

High Planes 1/48 "Nemesis" – Kit review

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High Planes Kit No. Race 4802 "Nemesis". 1/48 injection moulded kit, containing 19 styrene parts, a vacform canopy, decals and a two-page instruction sheet.

The plane

Jon Sharp (incorrectly spelt on the box lid) began building #3 "Nemesis" in 1989 with engineers Dan Bond, Steve Ericson and Cory Bird. It was completely built of composite materials with a revolutionary thick, blunt, laminar flow profile wing. The plane made its debut at the Reno races in 1991 and managed to win its debut race. This was the beginning of a winning streak of 44 races, including nine Reno championships. Nemesis holds all Formula 1 race and qualification records, the highest speed over a qualification lap being 263mph. After winning the 1999 Reno races, Nemesis was retired and will be put on display at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum.



The kit

On opening the box you are immediately struck by how small the aircraft is. The kit is actually smaller than High Planes 1/72 scale unlimited racers and this remember is a 1/48 scale kit.

The whole model is on one sprue of the now familiar light blue plastic with a separately bagged vacform canopy and small decal sheet. No white metal at all in this one.

The instruction sheet comes on one sheet of A4 paper and includes a short history of the aircraft, an exploded diagram of parts and a three view drawing of the plane in 1/72 scale that shows decal placement information.

A very welcome part of the instruction sheet is the very comprehensive colour description that is included. The cockpit interior is fully covered and there is also a small detailed drawing included to help you detail and colour this area.

As with all this manufacturers limited run kits, the first and most important job is the removal of the parts from the sprue and careful preparation. I have to say now, this model went together very easily and the only filler

required was a small amount on the wing to fuselage joints.

Starting as usual with the cockpit, all that is supplied is the instrument panel, rear bulkhead, floor and a oblong piece of plastic with rounded off corners that I assume represents the bulkhead tank that sits in front of the instruments. Unlike some of this company's interiors, these parts fitted into the fuselage with hardly any adjustments or thinning of fuselage sides required. I did find however that the rear bulkhead is shown in the instructions the wrong way up. A small amount of trimming is required to correct this.

The real Nemesis does not have a pilots seat. He just sits on the floor with his back to the rear bulkhead so the only detail required is the harnesses. These can be fashioned from your chosen method or you can use the decals that are supplied.

Decals are also supplied for the instrument panel detail and the red experimental text on the port side panel. There is also a blue "experimental" decal supplied but I'm afraid I haven't a clue where that is supposed to go.

Other extra detail that will have to be supplied is the side stick that fits on the starboard side, rudder cables that run along each side

of the floor and a former that attaches just behind the instrument panel. You will find the diagram included on the instructions very useful reference. All this extra detail however will be hidden if you chose to fit the canopy as it is tinted almost black preventing anything of the interior detail being seen.

Once the interior is to your liking, the fuselage halves can be joined and although there are no guide pips they go together very well requiring only a gentle sanding to get an acceptable join. Horizontal stabilisers were next, the rear fuselage sides having slight depressions where the parts are supposed to fit. I found the joint unsatisfactory and so with the help of a pin vice, drilled out the depressions to enable the stabilisers to obtain a more flush fit.

While you have your drill bits out, the air intake below the front of the fuselage requires opening out and there are three more small intakes situated just behind the spinner to be taken care of. The two each side of the bulged front cowling are quite obvious but there is a third just below the spinner slightly offset to starboard that, on my copy, was not represented. The front elevation drawing

on the instructions clearly shows it's location. Finally drill out the two depressions each side of the fuselage, just below the cockpit opening. These are the fixing points for the wings.

The wings themselves are in four parts, two upper and two lower and all that is required after cleaning up is a slight sanding down of the trailing edges before fitting together and attaching to the fuselage. This was the worst fitting part of the kit but could probably be improved if you were to spend a bit more time than I did cleaning up the mating edges. A touch of filler however along the wing roots and a careful sanding gave a good result.

