

CMC's riotously good Ferrari 250 SWB Berlinetta is something of a classic among 1:18 model car collectors. That has something to do with familiarity; even the staunchest American muscle collector has a soft spot for the real SWB's shape, vicious performance, and legendary exhaust note. But it sure doesn't hurt that CMC did a hell of a job bringing both the countenance and the content of the nearly-priceless Ferrari out in grand style.

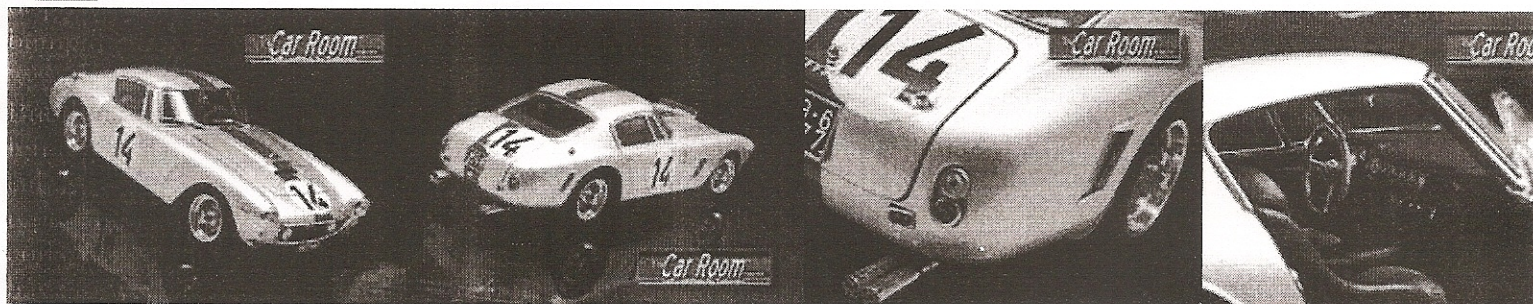
Now there's a competizione variant to play with, and those fellows may want to slide the street car over just enough to make some room. Possessed of the same "are you serious?" parts count (around 1,100) and equally impeccable build quality, this version wears the livery of chassis 2689 as it looked when it won the GT class - and came in third overall - at the 1961 running of the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

All of the functioning parts - an opening hood, trunk, and doors, steerable wheels, a working suspension and a flip-up gas filler - are tight and work smoothly, and the model is substantial in hand, with very good shut lines. The silver metallic paint and tamped-on livery are excellent, and the fitment of the window and door trim is perfect, right to the simulated gasketing around the glass. Photoetch is in short supply - and that's not a slam; aside from the "Ferrari" on the rear deck, all of the little *steel* bits, like the wiper arms, are made of - ta da! - steel, be it folded, lathe turned, laced, or pressed. Leather seats with textile centers, copper brake and fuel lines, rubber tires and brass-wrapped flex hoses bump the menu of visible noble materials to a truly lofty level.

But that's CMC's big trick - and their art. These guys love to let you in on the game. The aluminum and steel rims are left unpainted, and the knockoffs are stainless steel; behind them are shimmering metal brake discs that pass through calipers equipped with hair-thin copper lines; spin the knockoff, pull the wheel, and there's a full, piece-by-piece replication of the car's suspension at all four corners, built off a full metal tube frame and riding on stainless leafs and coils. Engine detail is startling, if a little hard to see under the foam-rimmed stainless pan affixed to the carbs; you'll have to work to see the trio of two-barrel Webers and the linkage - but definitely do so. The 3.0-liter V12 is hugely entertaining and detailed so well it would be a shame to miss.

Overall, the added race gear, the tossing of the bumperettes, and detail pieces like the like the cooling scoops at the car's leading edge make for a model that's desire-inducing, all over again. Nice work, fellas.

CMC 1:18 Ferrari 250 GT SWB Competizione, 1961 Le Mans #14, edition of 7,000; item M-079, \$319.00. www.cmc-modelcars.com/us.



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Hi.

I own the yellow model and I can say it is worth any \$ or Euro in my case (219.-)