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Build the Legendary

DODGE CHARGER R/T



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DODGE CHARGER R/T



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DOMINIC TORETTO

There are some movie sagas that manage to produce emblematic characters, and others that go even further and create authentic legends, true icons of a period. This is what has happened with *Fast & Furious*. Initially, people went to the cinema looking for the excitement provided by incredible action scenes and car races at breakneck speed. Today, many people's adrenaline levels shoot up just when they hear his name: Dominic Toretto, the undisputed king of the streets.

Ever since his brilliant appearance in *The Fast and the Furious* (2001), capturing the attention of a large group of car lovers who had gathered to take part in a street race, he has captivated millions of moviegoers all over the world. And he's done it thanks to his fascinating personality. He could have been a simple neighbourhood mechanic attracted by car races. However, he immediately showed that he was much bigger than that: a guy sure of himself, so tough that with just one look he is capable of making his enemies' blood run cold, so noble that he would rather go to jail due to a false accusation than see any of his buddies suffer. Besides being a rebellious spirit, he's a man who treats those around him like members of a true family – a family for whom he always sets himself the task of looking after and defending, playing the role of patriarch. He never forgets his people, not even when he turns into an overwhelming hurricane when he gets behind the wheel of the fastest car. After all, he is Dominic Toretto, one of the greatest legends in the history of action movies.

THE BIRTH OF THE CHARACTER

As has happened with other blockbusters, the character that is now the great hero of the *Fast & Furious* franchise emerged somewhat by chance. In the first versions of the screenplay, the bulk of the action fell to Brian, the undercover cop investigating the world of illegal racing. As the project advanced, the introduction of a second character to act as a foil for Brian was recommended. This is how Dom Toretto was born, an ambiguous tough guy, who would keep the audience guessing as to whether he was completely good or bad.

When it was time to look for an actor to play this character, the producer Neal H. Moritz arranged to see an aspiring new movie hopeful, Vin Diesel, who had stood out in a minor science-fiction film, *Pitch Black*. Moritz was impressed because Vin was so convinced that he was going to be a film-star that he was already behaving like one. His confidence and his arrogance were a perfect fit for the character of Dom Toretto.

Although he looks like a dangerous tough guy, Dom Toretto is actually a noble man with profound convictions, who defends his family above all else. What gives him the most satisfaction is the feeling of immense freedom from getting behind the wheel of a fast car.

Dominic Toretto



During the *Fast & Furious* franchise, Toretto has become an essential character. In some ways, he is a sort of latter-day Robin Hood who helps the least powerful in society, although to do this he has to break the law occasionally. He is an unexpected urban hero, already part of the gallery of great icons in the history of the movies.

THE STORY OF DOM

The character made his debut in *The Fast and the Furious* (2001). Throughout the film, we discovered a lot of things about the past of this legend of fast cars. For example, that he was born in Los Angeles and that he had grown up along with his younger sister, Mia, in a family that ran a café and a small shop. The girl would describe him as 'a magnet: he attracts everyone who passes by', a consequence of his incredible charisma and strong personality.

Together with the intrepid Letty Ortiz, his childhood friend and teenage love, he went to the barbecues that were held in the neighbourhood, where he listened to the stories that recalled his father's time as a professional racing driver. Not long afterwards, he would have the honour of helping his father rebuild a fabulous 1970 Dodge Charger R/T, with which he wanted to return to the racetracks and take part in the Los Angeles County Raceway.

"The thing about street fights... the street always wins."
Dominic Toretto

His father's racing comeback was triumphant. But, in the last race of the season, there was a fatal accident. Just a few weeks after the tragedy, Dom bumped into Kenny Linder, another driver that he had blamed for what had happened. Blinded by grief, he wanted to get revenge and he hit him with a spanner, an assault that he immediately regretted, but which would see him doing time in jail and forbidden to go to the racetracks for life.

It was when he was released that Toretto decided to form a group of drivers to commit robberies from time to time, allowing him to provide for his family and take part in street races, the only place where he could satisfy his true passion for speed. 'I live my life a quarter mile at a time. Nothing else matters, not the mortgage, not the store, not my team and all their bullshit. For those ten seconds, or less, I'm free.'

