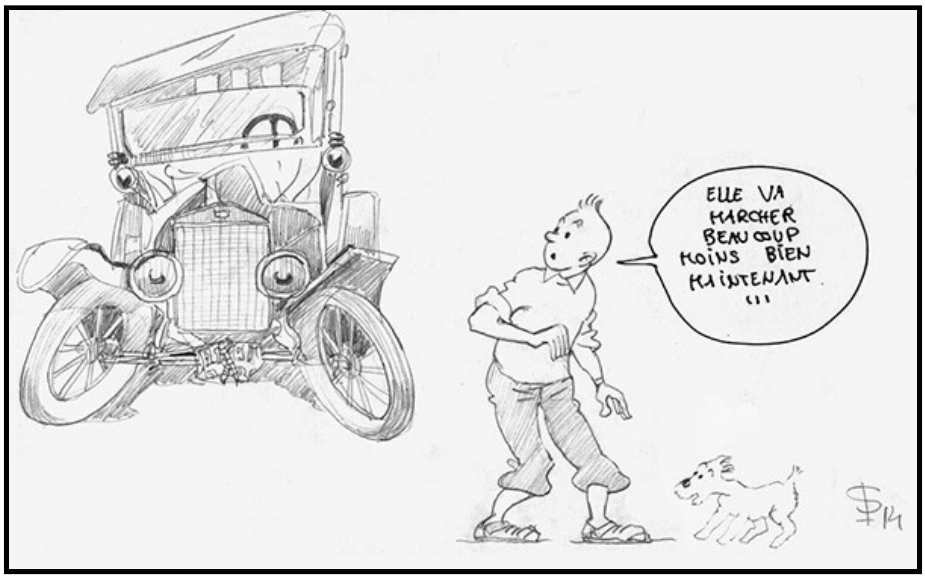
The Tintin & Spirou car problem - 1/43 scale

31/10/2014 — Basic techniques

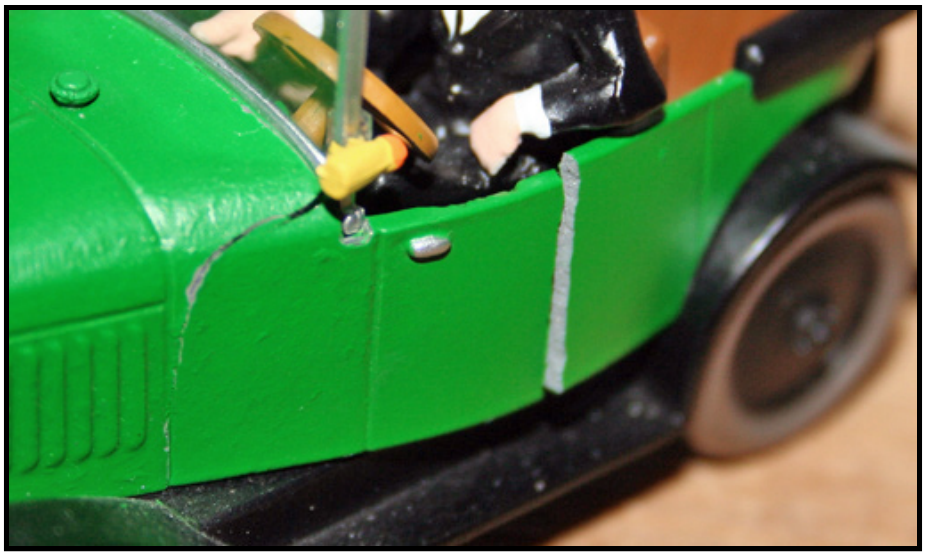


Dans la collection des voitures TINTIN & SPIROU à l'échelle 1/43ème vendues sur abonnement par les Editions Atlas, on a pu constater nombre de problèmes survenus à quelques véhicules des collections après un certain temps de "stockage"... En effet, sur certains modèles de certaines séries une...

