

New Lines for Carrera



Longstanding quality and performance are bolstered by the addition of all new race cars in 1/24 and 1/43 scale.

Jeremy Dunning

Carrera designers and engineers never rest. They have recently been busy with the creation a number of great new lines of cars and sets, two of which are some of the most exciting and fastest selling I've seen. They are the new 1/43-scale GO! Series cars and sets and the new 1/24-scale Hot Rod Series.

Before their recent revitalization by Carrera, 1/43-scale slot cars and sets were often considered by hobby dealers as throw-away items meant for discount and toy stores. Now, they are every bit as fast and sophisticated as their larger 1/32-scale and 1/24-scale counterparts, and they're extremely hot sellers.

Carrera's 1/43-scale GO! Series slot cars include two Minis, a *Fast & Furious* Nissan 300ZX and 1968 Mustang, Renault, Ferrari, Red Bull and McLaren Formula 1 cars, a pair of James Bond Aston Martins from past and newer films, and two beautiful NASCAR Chevies, Mr. Goodwrench and Cingular.



Carrera's 1/43-scale GO! Series cars are shown here on the mechanical turn track that comes with the new GO! Series race sets.

What a great new collection this is. There are new sets, too, and they come with Corvettes and Vipers in various liveries. Carrera's sets also come with excellent track and accessories that include pit or turnoff tracks, and lap counters and timers. The controllers are very nice. They stay cool, and feature a Turbo button that gives drivers another 20 percent extra throttle.

Carrera's GO! cars are amazingly fast, and each one carries a magnet that's hefty enough to help them stay on the track. The road holding is so firm that the feature makes GO! cars an excellent choice for younger or inexperienced slot car racers, and for family home layouts without turn marshals, where track time is more fun

than lap time. The size of these 1/43-scale GO! layouts and vehicles makes home life easier since the track doesn't take up much more room than typical HO-scale setup.

I'm very happy to report that the cars' performance is unlike any 1/43-scale cars I have raced. Each of these



Amazing paint and even more amazing flames adorn a selection of Carrera's 1/24-scale Hot Rod Series cars.

cars comes with a serious and well-designed chassis, high revolution motors, brass axle bearings, dual brushes, diodes and tough nylon pinion and crown gears.

I spoke at length about the new GO! cars with the folks at the HobbyTown USA store in Indianapolis, and they are very happy with their sales, telling me that the Go! Series is their best-selling line of cars and sets, and that they are on their third large order in only three months. This shop carries all the popular slot car brands, which makes this a significant sales success story. The HobbyTown manager told me that the new sets and cars are really popular with families and younger children.

Now, for something completely different, I'll take you to the other end of the scale spectrum for a look at Carrera's 1/24-scale Hot Rod Series. This series offers some of the coolest slot cars I have ever seen — absolute jewels in every way.

The Hot Rod Series has a 1934 Ford hot rod in three liveries. Two are coupes and one is a roadster. Another model is a 1941 fat fender Chevy hot rod that also comes in three different liveries. All three are coupes. Two of these come with "blown" supercharged engines and are open at the front. The third is a black custom rod with a Cadillac grill. These cars have meticulously fine, period correct detail elements, including dice hanging from the rearview mirror, suspension, miniature stickers and much more. These new hot rods look good enough to share a display shelf with high-end die-cast models.

The pain and tampo on these cars is spectacular, with some of the coolest flames I have ever seen on a die-cast or slot car. The mag wheels and tires are also stunning and realistic. Interiors are extremely detailed, with drivers



Jeremy Dunning's special edition Blast from the Past is the Sharknose Ferrari 156, produced by Carrera in 1963.

that rival expensive, handpainted miniature soldiers. Headlights and tail lights operate, and they work through a diode system.

While the exteriors are all visually stunning, Carrera's 1/24-scale Hot Rod Series chassis is also a work of art. It's a bit heavy but very well balanced, with a reverse switch, and diodes and printed circuit controls. The lights are inconspicuous but very effective, and the wiring is all neatly bundled in harnesses, just like a real car.

I ran the cars on my home track and was impressed with the performance. The cars handle well and show decent acceleration. On a larger track with fewer winds than my own, these cars would really fly. They handle extremely well, but they are so beautiful that it took me a while to work my courage up to really flog them along.

Recently, I spoke with the slot car guys at Al's Hobby in suburban Chicago, which is a really nice store with an amazing inventory and very knowledgeable sales personnel. Al's is showing good results with the 1/24-scale Hot Rod Series cars and sets, and these vehicles seem to have created a lot of buzz. The new cars are really hot.

This month's Blast from the Past is a Carrera icon. It's a very early Carrera slot car from 1963, the famous 1961 Sharknose Ferrari 156. The full-scale Ferrari 156 is the car in which Phil Hill won the 1961 Formula 1 World Championship. As you can see from my photograph, the model may be a little crude compared to the beauties that Carrera creates today, but there's still a lot to like about it. Carrera made good cars then — and *great* cars now.

For more information about Carrera, their traditional 1/32-scale slot cars, new GO! Series 1/43-scale slot cars and 1/24-scale Hot Rod Series, see the ad on page 19, visit www.carrera-toys.com or call 609-409-8610. **HM**



Wow factor in the Hot Rod Series slot cars comes from chrome mags, lakes pipes and supercharged engines.