ROBIN HOOD ON WHEELS

Despite the fact that the plot of the first movie revolved around him, it wasn't planned for Toretto to play such an important part in the franchise. But when the director of *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift* (2006), Justin Lin, had the brilliant idea of shooting a brief cameo appearance by Dom at the end of the story and audiences went wild, it was obvious that this was the character who had to get behind the wheel of the franchise.

As we see in the movies of the *Fast & Furious* saga, Toretto holds the same principles that he had learned from his father: the protection of the family, religious sentiments, loyalty to his friends, to the neighbourhood… but he does not cease to be a man whom the system has tried to exclude. And he has reacted in the only way he knows.

Dom thus becomes an unexpected hero, in the style of Robin Hood, a legend that has always fascinated and won the hearts of the general public. His true nobility appears again with the arrival of Brian, who is like the other side of the mirror. As the producer Michael Fottrell says, 'One of them grows up in the wrong neighbourhood, and the other in the right one. But Brian gets involved in Dom's world and the two protect one another. There is a blood pact between them, they will always take care of each other, without it mattering which of them is right.' In fact, it is Brian who will eventually redeem Toretto and who makes it his business to restore his honour.

Dominic Toretto can get the best out of any vehicle. But he feels true devotion for the fabulous 1970 Dodge Charger R/T, which he has gradually been rebuilding as if it were an authentic family treasure. When he gets behind the wheel of the Charger, Dom is transformed into a driver for whom nothing less than winning will do.





Associated with the world of automobiles since his earliest childhood, when he used to help his father prepare racing cars, over the years Dominic has become a master of speed. Nobody knows the risks to which the drivers who push it to the limit in street races are exposed like he does.

FROM BROTHER TO FATHER

The almost fraternal relationship between Dom and Brian was something that audiences really loved right from the first movie. Later on, Toretto's protective aura was boosted even more, whereby, rather than a brother he ended up as the father figure to all those around him. Because he is the one who looks after the rest, who decides when it's time to run or when it's OK to return to the old family home, in the Echo Park neighbourhood of Los Angeles. In the different *Fast & Furious* movies, he gets caught up in all kinds of schemes, including some that force him to break the law to see true justice done. But, deep down, what drives him is always the protection of his family and friends: from getting Letty back, the great love of his life, to rescuing his own son from the clutches of a sophisticated criminal organisation.

Toretto is a big-hearted man but, at the same time, he's as hard as nails. And this is an aspect that actor Vin Diesel has not overlooked in any of the movies, training intensively before each shoot. 'Vin is a tough guy and he really works hard when we shoot a fight scene,' Joel Kramer, the fight coordinator, revealed while filming the seventh movie. 'He's methodical when he does a scene. He figures out the character and we guide him so that he understands why he is doing what he does. Then we train for it and shoot the scene. Working with him is a dream.' The actor's enormous involvement with his character is what makes it truly believable.

Vin Diesel filmography

- *Saving Private Ryan* (1998)
- *The Iron Giant* (voice) (1999)
- *Boiler Room* (2000)
- *Pitch Black* (2000)
- *The Fast and the Furious* (2001)
- *Knockaround Guys* (2001)
- *xXx* (2002)
- *A Man Apart* (2003)
- *The Chronicles of Riddick* (2004)
- *The Pacifier* (2005)
- *Find Me Guilty* (2006)
- *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift* (2006)
- *Babylon A.D.* (2008)
- *Fast & Furious 4* (2009)
- *Fast & Furious 5* (2011)
- *Fast & Furious 6* (2013)
- *Riddick* (2013)
- *Guardians of the Galaxy* (voice) (2014)
- *Fast & Furious 7* (2015)
- *The Last Witch Hunter* (2015)
- *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* (2016)
- *xXx: Return of Xander Cage* (2017)
- *Fast & Furious 8* (2017)
- *Guardians of the Galaxy: Vol. 2* (voice) (2017)
- *Avengers: Infinity War* (voice) (2018)





DODGE BRAND, A TRUE LEGEND

When you see the emblematic Dodge Challenger in *Fast & Furious* you're also seeing an important part of the history of the American automobile industry. Because the Dodge brand became a true legend, whose history is full of challenges, incredible triumphs and curiosities.

