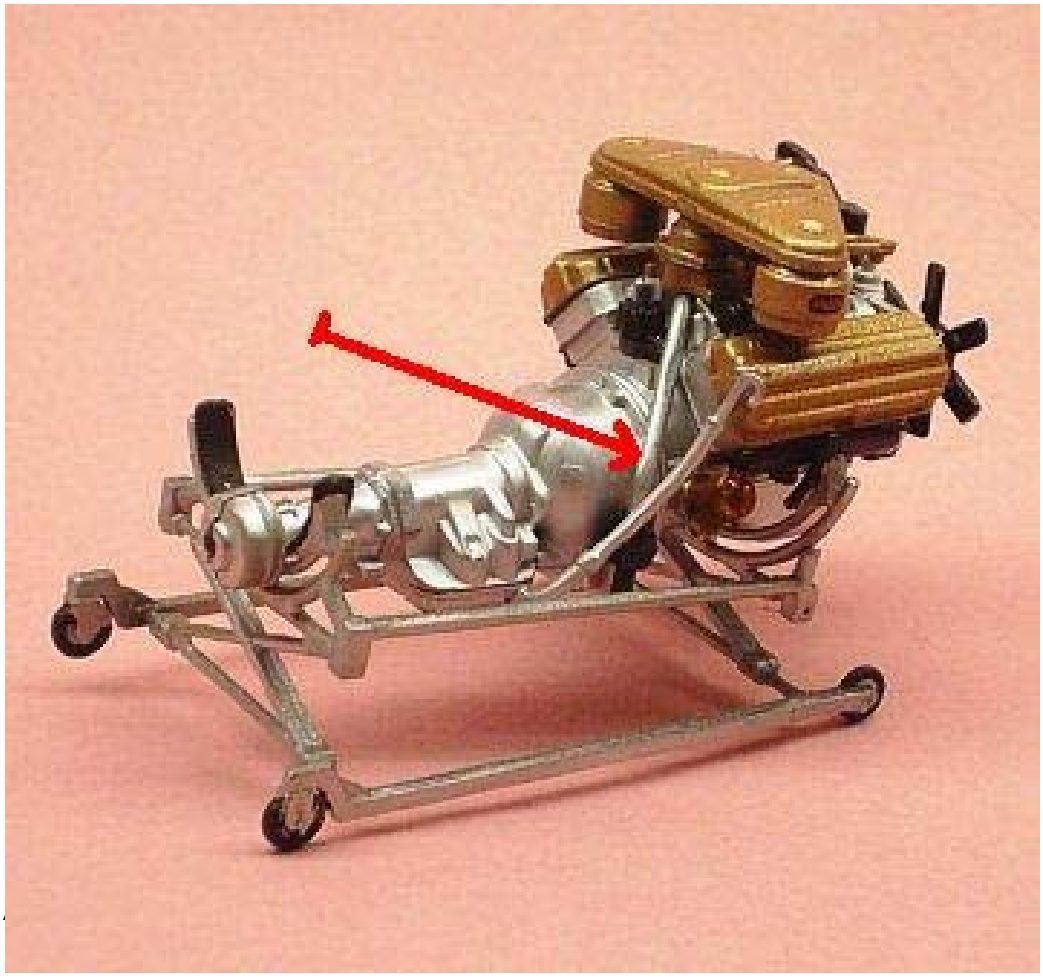
RoR Review 20120816* - 1955 Chrysler 300 Moebius 1:25 Scale kit #1201 Review

