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**XRAY'S
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JUNE 2006 ISSUE 30

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DRIVEN REVIEW

Text by Steve Trebing

Photos by Walter Sidas

FAST FACTS

MANUFACTURER: XRay

VEHICLE: NT18

CLASS: 1/18-scale nitro touring car

DRIVER: Anyone

PRICE: \$329.99

SPEED (AS TESTED): 35.16mph



XRAY

NT18

Finally, the moment we have all been waiting for. XRAY did what all of us micro nerds have been hoping would happen for a long, long time. Introducing the NT18, the first production, nitro-powered micro car ever to hit the streets. XRAY took the very best it had from its electric M18 and redesigned it with a state-of-the-art nitro power plant and drivetrain to match. This little guy really seems to have all of the ingredients to be a winner. Let's go see if it can live up to all of the hype.

Oh yes, they did!

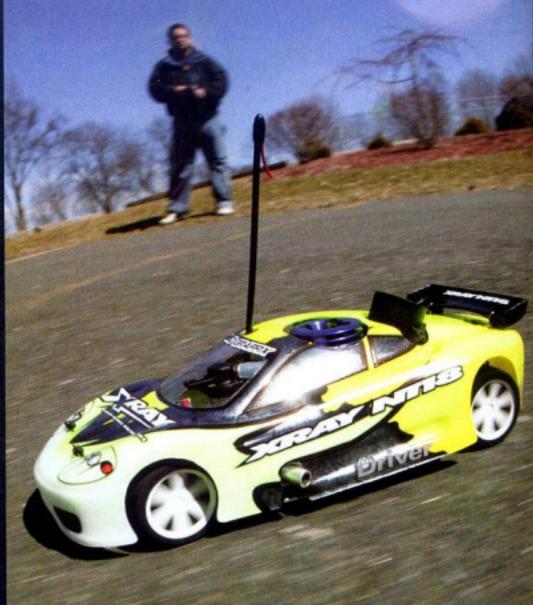


INFO CENTER

CHASSIS—The foundation for the NT18 is an aluminum chassis that extends the whole length of the car. Specially-cut flex channels are made in the front of the chassis to allow the car to flex under hard acceleration and cornering. Helping keep the engine nice and low are fully countersunk engine mount holes. Two grooves are cut into the chassis to accommodate the removable radio tray and guarantee a perfect fit every time. Up top, a brace is used from the front differential to the center of the chassis. This helps reduce the flex and makes the chassis a little more rigid.

STEERING—Steering duties are handled by a simple, two-link system. One adjustable tie rod connects the two front wheels together and can be tuned to adjust toe. A second tie rod connects the left front wheel to the included servo saver. The kit we are testing includes electronics, so an XMS-01MG steering servo takes care of turning the wheels. Plastic servo mounts secure the servo to the chassis.

SUSPENSION—Like its electric twin, the NT18 uses independent suspension. Each corner has upper and lower A-arms, with adjustable grub screws to set droop. Four friction shocks soak up the bumps. Each shock has two mounting positions to help tune the setup. Small spacers can be added to each shock to set the initial ride height, both front and rear. **DRIVETRAIN**—The entire drivetrain on the NT18 is fully supported by ball bearings. A center aluminum driveshaft is used to get the power to the front and rear differentials. Sitting inline with the driveshaft is a single-disk aluminum brake rotor. Two fiber brake pads are used to squeeze the brake rotor and stop the NT18 in a hurry. XRAY includes gear differentials to send the power out to the wheels. Four plastic bevel gears are used in each differential to ensure smooth operation. Plastic drive shafts are found at each corner and attach to a unique wheel hub, exactly as in the electric version. **ENGINE AND EXHAUST**—The heart and soul of the NT18 is the 0.8cc nitro engine. This engine is specially engineered for the NT18 and includes features normally found on purebred racing engines of larger-scale cars. Topping off the engine is a cool blue aluminum heat sink head to allow everything to run as cool as possible. Getting air into the engine is a two-needle slide carburetor. The carb has high speed, low speed and idle adjustments, so you can really dial it in. A small aluminum exhaust header flows from the engine into a tuned exhaust pipe designed just for the NT18. The header and pipe are tuned to get the NT18 singing quickly and help it produce maximum rpm for super-high-speed runs. A two-shoe aluminum racing clutch and a 23T clutch bell pinion are included with the kit. **WHEELS, TIRES AND BODY**—XRAY includes pre-mounted foam tires on white, six-spoke wheels. Foam tires help stabilize the car at high speeds and give it as much grip as possible. Topping off the NT18 is the standard F-360 body. The body is very aerodynamic and helps the car stick to the road during the run. In order to accommodate the nitro engine, you will need to trim quite a bit of material from the body to allow everything to fit. **INCLUDED ACCESSORIES**—The accessories you'll get will depend on which kit you pick up. The one we tested includes all of the electronics to get the car ready for the road. Two metal gear servos along with a four-cell micro receiver pack are included with our test kit. A simple version, which includes only the car, engine and pipe, is also available.