Nowadays, the models like Dodge Challenger Hellcat of 2018, with 717hp of power, set the trend in the world of the sport cars.

Drivers all over the world have fallen in love with the classic Dodge Coronet Lancer, the Dodge Diplomat, or the more modern models, like the Dodge Viper SRT Coupé and the Dodge Charger SXT, but they are all only part of a long history in the business. Dodge became an important marque right from its beginnings at the start of the 20th century. It was in 1901 when two brothers from a modest family, John Francis and Horace Elgin Dodge, laid the foundations of this giant of the car industry. Their association with Henry Ford broke down due to serious differences in their ideas about the business. Despite that, in 1914 the Dodge brothers were able to make their dream come true and manufacture their legendary first model, known as Old Betsy.

After the turbulent years of the 1920s, as well as the deaths of the two Dodge brothers and the takeover of the company by Chrysler Group, a new era dawned in the history of the company. It was a period in which it would have to get through a world war, the upheavals of the post-war years and the first major oil crisis. But with the same strength exhibited by the engines in its wide range of vehicles, Dodge overcame all these difficulties and managed to have its name associated with the elite of the car world.



This was the appearance of the classic 1970 Dodge Challenger.

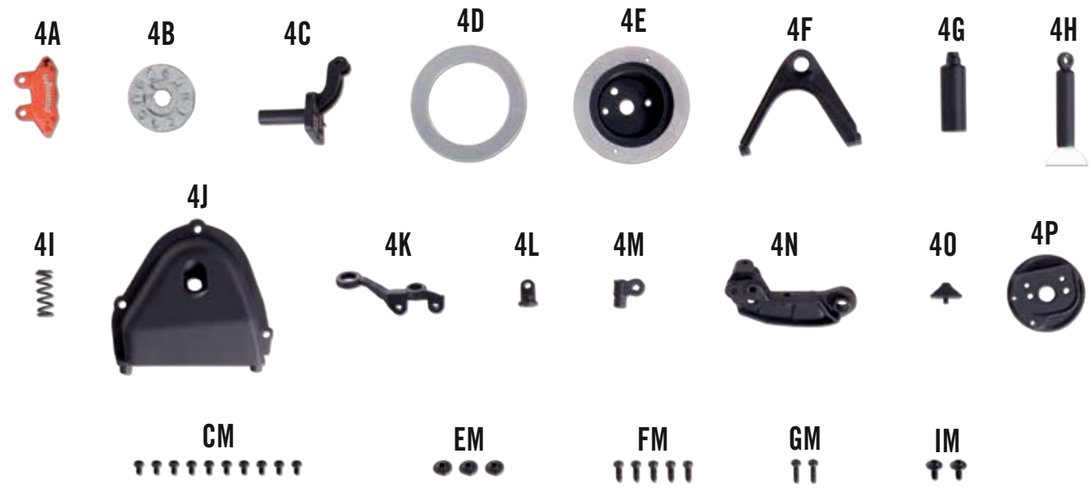


FRONT LEFT BRAKE AND SUSPENSION

You can now make the brake disc and attach the wheel to the elements of the suspension.

Editor's note: The parts shown here may differ slightly from the parts supplied with this issue. This does not affect the quality or the assembly instructions in any way.

PIECES FOR THIS STAGE



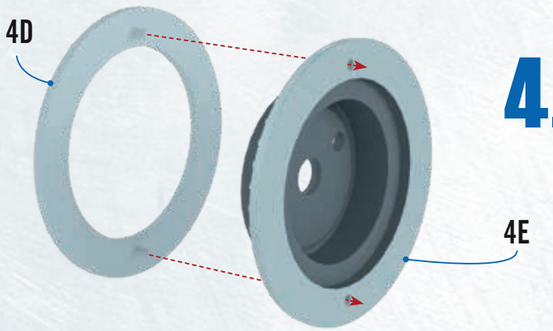
- 4A Front left brake caliper
- 4B Front left wheel hub
- 4C Front left spindle (piece 1)
- 4D Brake disc (piece 1)
- 4E Brake disc (piece 2)
- 4F Upper front left control arm
- 4G Shock absorber cylinder
- 4H Shock absorber piston
- 4I Spring
- 4J Front left upper spring mount
- 4K Knuckle arm
- 4L Suspension ball joint
- 4M King-pin
- 4N Front left suspension arm
- 4O Shock absorber travel limiter
- 4P Front left brake caliper baseplate
- CM Screw 1.7 × 3 mm (x 10)*
- EM Screw 2 × 3 × 6 mm (x 3)*
- FM Screw 2 × 5 mm (x 5)*
- GM Screw 1.7 × 6 mm (x 2)*
- IM Screw 2 × 5 × 5 mm, (x 2)*

* Some of the parts are spares.