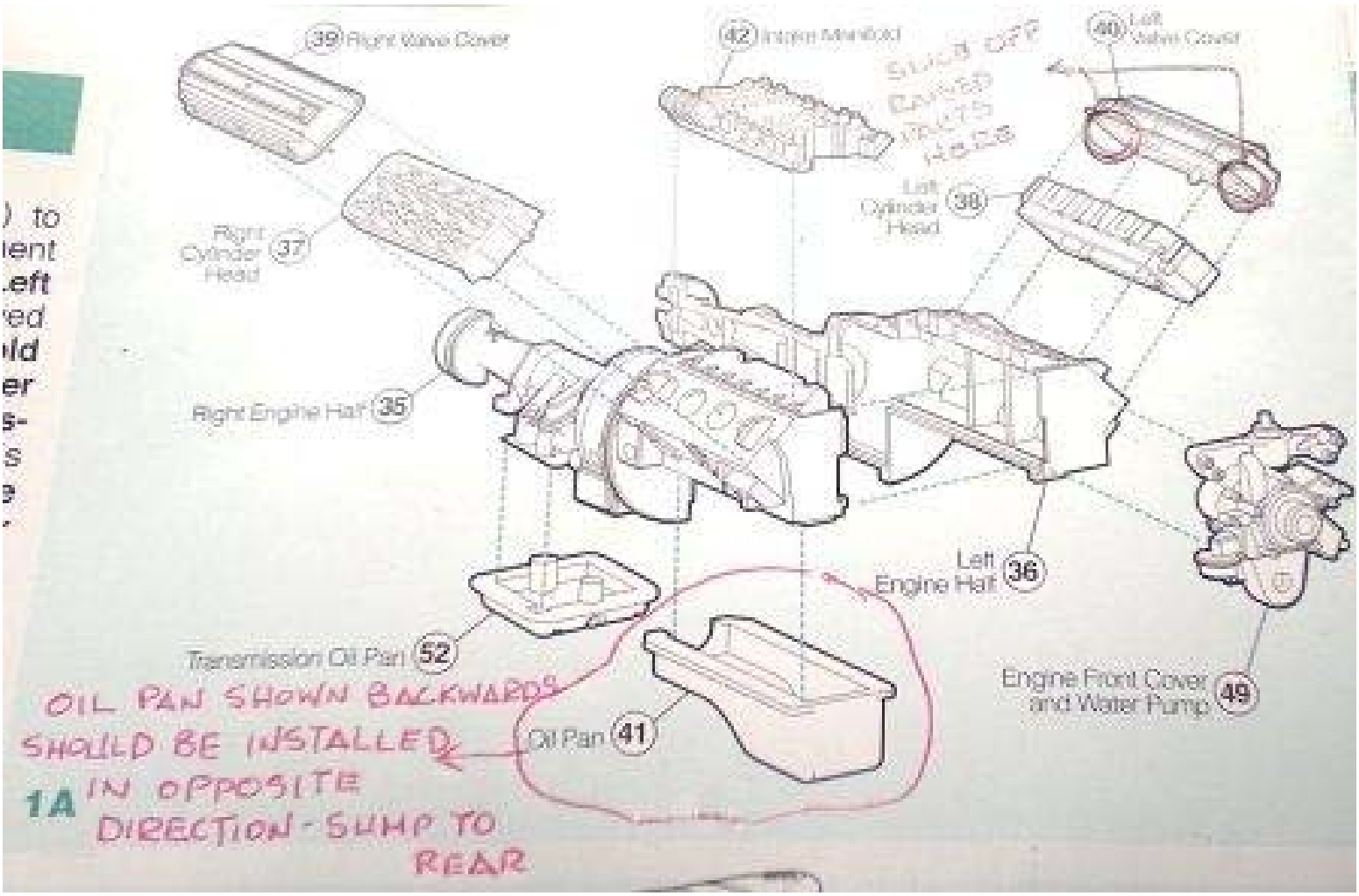
Moebius Models set out to "set the bar" for automotive model kit subjects and they succeeded when they debuted their wildly popular and enormously successful '53 Hudson Hornet kit in 2011. Not content with resting on their laurels they introduced yet another highly desirable automotive subject with the release of the 1955 Chrysler C-300 kit, hoping to continue their success and becoming the manufacturer that every modeler wishes to purchase kits from, due to the quality of design, engineering, and execution of their offerings. The '55 Chrysler C-300 would prove to be an "interesting" experience from this modeler's perspective.