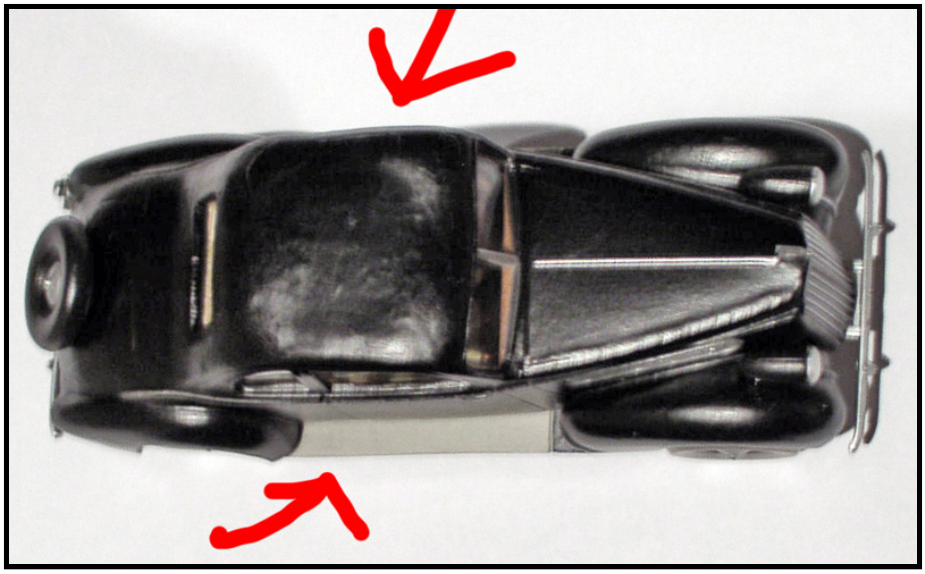




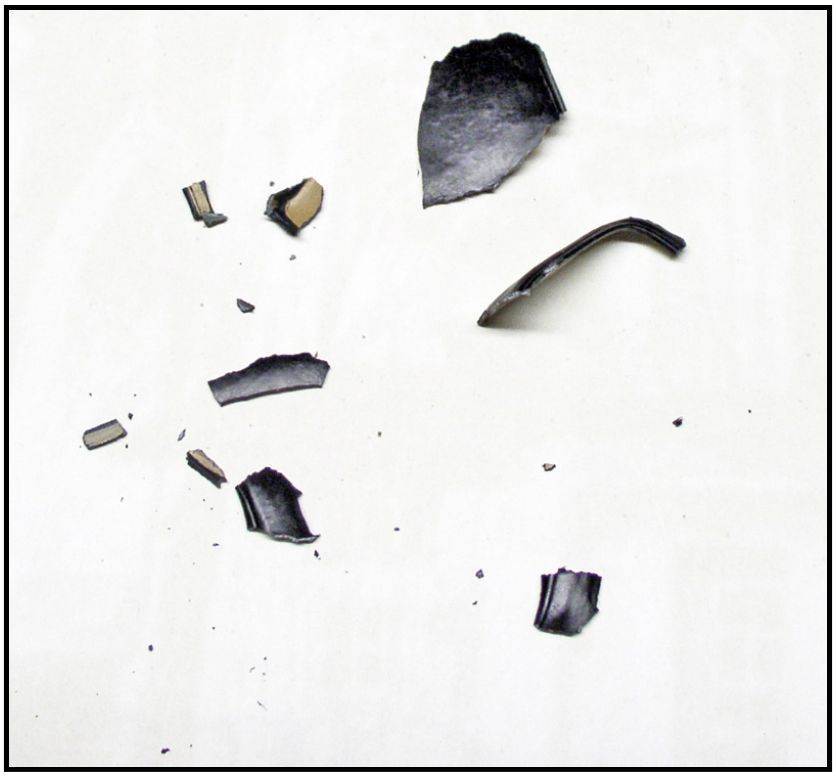
In the collection of 1/43-scale TINTIN & SPIROU model cars sold by subscription by Editions Atlas, we have observed a number of problems that have arisen with some of the models in the collection after a certain period of "storage"...







In fact, on certain models in certain series, deterioration has occurred, resulting in cracks, warping, and peeling paint...



The Zamac used in manufacturing is made from zinc, aluminum, and copper. It is a strong alloy that is easy to work with. It is used for die casting because it has good fluidity. It is well-suited for hot-chamber die casting, allowing for the production of high-precision parts with a short cycle time...

After cooling, the mold is broken open, and the part is removed and deburred. However, a mold designed for mass-produced parts can also be used. It offers good resistance to alcohols, gasoline, motor oil, and trichloroethylene...

