

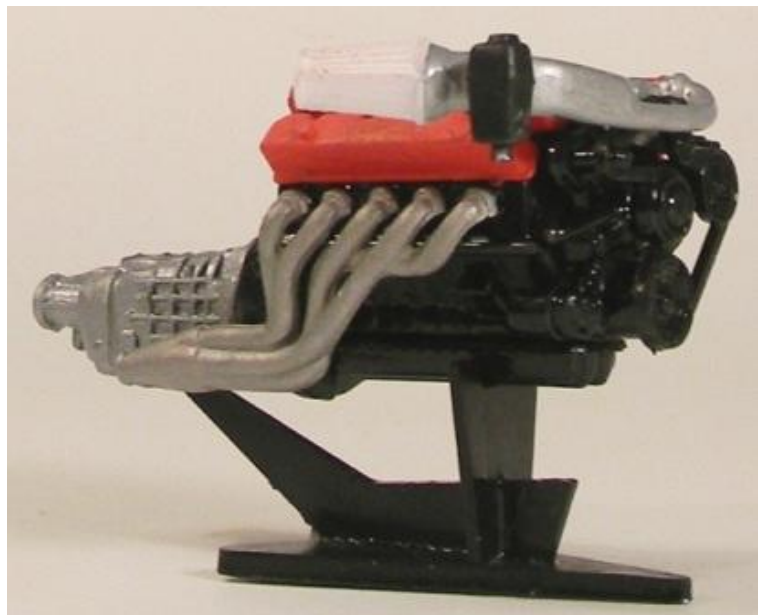


The premise behind this truck was simple; make a Viper powered Ram pickup. However they went a step further and tuned the truck's suspension like a sports car. Seriously - how many people wouldn't like to drive a 400 HP truck with a sports car suspension allowing it to hug the curves?

For the Modeler: Upon opening the kit you immediately realize a few things: one this kit builds only as the VTS, two at one hundred and sixteen pieces this kit is pretty detailed. Lastly some good news for all of us there is no flash to be found on this kit. This kit has been reissued a few times since it came out in 1996 [kit #85-7617]. Paint choices and details for the interior, exterior and engine/chassis; adhesive choices for windows and gauges; black foil applications; detailing with black washes; tire/wheel assembly procedures; brake caliper finishing options; simulating a separate cab; tonneau cover considerations; fascia decal preparation; creating realistic turn signal and driving lights; instruction errors; tire/wheel and ride height options; are all fully examined in this **7 page, full-color** Step-by-Step review.



[fig 0a] As is always my custom I started this build with the engine. This kit features a 10 piece replica of the famous 8.0 liter Viper V10 engine with 6 speed manual transmission that is quite well done.



[fig 3 & 4] I started by assembling the black halves [#25], oil pan [#27] and added the cylinder heads [#28] then painted it Duplicolor Gloss Black. The transmission is then painted Testor's Aluminum. The engine front [#31] and belt assembly [#32] are painted Duplicolor Gloss Black with Testor's Flat Black belts. The exhaust headers [#33"] are then painted Testor's Steel and installed.



[fig 5] Finally the intake manifold is painted Testor's Aluminum, Flat Red and Flat White [as shown in fig. 5].



[fig 6] The interior features a bench with Hurst shifter and consists of 13 pieces. Although it is the standard "bucket" type it is highly detailed and does include separate door panels. With some detail painting it looks very good. To achieve the correct satin gray appearance I painted the interior with Duplicolor gray primer and then cleared it with Krylon Crystal Clear. Then detail painted it with Testor's Black chrome trim. Finally after applying decal #10 I used Elmer's Glue All to attach the clear gauge panel [#110] over it.



[fig 7] The Viper styled rims [#51 front & #62 rear] are well done with Ram head center caps molded in and with some black wash [mixed 2 parts thinner/1 part flat black paint] they look very nice. Then mount them to the tires by gluing to the backings [#57 front & #64 rear are Duplicolor Gloss Black]. The tires in this issue are softer more realistic rubber. However they are lacking any raised lettering and no decals are provided, so white lettered tires are out unless you kit bash different tires or use aftermarket decals.