(Fig. #0a) This is the box art of the kit.

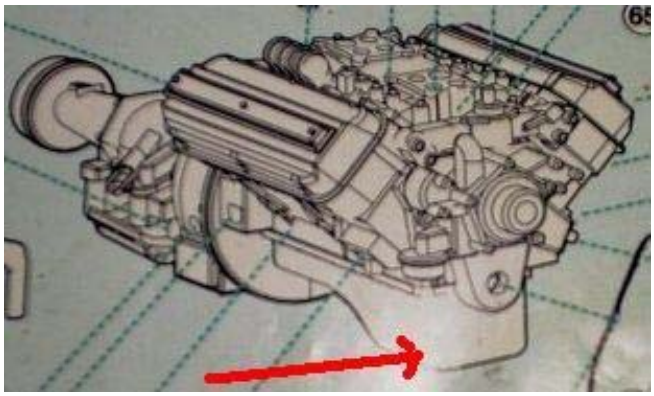
(Fig. #3) I started with the engine, which proved to be a model within itself. The basic components: block/tranny, oil pan, transmission pan, cylinder heads, front cover, and intake manifold should be assembled and painted aluminum. I did so and painted them Testor's Aluminum Plate buffing metalizer.

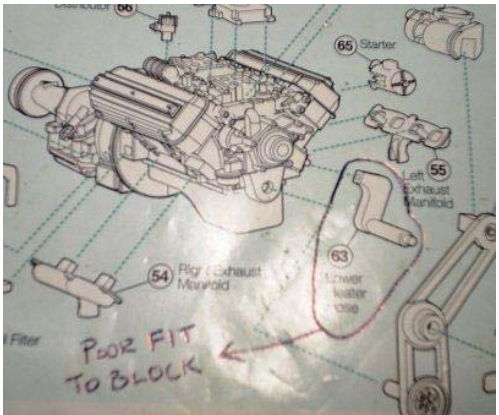
(Fig. #4) I also painted the transmission dipstick (which was a nice touch!) the same color. Unfortunately the dipstick practically disappears upon final assembly of the car. I then painted the valve covers and three-piece air cleaner assembly Dupli-Color Ford Sunburst Gold to replicate the Chrysler gold color used on them. All other components were painted according to the instructions. The decals for the air canisters, generator, power steering pump reservoir, and oil filler applied with no problems and look quite good.





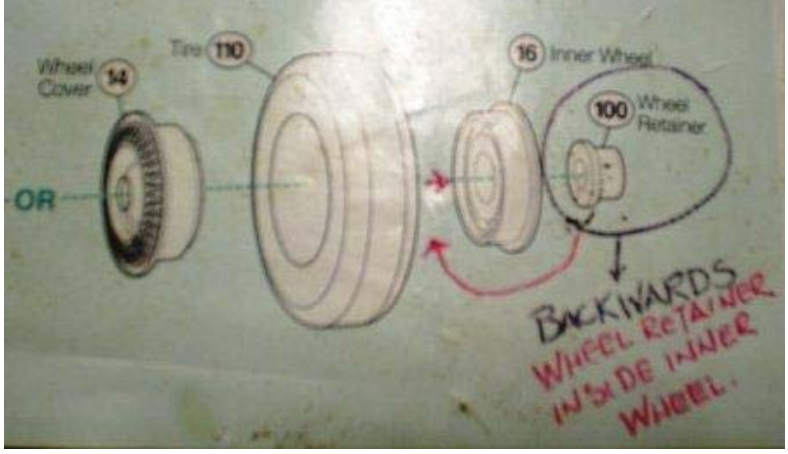
(Fig. #20, 21a) However, there were a few discrepancies I discovered while assembling the engine, one of which I did not notice until it was too late. The oil pan is shown in the instruction sheet with the oil sump facing forward. This is incorrect, and in fact, the sump should face toward the rear of the engine. Thankfully even though I installed it incorrectly, it did not interfere with neither placement on the chassis nor eventual front suspension parts. In fact, the instruction sheet art photo of the completed engine shows the oil sump facing toward the rear of the engine.



