

The LF Models "Schoenfeldt Firecracker" – Kit review

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LF Models kit No. 7238 "Rider R-4". 1/72 kit, comprising 15 resin parts, a vacform canopy and a piece of metal wire. Decals included. Produced by **LF Models, Gagarinova 10, 787 01 Šumperk, Czech Republic** (Internet: <http://www.lfmodels.cz>, E-mail: fofi@post.cz, Phone/fax: +420 649 221282)

This is another neat, very small kit from the Czech company. The main airframe consists of a one-piece fuselage with a separate nose cone, a one-piece wing and separate horizontal tail surfaces and rudder. The parts fit reasonably well. Everything is very small though, so the builder will have to be careful with the superglue. The interior comprises a seat, a stick and an instrument panel decal – the interior is so small that only a fanatic will want more. The landing gear is very well cast, almost to scale thickness, but looks very delicate and will have to be treated very carefully.



The parts are made of cream-coloured, pretty hard resin. They are well cast, with only a few bubbles, and do not need much cleaning-up. The surface detail is sharp and well-defined, with recessed lines and good fabric surfaces. Several of the parts are cast into big resin blocks – some of them can be scored and broken off, but especially the nose cone and the seat will more or less have to be sawn off. Most builders will probably replace the metal wire with stretched sprue for pitot tubes, landing gear retraction rods and tail skid. The canopy is

rather sturdy – such parts are of course always a compromise between accuracy and fragility.

The kit depicts the 1938 Greve Trophy winning version – in the next BT there will be a more complete Firecracker article that will sort out all the different versions. The kit faithfully follows Robert Hirsch's drawings of the plane. This is the main problem with it – it's a great pity that it wasn't based on the more accurate drawings by William Kerka or Arthur Hall.

The wing should have a much more pronounced dihedral. The landing gear doors are different in the side view and the plan view of Hirsch's drawings, and the kit unfortunately doesn't depict the more accurate side view. The doors are too wide in chord and have a kink in the leading edge that wasn't there, and the wheel wells do not meet at the centreline. The carburettor intake below the fuselage is missing. These things are relatively minor, and apart from the wheel wells they are easy to correct.

The decals are simplified – the shadow-shaded colours are only two instead of four – but this is not immediately noticeable. They are in fact much better than the considerable bigger Williams Brothers decals. They are well printed and look thin. The colour is perhaps rather pink than orange, but I have never seen a colour photo, so... However, I suspect that there is an awful error: The decals for the fin and the top of the wing have the registration NX261Y, whereas the decal for the bottom of the wing has the registration R261Y. I have no photographic evidence, but this must be wrong. In 1937 it carried the "R" registration, but already at the Oakland races in the spring of 1938 it carried the "NX" registration. Furthermore, the markings were modified considerably between that race and the NAR. The race number for the bottom wing is also missing, so unless you want to glue the model to its base plate the only easy solution is to get a second decal sheet.

Conclusion

This is a sharp and well-produced little kit, which should not be too difficult to build. A pity about the Hirsch drawings, though...

A big thanks to LF Models for the review kit!