WHAT WE LIKED

- It's crazy fast.
- Love the included foam tires; they're absolutely needed.
- Engine package is awesome.
- Good quality metal gear servos included.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Ferrari body doesn't really fit and needs quite a bit of trimming.
- Ball diffs would be a little more durable, especially for the speed.
- Torque steer is a problem, but is easily overlooked by the speed of the car.

TECH SPECS

SCALE: 1/18

DRIVE: 4WD

LENGTH: 9.49 in. (241mm)

WIDTH: 4.21 in. (107mm)

WEIGHT: 18.7oz. (530g)

WHEELBASE: 5.91 in. (150mm)

RIDE HEIGHT: .12 in. (3mm)

TIRES: Pre-mounted foam on white spoke wheels

ACCELERATION: 0-10mph: 0.38 sec., 0-20: 0.8 sec., 0-30: 1.63 sec.; 3.36 sec. @ 35.16mph in 129.39ft.

HELPFUL HINTS

GOT TO GET: Radio gear, fuel, starter box, glow lighter, paint

COMPETITORS INCLUDE: No other vehicles in class as of this writing.

RECOMMENDED UPGRADES: Hudy Micro Start Box (104300), Adjustable Ball Differential (385001), Front One-Way Differential (385101), Aluminum Drive Shaft (385201)

RADAR DATA



PERFORMANCE

SURFACE - ASPHALT

From the first squeeze of the trigger, you are absolutely blown away at the sheer power that the NT18 has available. The 0.8cc engine is a powerhouse and is capable of launching the car faster than you can blink. It took a few minutes to really get the carburetor dialed in, but once it was hooked up, there was no stopping this thing. The foam tires that XRAY includes are an absolute must and allow the car to launch better than any other car I have ever seen. The 1/8, the 1/10 and even the 1/12—nothing comes close to having the speed and precision of the NT18 as it leaves the gate.

I set up a series of cones in a small version of a basic road course. The balance of the NT18 is really nice, and I was able to push the car hard into the corners carrying a fair amount of speed most of the time. The foam tires really made the biggest difference. Just to see, I decided to put on a set of standard micro rubber tires. Not a good idea; the people at XRAY knew what they were doing when they included a set of nice, soft foams with the car. Side to side, the NT18 seemed to stay planted and go where I pointed it. The only time the car got out of control was when I drove a little wild and made it lose control. Under normal driving conditions the car was stable and drove great. The car handles as if it were on rails, and the sound of the little 0.8 is unmistakable!

ON AND OFF POWER STEERING

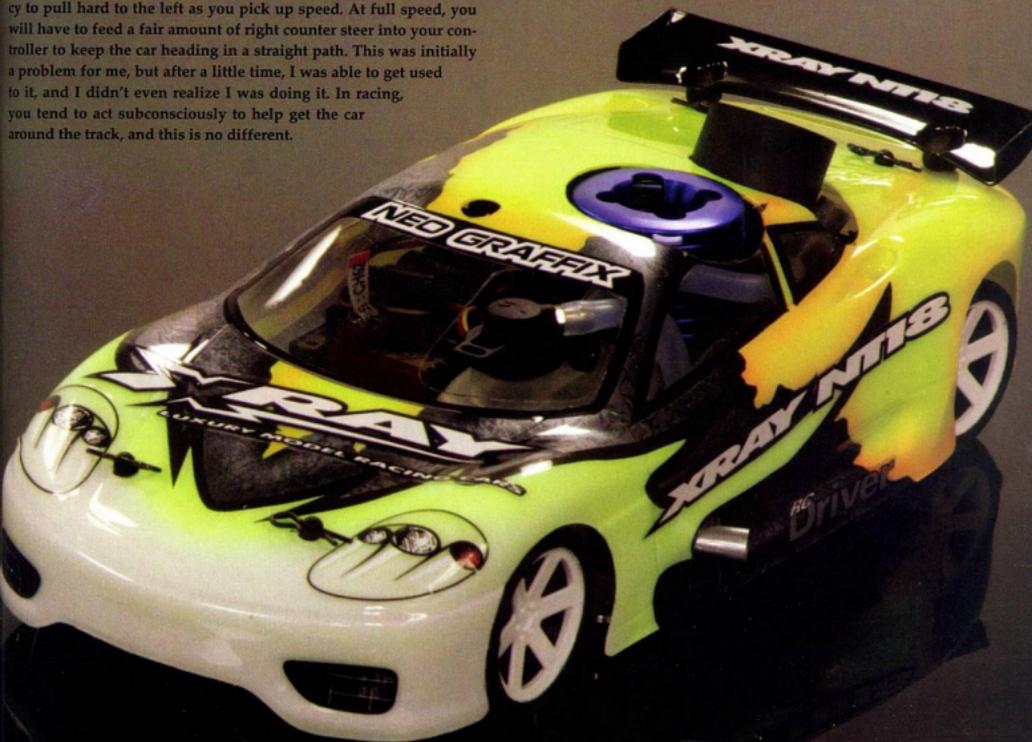
Holy torque steer, Batman! On power, the NT18 has a bad tendency to pull hard to the left as you pick up speed. At full speed, you will have to feed a fair amount of right counter steer into your controller to keep the car heading in a straight path. This was initially a problem for me, but after a little time, I was able to get used to it, and I didn't even realize I was doing it. In racing, you tend to act subconsciously to help get the car around the track, and this is no different.