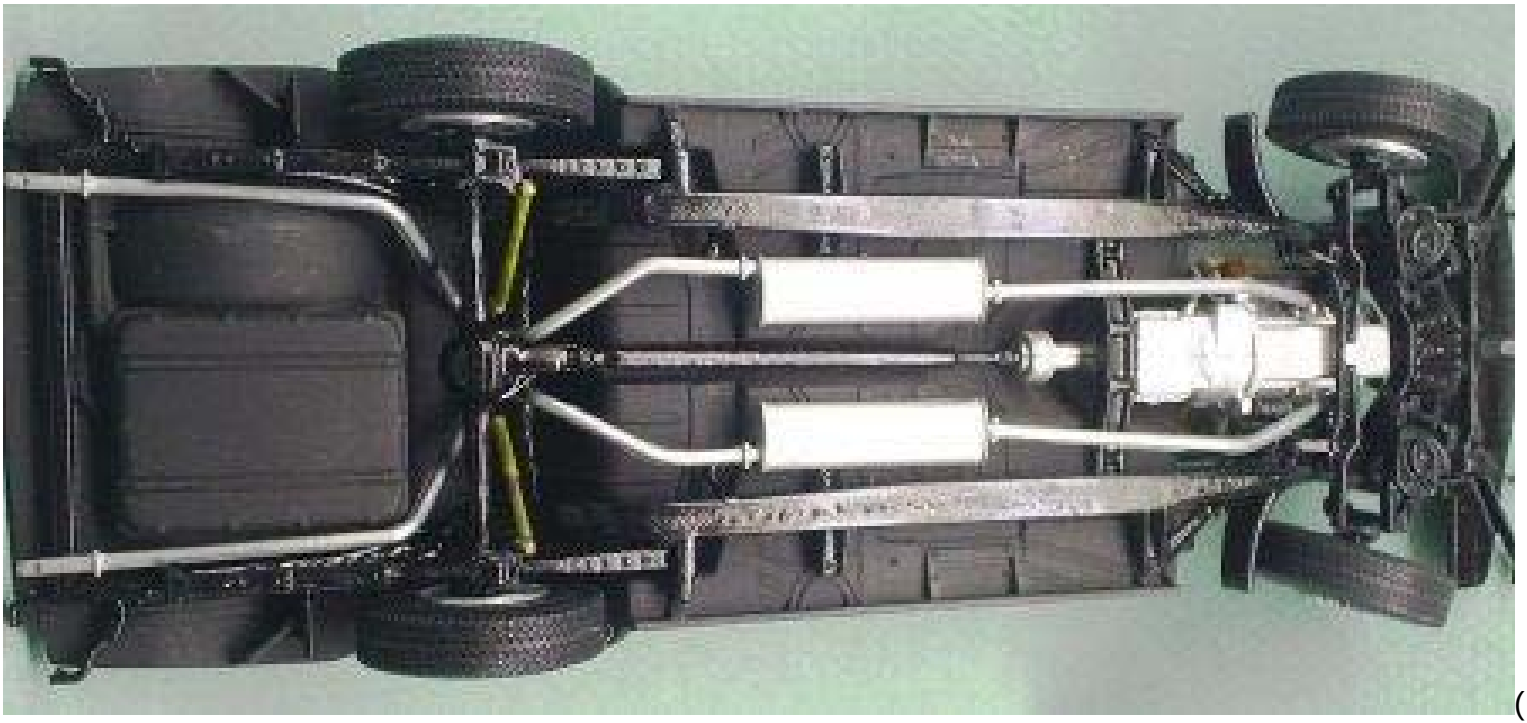


(Fig. #21b)The second issue was with the valve covers. Besides the pegs in the middle of the valve covers which locate to holes in the cylinder heads for proper alignment, there are also raised tabs on either end of each valve cover. These tabs prevent the covers from fitting flush on the cylinder heads, and should be shaved off. Once this is done, the valve covers fit flush on the heads. The lower radiator hose gave me fits as it had poor contact points to the block and kept breaking