Now came the fiddliest part, the attachment of the undercarriage. The main wheels come moulded to the wheel spats, each moulded in two halves. These are attached to the fuselage by two oblong pieces of plastic that represent the undercarriage struts. The only attachment points are two slight recesses on the bottom of the fuselage and two on the side of the spats themselves. The way I did it was to glue the struts to the undercarriage with liquid glue, making sure they were at the proper angle using the front elevation drawing in the instructions. Leave them to dry before fitting the wheels and spats. When everything was set and in the correct position, I then ran superglue along all the joints to strengthen them up a bit. The other way you could do it to get a stronger join would be to get the drill out again and drill out the recesses, cut out two more struts from plastic card, making them slightly longer than the originals and the insert each end into the resulting slots. Either way the undercarriage is robust enough to handle the weight.

Painting of Nemesis is straight forward enough. The whole plane is Pearl White. On the original plane, polyurethane car paint for Mercedes Benz and Lexus cars was used so there's no reason not to do the same on the model. I, however, only used a car spray for a white primer coat. I then airbrushed, on a couple of fine coats of Liquitex acrylic white, artist colour paint, that I picked up in a local art shop. It was at this point I realised it would have been much simpler to have left the

wheel spats off until after painting as it was quite fiddly to apply paint to the inboard sides of them while they are in place. Once the paint has dried, a coat of varnish can be applied and then you're ready for the decals. These come on a small sheet, produced by Fantasy printshop, which is crammed with colourful markings that represent Nemesis in her 1992 season.

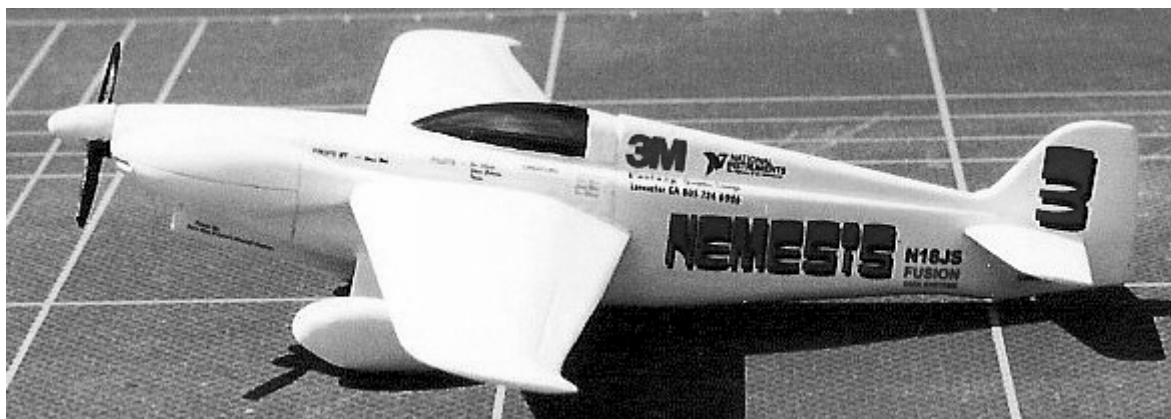
The markings changed considerably during the years and if you look at the Nemesis website (<http://www.nemesisxt.com/images/photos/>) for reference you will find the markings of later versions are quite different. Decals went on without a hitch and are very clear, each piece of text is readable and all of them were in register. Once applied the little airplane comes alive. A second coat of varnish was applied and all that is left is the addition of the final small details.

I painted the wheels and cockpit decking, Tamiya XF-63, tank grey and the tail wheel, dark red. I then attached the propeller and painted the blades and blade roots, Tamiya X-18, semi gloss black.

The vacform canopy was cut out using a pair of nail scissors and requires a small extra amount to be removed from it's bottom edge as it sits slightly to high. It has to be tinted almost black so I applied four thin coats of Tamiya X-19, smoke. Try not to apply it all at once or it will run like mad. Once dry, the white cockpit framing is applied and the canopy is attached using Kristal Klear. If you wish to show cockpit detail, you will have to remove the canopy all together as the canopy on the real plane does not hinge but is completely detachable.

Conclusion

If you've tried High Planes models before and have found them hard work, give this one a try. It is an uncomplicated model that goes together without much fuss at all and results in a smashing replica of quite an unusual subject. You could fit quite a collection of these aircraft on one shelf and I for one look forward to their next formula one release.



A big thanks to High Planes for the review kit!

The kit is produced by **High Planes Models** (<http://www.corryongcec.net.au/~hiplanes/>), 127 Wheeler Street, Corryong, VIC 3707, Australia, phone: +61 260 761961, fax +61 260 761843, e-mail: hiplanes@corryongcec.net.au