If the correct proportions and temperature are followed, there should normally be no problem. However, if there are too many impurities in the product, IT MAY DETERIORATE OVER TIME. Zamac from the 1950s frequently crumbles into dust, hence the name “zinc plague”...

It’s clear that somewhere along the chain—from order to final delivery—there was a “failure.” Was it a lack of oversight on the part of Atlas and Moulinsart, or was the product tampered with during manufacturing? It doesn’t matter... As usual, the consumer is left to foot the bill—and let’s not even get into the issue of planned obsolescence here!...

It should be noted that Editions Atlas automatically exchanges the affected products, either by replacement or refund (if Spirou cars are out of stock, they are refunded)...

THE FACT IS THAT THERE IS NO GUARANTEE REGARDING THE PRODUCT'S LIFESPAN. Although it appears that the problem has only arisen in certain series (six cars in my case), there’s no guarantee that the rest of the collection won’t suffer the same fate in the coming years...

The crafty ones will rush to sell off their collections quickly without saying a word...

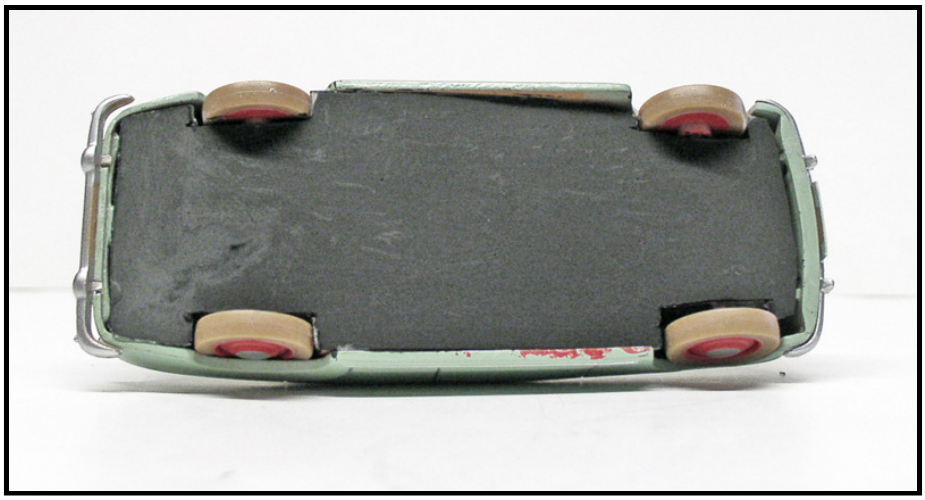
Catering



As for me, I've remade some parts and modified others...



Here, the T-Bird’s chassis is completely warped. I THINK IT’S IMPORTANT TO REMOVE THEM ALL FROM THEIR BASES —while leaving them in their boxes, and removing the mounting screw that may, over time, cause stress that puts strain on the weakened zamac (just look at how many frames are warped even though the body remains intact!)...