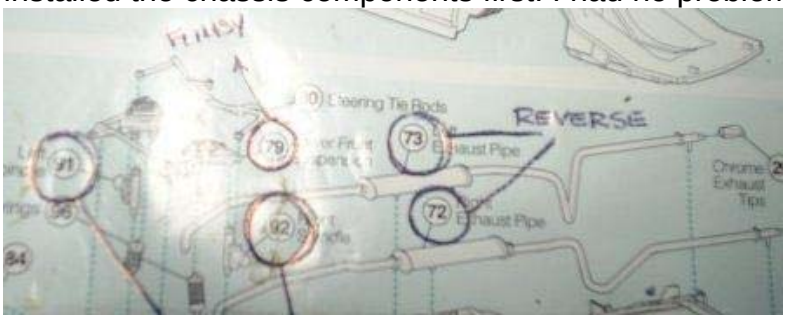
loose while I installed other engine components. I finally discarded it altogether since it would not be noticeable on the completed model anyway.



(Fig. #22) I then detail painted and assembled the wheels using the full hubcaps as opposed to the wire wheels which were also included in the kit. The instruction sheet shows the inner wheel inserted into the tire and the wheel retainer installed outside of the inner wheel, which makes no sense at all. In fact, the retainer should be placed "skinny side" out between the tire and inner wheel. Most modelers with experience would be able to figure this out based on previous experience, but it's difficult to believe this typo escaped the eyes of the proofreaders.