ASSEMBLY AREA

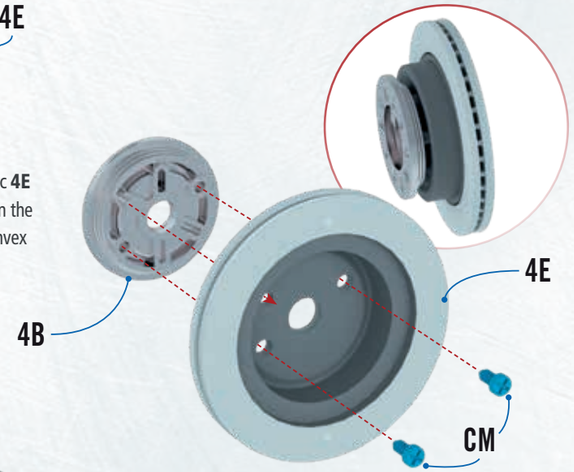


FRONT LEFT BRAKE AND SUSPENSION

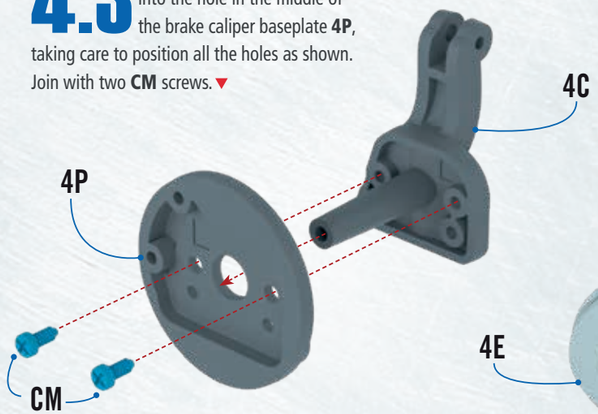


4.1 **PUT** the parts of the brake disc (4D and 4E) together by inserting the pins on piece 1 into their corresponding holes in piece 2, as shown in the illustration. ◄

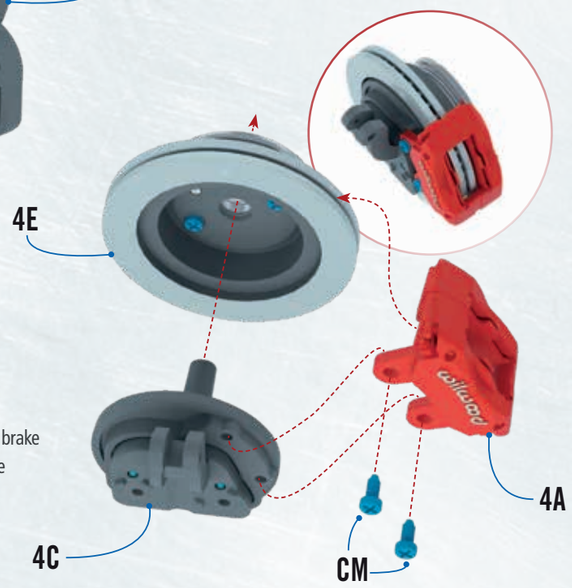
4.2 **PUT** the wheel hub **4B** and the convex side of the brake disc **4E** together, by inserting the positioning pin into the small hole in the assembled brake disc **4E**. Insert two **CM** screws, from the convex side of the brake disc, to join the two parts together. ►



4.3 **INSERT** the axle spindle **4C** into the hole in the middle of the brake caliper baseplate **4P**, taking care to position all the holes as shown. Join with two **CM** screws. ▼