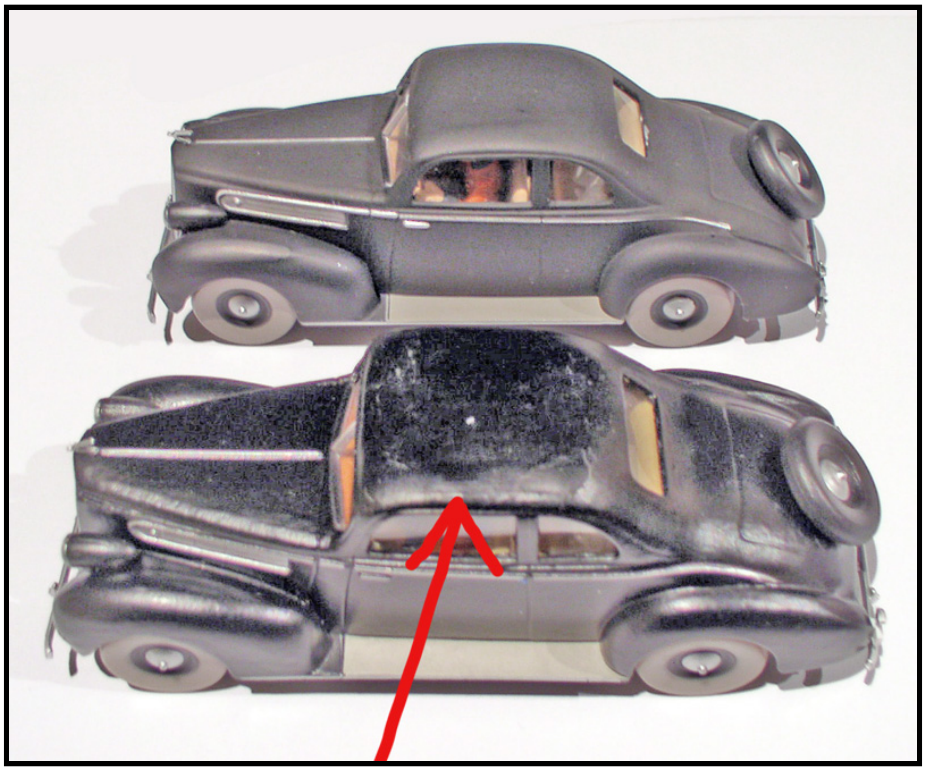
Here, the chassis—which was crumbling like a cookie—was rebuilt using plastic sheet, and the undercarriage was reattached to it. The whole thing is painted black with oil-based paint...



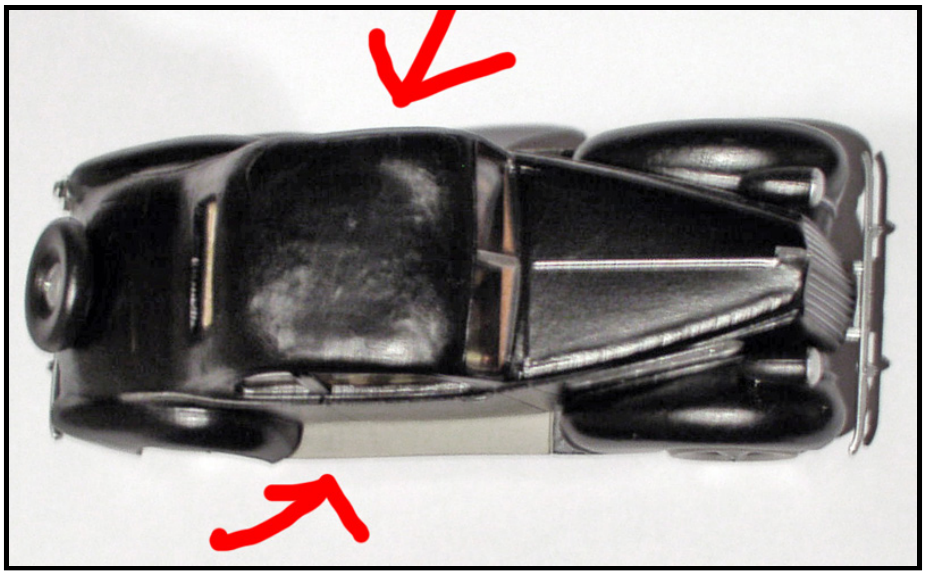
The T-Bird has regained its original shape. Of course, purists will take offense, claiming that it is no longer an original model. But the model builder is first and foremost a creator rather than a collector and does not speculate on the potential future resale value of the parts in their boxes based on the product’s rarity...



The same goes for the 404, two of whose wheels were no longer touching the ground... Since the figures and seats are glued to the chassis on all the vehicles, you have to take care to peel them off carefully before reattaching them to the new plastic chassis...



Here, the problem is more serious. At the top, you can see the replaced model and the old one, whose body has warped. The texture clearly shows that there was a manufacturing defect...





There's not much else to do except... cut off the roof...



The windshield was recovered, and the pillars were repainted black...



The tarp is made of double-layered toilet paper coated with liquefied wood glue and then painted with oil paint. Here’s an original design that will be a great addition to the collection!...



Some of the restored cars... You can see that the convertible's top hasn't been painted yet...

There you go. The TINTIN collection remains interesting even though the models are far from matching the 1/43-scale prototypes used to create them. As for the SPIROU collection, it’s a shame that it stopped at 24 vehicles. Since then, a new series of the same models has been released at a 1/24 scale. Business... Business...


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