anodized frame, and a 20T brass set screw pinion. To add to my confusion, I JUST discovered that Classic also had a 600B version of the endbell drive CM250 motor (found it in an Astro=V)!!!! So I'm not sure which motor was in this version. My guess is that it was only the early 600A motor. Here is what the early 600A can bearings look like:



For reference, here's the later 600B bearing:



Starting with this version, the front axle spacers were thick wall brass tubing, and the 5-40 nuts were brass also. Guide remained the white Dynamic.

The third version is the most commonly seen: it's the same as the second, with the exception of a can drive CM-360 motor (with the 600B style can bearing a la Revell SP90 Monogram X-220, etc), corresponding frame, and Classic's own dark gray guide flag.



Here's what the gears look like:



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The fourth version had the metallic red / green / blue Lancer body in place of the original orange, but retained the original black German sponge rear tires. The fifth version was like this but now had the narrower, closed cell foam rear tires in various colors. There's also a sixth variant that I'll talk about later.....

Here's some of the closed cell foam tires in red (they also came in light blue and green):



There is another subtle difference between the early and the later Mantas is the spur gear. The later factory cars always came with a 5-40 thread, 1/8" thick brass 50T spur, with 5 9/32" lightening holes. These gears were available, but not commonly found as replacement parts. Most of the NOS stock found over the past 15 years have been the almost identical 48T gears, which were used by the early cars. Here's a shot of what they look like:



Another giveaway is the motor: always orange, with a gold foil Classic Shield sticker that looks like this:



The CM-250 in my early frame does NOT have one of these stickers, and it doesn't look like there had been one, but I can't be sure that they all didn't.....

So if someone claims that a Manta is all original, and it has a purple motor with a Cox 48T spur gear..... Don't laugh - I've seen it !

Here's what the fronts look like compared to the rears:



A seemingly odd thing: all of the Manta Ray front tires I've seen have tiny tiny steel balls in the tread! Something in the manufacturing process, I guess.



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The Manta was sold only as a RTR, in a square box, and was packed with a spare clear Lotus 30 body. As far as I know, all versions shared the same box.



The cover art on the early Classic boxes was spectacular! Mine obviously is not in such great shape. Here's a dealer sheet with the same art (From the Bob "Ziggy" Ziegler collection..



I wasn't aware of any Manta Ray instruction sheets like were found in some of the later Classic kits. The only thing I could vaguely remember was that the later Mantas came with an additional 16T pinion, and that there was a tiny piece of paper telling you what it was for. Then recently Derric Reed purchased an early Manta Ray in its box off of eBay, and a parts / price list was included! He was kind enough to send a copy, which I've retyped for clarity.

 3300 MANTA RAY PARTS LIST AND PRICES		
PART NO.	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE
3301	Manta Ray body clear .....	\$ 1.49
3301-1	Manta Ray body painted.....	1.99
3295	Chassis w/ drop arm.....	2.95
3395	Chassis w/ parts .....	3.95
3375	Chassis complete motor, less body.....	11.00
3322	Drop arm w/ swivel pin .....	.69
3304	Weight w/ screw.....	.29
3306	Flag assembly w/ brushes .....	.98
3308	Pinion gears (20 tooth).....	.35
3309	Spur gear (48 tooth).....	.79
3352	1 pr. front tires w/ wheels.....	.98
3351	1 pr. rear tires w/ wheels (hard) .....	1.19
3351-1	1 pr. rear tires w/ wheels (soft) .....	1.19
3316-15	Rear axle - stainless .....	.39
3316	Front axle .....	.29

For the above parts, please see your local hobby dealer. If unavailable, you may order direct. Classic Industries, 8926 National Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. Please send cash or money order, no C.O.D.'s

This parts list is for a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation car. It has endbell drive, with the first anodized chassis, and a 48T spur gear. What caught my eye is the complete chassis w/ motor but less body, part number 3375. I've never seen any other mention of this of this combo before.

However, Derric's car is actually a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation car - it is a can drive version. Must have been in the transition from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> type, and they had some of the old sheets left.

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