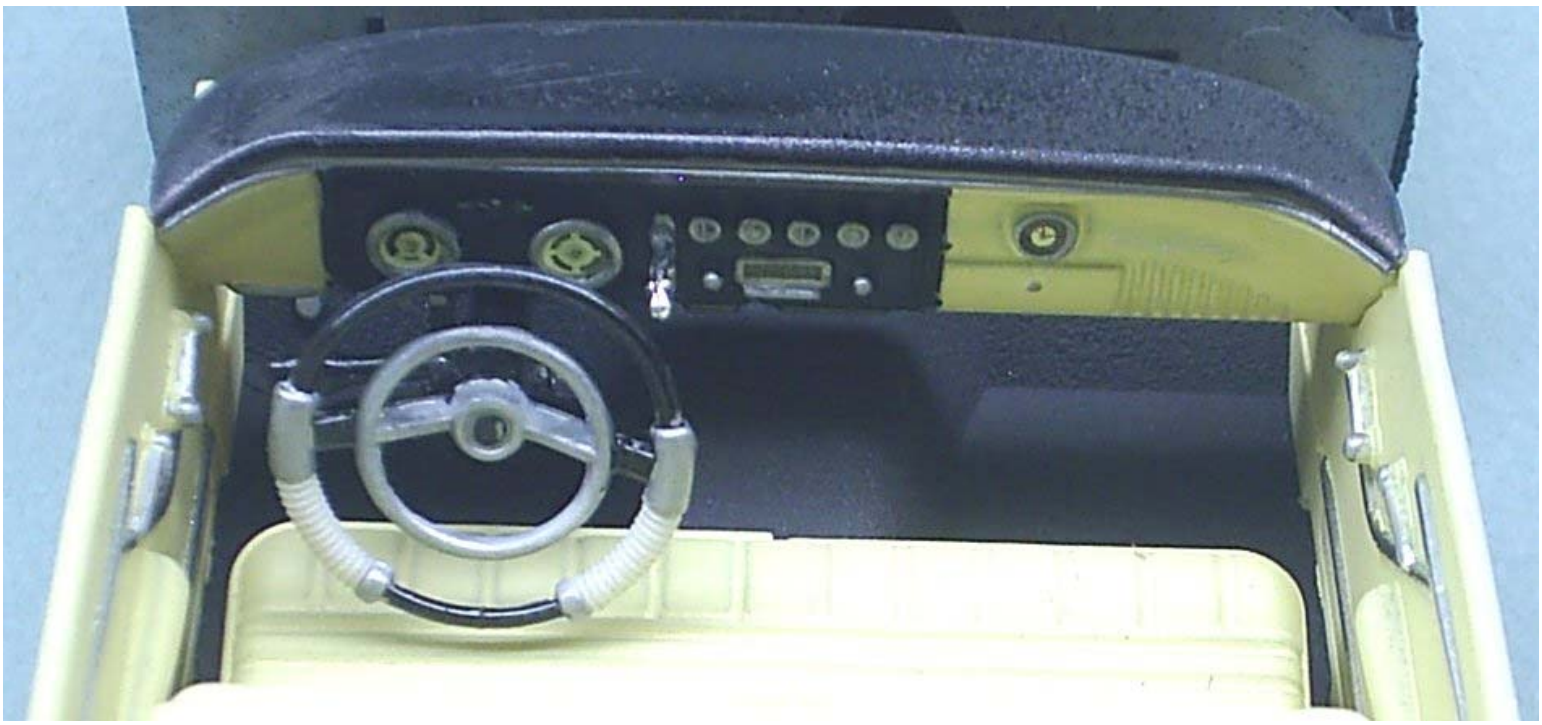


(Fig. #9, 23) Although the instruction call for assembling the interior before the chassis, I deviated and installed the chassis components first. I had no problems installing the front suspension except for the tie rod,



which was quite flimsy and great care must be taken when removing it from the tree. The spindles, even though they are "keyed" to fit in a certain position, allowed enough play for me to be able to pose the front wheels at an angle without interrupting the fit of the tie rod. The exhaust pipes installed without issue, although the part numbers shown on the instruction sheet are incorrect: part #72 is the left exhaust pipe, and #73 is the right. Test-fitting parts before committing them to glue is ALWAYS important in making sure parts fit correctly the first time. I am a firm believer in this.

