FineScale Modeler

SNAPSHOT

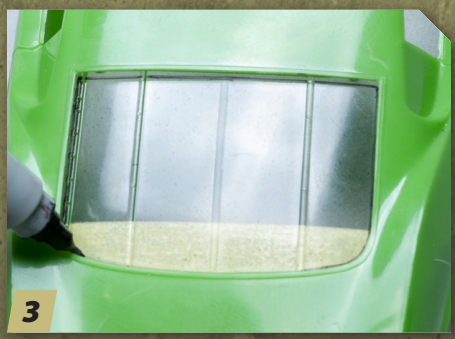
FABRICATE A CONTOURED, FLUSH-FITTING CAR WINDOW

LOSE A WINDOW? NO PROBLEM! Rather than use clear styrene sheet, turn to your spare-parts bin to find a window that will give you plenty of material to work with and come close to following your car's body contours. Let's use an ICM 1/25 scale Avenger as an example.

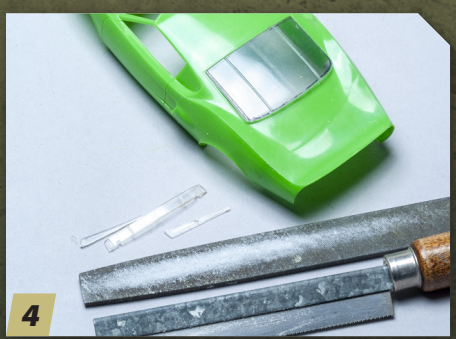
By Mark Jones

I chose a Revell-Monogram NASCAR Monte Carlo rear window (right). The curvature comes close to the Avenger body (left), and it's big enough, even with the holes at the top. Don't worry about molded-in details.

Locate the window in the body and tape it where you want it, making sure the window is straight. Sometimes, depending on the body and window shapes, this might work better with the window tape to the outsides.



Trace the edge of the window opening onto the clear part with a fine-tipped marker.



Remove the window and begin shaping by cutting around the edges with a razor saw about 1/16-inch outside the lines. A flat bastard file works well to shape corners and curvature. Work slowly and test-fit often.

At this point, the window fits well, but it's tighter than I want. You need to make sure you have enough room for paint so the window doesn't bind or, worse, chip the paint.

Quickly remove unwanted raised details with a sanding block and wet, 400-grit sandpaper. Follow up with 600, 1200, 1500, and 2000 grits and then with 3200 through 12000 polishing cloths or sponges.

Lastly, apply a polishing compound from Tamiya, Meguiar's, or Novus to restore the window's shine and clarity. You may have to fine-tune the edges of the window with 1200-grit sandpaper once paint is on the body to make sure it hangs properly. Finding an existing window that closely matches the shape of the original will always look better than a flat or bowed section of clear styrene sheet, which is never quite as clear as a kit part. FSM

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