[fig. 8 chassis] The chassis on this kit assembles easily enough, but let's go through it anyway. The first thing I did was to put together the radiator assembly [#37']. Then I cemented the differential cover [#47] and driveshaft [#54] to the rear axle [#46]. Set both assemblies [painted Duplicolor Gloss Black] aside for now. Cement the upper A arms [#56 left #55 right both Duplicolor Gloss Black] to the Chassis [#40 Duplicolor Semi Gloss Black gas tank painted Testor's Aluminum] then add on the front suspension [#50 Duplicolor Gloss Black] and Rear leaf springs [Duplicolor Gloss Black #45 left & #44 right]. Now put in the completed engine and radiator assembly then add on radiator hose [#69 Duplicolor Gloss Black and Flat black on hose itself]. Add on the exhaust [Testor's Steel pipes, Aluminum mufflers/catalytic converter and Gloss Black brackets]. Next cement the rear axle assembly in place and add the shocks [#42 right & #43 left painted Gloss Black] and the sway bar [#48 Gloss Black]. Finally add the front disc brakes [#65 left & #66 right]. I painted the caliper Gloss black, they could be body color, Red for Brembo or Purple for Endless as other examples. Finally, just snap on [or glue for non rolling] the assembled wheels. I sanded the tread on the rear wheels to give it realism. What 400 HP truck wouldn't leave rubber someplace?

The body is free of mold lines and well done. This truck as far as I could see came only in Blue. I thought it would look nice in red, so I did mine Krylon Cherry Red with Krylon Crystal Clear. One thing I wasn't crazy about is that the cab and bed are molded as one piece. This created an incorrect look of a one piece body. To fix this a little I masked and black washed the recessed area [with a 5/0 brush] where the cab meets the bed. This will give the illusion of separate pieces. The tonneau cover [#10] on mine had a slight warp to it, but as I glued mine in place there was no issue. If it is warped [and you want it removable] Revell will replace it. Just see their website.

[fig 9] The decals for this kit are well done. However decal #1 [fig 9] only covers the outer part of the bumper, so the recesses must be painted Flat White [see arrow on fig 9] to look correct.





[fig 9a] Final assembly is very straight forward at this point, but let's go over a couple of things. One omission I see with the interior is that no rearview mirror was provided. First install the bed front [#61]. Then add in the windows [#100e] and dome light[#109] . I used Elmer's Glue All for this. I used Black Chrome Bare Metal Foil to go around the windows. This foil is different to work with [not harder just different] as it is coated with a semi gloss black. However if you work slowly and carefully there should be no problem. Don't forget to foil [or paint] the trim that is molded into the rear window before installing it. I also foiled the dome light [#109] then painted it flat white before installing it. Also the windshield calls for the edges to be "shaded" in black, but I omitted this as I have never gotten it to look correct with either paint or foil.



[fig 9b] Once the interior is installed. Glue inner [#8] and outer [#9] tailgate pieces together then install. Now carefully work the chassis into the body. Before installing the taillights I applied foil to the back of them for a more realistic look as there are no chrome bezels. Then add on the exhaust tips [#49 x2].

[fig10] Moving on to the front. The headlights are next. First of all the instructions incorrect about the turn signals. Let me explain. On the actual truck only the very edge of the signal lens is Amber and it has an Amber bulb. To replicate this you need to paint a 3mm [1/8"] section [on the inside] at the ends with Amber. Next add one dot of amber to the center of the outer lens buckets. [see fig 10] Now they can be installed [I used Elmer's Glue All]. Moving onto the front bumper we have work to do here. First off the driving lights are molded into the bumper, so some chrome has to be added. I used chrome foil on mine. After I cut a piece of foil [by using a new #2 pencil eraser as a guide] I worked it into the light [with the same eraser] until smooth. Using my Elmer's glue I attached first the lenses [#104 x2] then the covers [#105 right & #106 left].





[fig10a] At this point I painted all of the grille openings [two in bumper and four in the grille] Testor's Flat Black. Now cement the bumper in place. Next attach the hinges [#67 left & #68 right] and the grille to the hood. Assemble the left [#4] and right [#5] side mirrors then install. Finally add the license plate of your choice and the tonneau cover if desired.

Conclusion:

This kit builds very well despite the age of the tooling and the few problems listed above. It should be suitable for all builders. The fact that this kit is set up for larger tires and has a lowered suspension also opens up possibilities of adding larger diameter rims, a 5.7 Hemi and possibly some "Charger Bee decals" for a modern street truck build! All said I would give this kit 8 out of 10 stars. I will definitely build this kit again.