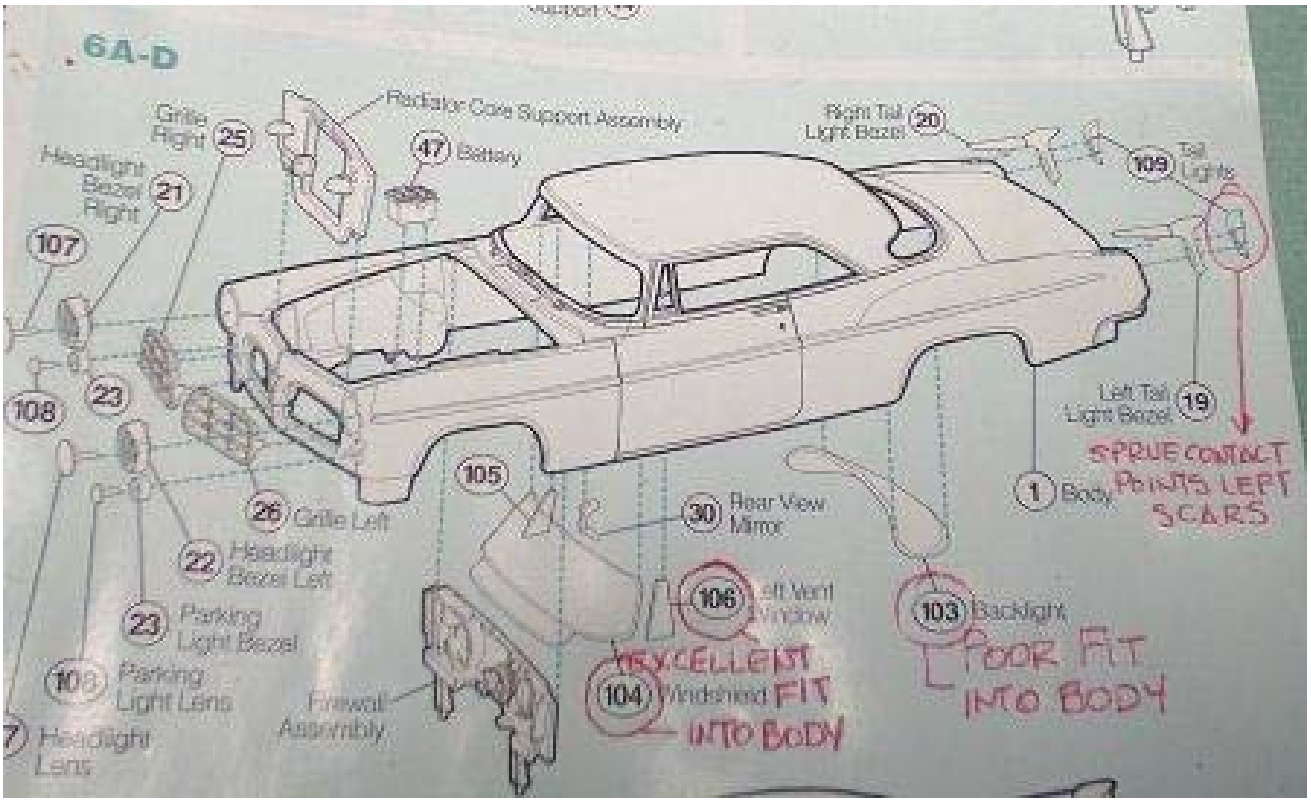
The rear suspension, which consists of a 2-part rear axle, driveshaft, leaf springs, shock mounts, and shocks assembled and installed seamlessly.



(Fig. #6a) I painted, detailed, and installed the interior, which consists of a two-piece bench front seat, separate rear seat, two side door panels, dashboard with molded in brake pedal, separate gas pedal, dash-mounted shifter which is chrome-plated, steering wheel and steering column with turn signal stalk molded in. I found the turn signal stalk to be way too thick scale-wise. There was also no positive contact point for the end of the steering column into the floorboard. Excellent decals are found for the speedometer, fuel/temp gauge, radio face, clock, and Chrysler logo on the dashboard.

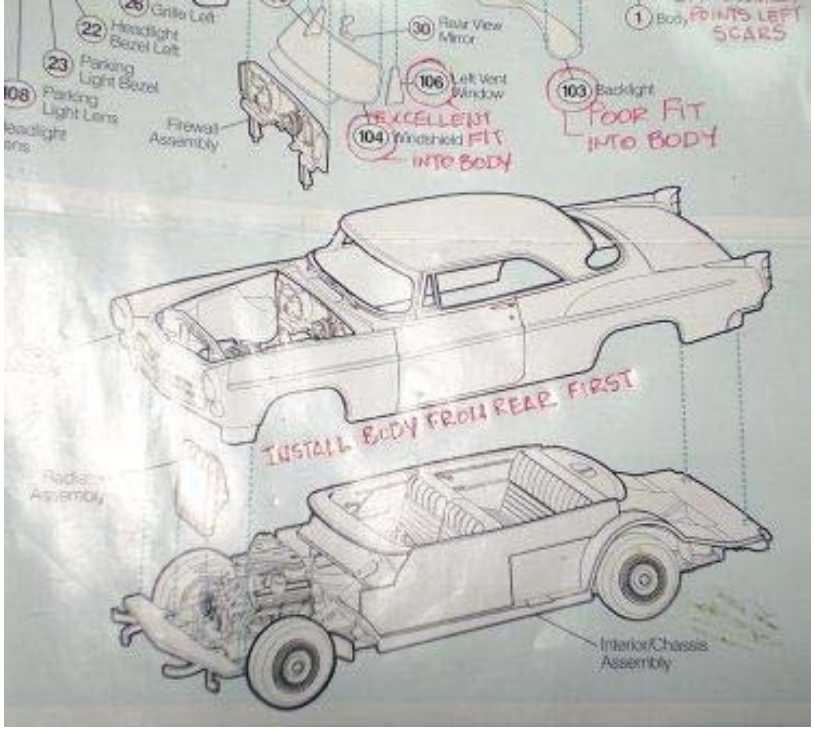
(Fig. #7) I then assembled the radiator and shroud together, painted the right and left horns and attached them to the radiator wall. I then painted, assembled, and installed the two-piece master brake cylinder/booster onto the firewall.

