

Model Review

1999 Jaguar XK-180

by Wayne E. Moyer

KIT: Provence Moulage

SCALE: 1/43

MATERIAL: Resin with photo-etched metal detail parts

SOURCE: Grand Prix Models, 3 Noke Lane Business Centre, St. Albans, Herts AL2 3NY England

<http://www.grandprixmodels.co.uk>

Jaguars have always been something special. Whatever their faults (principally Lucas electric components and heavy, oil-consuming engines) in the past, they were more than offset by the lovely bodywork and the exhilarating performance of the cars. The XK-120 took the sports-car world by storm following World War II, the much prettier C-type established Jaguar in World Championship racing, and the sleek, aerodynamic D-Type wrote the Jaguar name into the record books for all time with three victories at Le Mans. Then there was the XK-E; if you were into sports cars in the 1960's and 70's nothing more needs to be said. Yes, E-Types rivaled Italian cars in unreliability, but it looked so great that you didn't need to drive it to love it.

The later 1970's and all the 80's were hard times for Jaguar enthusiasts, but an infusion of Ford money brought new designs and (gasp!!) reliable engines and electrical systems to Jaguar in the 1990's. First there was the V-8 powered XK-8: were my first-born younger I could consider a swap for a British Racing Green convertible! Then the XJS Sedan-- I'm not ready for such sedate motoring yet but someday----. And now Jaguar has come up with the XK-180, a beautiful roadster that blends elements of the D-Jag, the rear-engine XJ-13, XK-E, and XK-8. Jaguar says that it's only a show car and there are no plans to put the XK-180 into production, but fortunately, for 1/43 scale modelers at least, Provence Moulage has released a very nice resin kit of this beautiful Jag.



The resin body is superb; perfectly smooth surfaces with crisp panel lines and hood louvers. There's "mesh" in the radiator air scoop, but the lower scoop is open all the way through the body. The rear wing is a separate piece, but mine was absolutely straight. Don't worry about the seam where it joins the body as there's one on the real car. The baseplate, interior, inner door panels, seats, and wheel spiders are crisp resin castings too, while the wheel rims are machined aluminum with photo-etched brake disks. The tinted windscreen and clear headlight covers are vacu-formed, of course. Instructions consist primarily of annotated photos of a completed model, enough to build the kit but not enough to detail the interior correctly.

Mold lines and flash are almost non-existent on this kit, so parts clean-up took very little time. The first primer coat revealed that there were no pinholes in the body, either (PM castings are improving) but there were a couple of blemishes under the nose that were easily filled with a small dab of putty. The upper surfaces needed no filler at all. According to Sports Cars International (June/July 1999) the color is "Teal Gold" (the July '99 Road & Track is also a useful reference) whatever that is. Naturally, all the color photos differ somewhat, but I found that Plasti-Kote Ford FM 3958 was very close, and lightened it with GM 3886 just enough to achieve a good "average" of the printed colors. Both the seats and inner door panel castings have the color separation lines engraved in the castings, so I painted both with my body color and then brushed on several coats of flat white acrylic. When all was dry, I sprayed all the interior pieces with semi-gloss clear before applying the instrument panel decals and painting the integral seat belts. The "engine-turned" aluminum instrument panel and console face are supplied as decals with the gauge faces included and look good when carefully applied.



P.M. has done the wheels right for this model; aluminum rims with resin spiders and separate resin backing plates. Since the wheels should be a single solid color, I glued the spiders to the rims and then sprayed the assembly with Metalizer "aluminum", followed by a clear gloss coat. The backing plates were painted "steel" on the outer surface and flat black on the inside. When they were dry the photo-etched disks and calipers were glued to the backing plate before the wheels were assembled. Simple, but very realistic.

Final assembly was a breeze as the few parts fit very well. Leave the windscreen as a single piece; it fits outside the "A" pillars. My finished model matches photos of the car as it first appeared, but by the time "drive test" reports were published individual roll bars had been added behind the seats. Overall lines (from the side) and details, right down to the asymmetric "power bulge" on the hood, match photos very well. Seen from above, the model looks a bit short, but it's not. Wheelbase and length are right on 1/43 scale, but both width and track are 0.13" too great; almost six scale inches. It's only noticeable, though, if you very carefully compare the model to overhead shots. All in all, it's an easy-to-build kit that makes a beautiful model of an absolutely stunning car!