

# Round 2 Taps Nostalgia Market For Car Lovers

Gary Wollenhaupt



*There's something for every hobbyist from Round 2's line up.*

The name of Round 2 reflects the rebound that founder Tom Lowe has experienced with the company. Feeling his own love of classic toys from his youth, he bought the rights to the Johnny Lightning brand 20 years after it went defunct. He relaunched the line of diecast competitors to Hot Wheels under the Playing Mantis brand, acquired model companies, including Aurora, and later sold that company. The company that took over Johnny Lightning allowed it to go out of production again, and Lowe pounced.

He took over Johnny Lightning again and launched Round 2 as his second go-around at the toy business. The company has been dedicated to reinvigorating classic brands while serving today's customers.

Based in South Bend, Indiana, the company turns out more than 1,000 individual products in model kits, diecast vehicles, slot cars, and model railroading vehicles. Round 2 products are available through all major distributors, and smaller quantities can be ordered through the Auto World website.

One of Round 2's claims to fame is the Auto World diecast lines are true to scale. That means a 1/64 Cadillac is bigger than a Corvette, unlike some diecast lines that are all created on the same sized platform.

"That's one of the things our collectors like that differentiates us from other brands," said Chad Reid, marketing manager.

Lowe purchased the rights to the Auto World

name from slot car luminary Oscar Koveleski and continues to support the hobby with new vehicles and track sets in accurate HO scale.

The car guys at Round 2 like to break the mold on what cars are considered collectible. The 1984 Dodge Caravan and Plymouth Voyager 1/64 diecast model was a recent winner. Round 2 saw the nostalgia for a vehicle everyone knew but few people loved.

"We took a gamble, and it paid off because there was a hole in the market that had not been filled," Reid said

Reid is leading the charge to add newer collectibles to the lineup, like import cars from the 1990s and early 2000s.

"There is growing interest in the cars that people who are adults now wanted when they were kids, and it's a part of automotive history that has been underrepresented," Reid said. "Nostalgia changes as the times change."

In 2021, the company got an infusion of funds from Praesidian Capital, which has paid for new tooling and other investments.

"We have probably put out more tooling in the last year than in the last nine years," Reid said. "We have been investing into the hobby and the brands to keep fresh products in the pipeline." **HM**

## Round 2 Brands

### Model Kits

AMT

Hawk

Lindberg

MPC

Polar Lights

### Diecast

Auto World

American Muscle

Big Country Toys

Johnny Lightning

### Model Railroad

#### Vehicles

Mini Metals

### Slot Cars

Auto World