(Fig. #8) After painting, clear-coating, and wet-sanding the body, I applied Bare-Metal foil around the windshield, backlight, side body spears, and front and rear emblems. I was quite dismayed by the fact that all the trim parts to be foiled were not as crisp as I would have expected...even after paint and clear coat. I didn't have that issue with the Hudson Hornet whatsoever.



(Fig. #24) I then installed the windshield and vent windows, as well as the rear view mirror, which fit perfectly. However, the backlight glass did not conform well to the contours of the roof, and kept trying to pop out when glue was applied. I ended up holding the backlight in place with my fingers until the glue set. Luckily I applied a coat of automotive wax to the clear windows beforehand so no lingering fingerprints would be visible, and took a final swipe of wax to them once they were in place. I then installed the firewall and radiator wall to the body. The radiator itself installs to the chassis.

(Fig. #25) The body should be installed onto the chassis from the rear forward, and gently massaged into place, since it's a tight fit. The body in my example actually fit so well onto the chassis I did not need glue to cement it into place...it literally snapped in and held.



(Fig. #10) The battery, upper radiator hose, hood latch, and heater hose (a nice touch!) were installed without issue and the coolant warning decal was applied to the top of the radiator support wall. The finished engine bay actually looks quite nice, although the transmission dipstick all but disappears. It would have been nice if Moebius had included an oil dipstick which would have been more visible on the finished model.

The external body trim parts installed without any problems. However, I had issues with the rear chrome taillight bezels and the taillights themselves. The sprue contact points were in a conspicuous area on the bezels which would require touchup to conceal. The same issue applies to the red taillight lenses. It seems to me the sprue contact points on these parts could have been made where they joined the body and bezels respectively. The same issue applies to the headlight bezels and front turn signal bezels.

(Fig. #27 & 28) Also, the front and rear bumpers contain pre-opened holes for the license plate frames, making it mandatory for the modeler to either install the license plate frames or fill the holes in, which would inevitably cause the modeler to have to conceal the holes with putty/glue/Bare-Metal foil. Moebius could

have done what other manufacturers do...allow the option by engraving holes partially from the inside, but leaving the outside intact, and letting the modeler decide. I decided to use the "MY 300" plate decals on the chromed plate frames.

Final impressions: The finished model looks acceptable, and provides a realistic replica of the beautiful Ghia-designed '55 Chrysler C-300. After my most enjoyable experience building the Hudson Hornet, I eagerly awaited this desirable automotive subject, and was literally drooling at the prospect of building this kit, convinced it would be of the same quality as the Hornet. Unfortunately, excessive flash on many parts, numerous instruction sheet typos, poor fit on some parts, poor sprue contact point placement, and other issues discussed in this review make me think this kit was rushed into production without the usual Moebius quality control, simply to grab onto the heels of the success of the excellent Hudson Hornet kits while the fire was still hot. This is simply one modeler's opinion. There are a lot of good points to this kit, yet there are an equal number of not-so-good points. Therefore I can only give this kit 7 stars out of a possible 10. Not too shabby considering I gave it 3 stars simply for the fact it's a Moebius kit. I hope (and I know) Moebius can do better...the Hudson Hornet is pure proof of that.