Driving the NT18 around the track I set up, I was able to push it hard through almost every corner. The car wants to push if you are hard on the power while entering the corner. I found that letting off of the throttle just long enough to set up for the corner gave the car just enough bite to start my turn in. After it was fully committed, I was able to roll back into the throttle and motor my way through the rest of the corner. Off power, the car will turn on a dime, almost too easily. Getting back on power will cure any over steer you may have.

ACCELERATION AND BRAKING

As I mentioned before, acceleration on the NT18 is unbelievable. The little 0.8 engine produces so much power that it's hard to believe you are driving a 1/18-scale car. Top speeds are equally as impressive. Braking tends to be a little grabby at times, and I think it will improve as the brake pads wear in and I do a little more fine tuning.

From a dead stop in the parking lot where I set the track up, the NT18 came to life from the moment I pulled the trigger. The car rocketed away and in a split second was already entering the first turn. I tended to stay off of the brakes because of their grabby nature. The car handles so well I really didn't need much brake to get around the track smoothly. Acceleration out of the corners was absolutely unreal, and the car was so stable that it almost drove itself straight.



XRAY NT18



Two independent friction shocks are used in the rear of the NT18 to soak up the bumps. The shocks can be moved to one of two mounting positions to adjust the ride.



Pre-mounted foam tires are included with the NT18. These are a nice touch and really give the car tons of traction.



A small, hand-ground steel brake disk is used to stop the car. Two ferodo brake pads gently squeeze the disk to slow the car.



A polished, tuned aluminum exhaust pipe makes its way onto the NT18. The pipe is tuned perfectly for the small engine and really makes it sound great.



The front and rear of the NT18 are identical with the exception of a bumper in the front. Adjustable shocks are found here, as in the rear.



This little 30cc fuel tank will hold enough fuel to keep you running about ten minutes. Bring it in and fill it up for even more fun.



Both front and rear differentials are fully supported by ball bearings. Each diff uses four plastic gears and is very capable of handling the power of the nitro engine.



The superstar of the kit is the 0.8cc nitro engine. This little monster features a slide carburetor, two-needle adjustment, and an aluminum clutch. Love the blue heat sink engine head!



The front of the chassis houses the differential and all of the suspension components. Notice the upper and lower A-arm configuration and chassis brace connected up to the differential case.



AUTHOR'S OPINIONS AND RATINGS

Rating: 1 to 10
(Poor to Excellent)
Rating Category: Entry level

■ **CHASSIS**—The thick aluminum chassis is perfect for what this car is intended to do. It has just the right amount of flex to make it easy to drive and should be fairly competitive at the track as well.

RATING - 10

■ **SUSPENSION**—XRAY was one of the first to offer four-wheel independent suspension on a micro car, and I am glad to see that design used on the NT18. The friction shocks work well on the car, and the ability to adjust droop is worth its weight in gold for the racer.

RATING - 9

■ **DRIVETRAIN**—The drivetrain is just about right for the NT18. I would really like to see ball differentials and aluminum driveshafts included with such a high-end kit. I think that would make it perfect.

RATING - 8

■ **ENGINE AND EXHAUST**—The 0.8cc engine on the NT18 is unbelievable! It sounds like a race-tuned .12 1/10-scale engine. It's fast and responsive, and it runs great. The exhaust is tuned just right for this little car and makes it sound mean and nasty.

RATING - 10

■ **STEERING**—Steering such a small car at such high speed should be difficult, but it's surprisingly easy on the NT18. The only quirk is the need to apply increasingly more right input as the car goes faster, because of the rotational speed of the engine and drivetrain. The steering setup on the car is right on.

RATING - 10

■ **DURABILITY**—Nothing broke on the NT18 during my test, and man did I test it! I ran two quarts through it before I was done, and not a single item broke. I am starting to loose one of my rear tires, but that is to be expected.

RATING - 10

■ **EASE OF USE**—This isn't the easiest car to get going. Without a pull start or rotary starter, you will have to use a starter box. In today's world of RTBs, most people have never used a starter box and could find this task a little daunting. Luckily, XRAY offers a special micro starter box to make getting the NT18 on the road a snap.

RATING - 8

ITEMS USED



Hitex CRX transmitter



Hitex HFS-03MM receiver



White Lightning 20 percent fuel

CONCLUSION

We all knew it was inevitable, and XRAY definitely hasn't disappointed! The NT18 is an unbelievable machine worthy of some serious praise. From its innovative chassis and engine combination to the ability to use so many of the hop-up parts already available for its electric twin, the NT18 is one hot ride. I can't wait to throw some speed-tuned parts on this thing and really open it up...

Links

XRAY, distributed by RC America, www.teamxray.com, (800) 519-7221

For more information, please see our source guide on pg. 193.