



SPEED WHEELS

GO

SPORTING

by Chris Jelley

LAST MONTH saw the Meccano Magazine debut of that fabulous Dinky feature, Speedwheels, as fitted to the new Pontiac Parisienne. This month, however, Speedwheels really get into the fast-moving swing of things with a model of a car designed purely for speed and high performance—the Alfa Romeo O.S.I. Scarabeo.

A product of the world-famous Alfa Romeo company of Milan, Italy, the Scarabeo is beautifully distinctive with its low, sleek shape and “chopped off” back, yet it is a car which you are not likely to see on the roads of Britain—or even of Italy, if it comes to that—as this particular example was produced as a “one-off” special. In a sense, this is a pity because it is a car that would hardly fail to appeal to sports enthusiasts, not only because of its bodywork design, but also because it has a top speed in excess of 140 m.p.h. Even this maximum speed, though, is not particularly unusual in a high performance sports job, but what really does come as a surprise, at least to my mind, is the fact that this speed comes from an engine with the comparatively low capacity of 1600 c.c. Mind you, even with this capacity, the engine develops a power output of no less than 160 B.H.P. so you can imagine how much of a precise piece of craftsmanship it is!

All in all, the Scarabeo is an ideal vehicle to serve as a pattern for a Speedwheels-sporting Dinky Toy. Fast car, fast model, you might say, and the Dinky Scarabeo, Sales No. 217, is fast. Give it a good push on flat, smooth ground and it will streak away from

A close-up view of the Dinky Scarabeo with its engine cover open to reveal the highly detailed engine moulding. Note the realistic “wire” weeds fitted to the model.

you at great speed! What’s more, it will carry on running and running until long past the point where any “ordinary” model would have stopped.

Such performance is, of course, due to Speedwheels, so, for the benefit of readers who might have missed last month’s article, I should explain that Speedwheels are free-rolling wheels, with built-in low-friction bearings, which are mounted on new-style axles made from thin but very strong steel wire. The combination of the special bearings and thin axles results in a model fitted with them running a lot faster and very much further than a model fitted with normal wheels and axles, and it will run extremely smoothly and quietly as well. In addition, the “spring” in the axles will, in most cases, serve the same purpose as all-round independent suspension, so you can see that Speedwheels are a vast improvement on their earlier counterparts.

In the case of the new Scarabeo, the suspension effect is very much in evidence, but it is by no means the only appealing feature. Also included are wind-screen, seats, steering wheel, moulded “glass” head-lamps, number plates and—more impressive still—an opening engine cover at the rear which hinges back to reveal a miniature “engine” in a shiny plated finish. The detail on this engine is minute, even down to incorporating what looks like boltheads, and it is undoubtedly based on an Alfa Romeo original. How do I know? Because the words “Alfa Romeo” actually appear on the top of the engine moulding!

Overall finish of the model before me is in a flamboyant—almost fluorescent—light red, set off beautifully by a pale yellow seat moulding which is, itself, set off by a black steering wheel. The effect is striking and gives the finishing touch to a Dinky Toy which is bound to become a great success.

New Dinky Catalogue

By the time this magazine goes to press, issue No. 5 of the Dinky Toys catalogue will be available from your local dealer. If you want to know what models are included in the Dinky range and what they look like, as well as their recommended retail price, then this catalogue is a “must.” It contains 22 pages of illustrations in full colour showing more than 100 models and lists many more which lack of space prevented being shown. It’s also good for a preview of some of the great new Dinkys yet to come, so why not call on your dealer and invest in a copy?