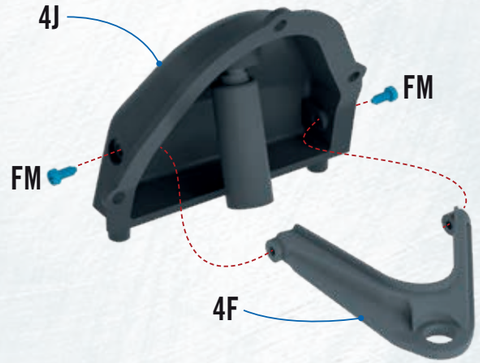
4.4 **INSERT** the spindle and baseplate assembly into the centre hole in the brake disc **4E**. Then slide the brake caliper **4A** over the brake disc (**4D** and **4E**) and the spindle **4C**. Fix the caliper in place with two **CM** screws. ►

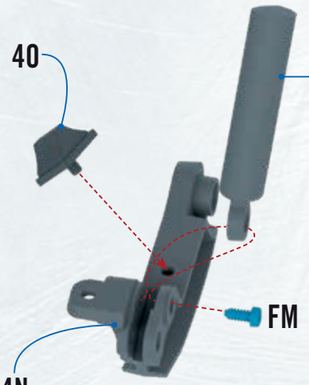


4.5 **ATTACH** the shock absorber cylinder **4G** to the inside of the upper spring mount **4J** using an **EM** screw. ▼



4.6 **ALIGN** the upper contol arm **4F** with the corresponding holes in the side of the spring mount **4J**, ensuring that the pieces are facing the same way as shown in the illustration. Fix the arm in place with two **FM** screws. ▼

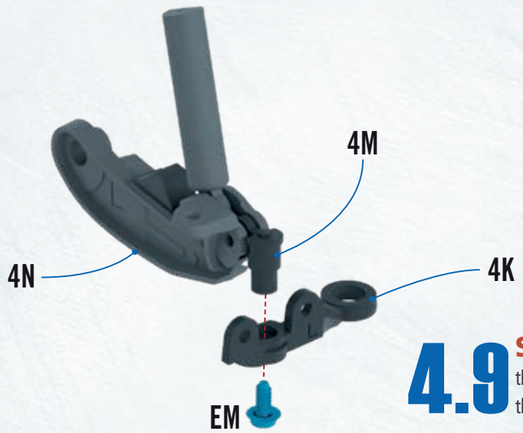




4.7 **INSERT** the pin on the travel limiter **4O** into the hole on the upper part of the suspension arm **4N**. Insert the eye of the shock absorber piston **4H** into the slot on the suspension arm **4N**. Align the eye with the hole closest to the travel limiter **4O** and fix it in place with an **FM** screw. ◄

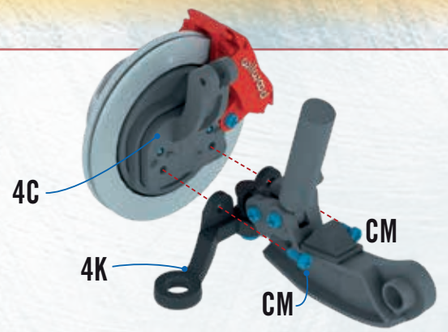
4.8 **IN THE SAME** slot on the suspension arm **4N**, insert the king-pin **4M**, with the cylindrical end facing downwards. Fix the part in place with an **FM** screw. ►





4.9 **SLIDE** the knuckle arm **4K** onto the end of the king-pin **4M** that you have just fixed in place. Use an **EM** screw to assemble these pieces. ◄

4.10 **Put** the completed suspension and brake parts together. Use two **CM** screws to join the knuckle arm **4K** to the spindle **4C** (as shown). ▶





4.11 **Insert** the ball joint **4L** into the corresponding hole in the upper control arm **4F**. Now align it with the wishbone of piece 1 of the spindle **4C**. Join everything together with one **GM** screw. Then slide the shock absorber piston **4H** into the shock absorber cylinder **4G**. ◀

4.12 **Slide** the front left wheel you made in the second assembly session onto the axle spindle **4C**. Remove the wheel hub cover **2J** and the washer **2I**. Then insert an **IM** screw through the washer and attach the wheel to the axle spindle **4C**. Finally, put the hub cover **2J** back on. ▼

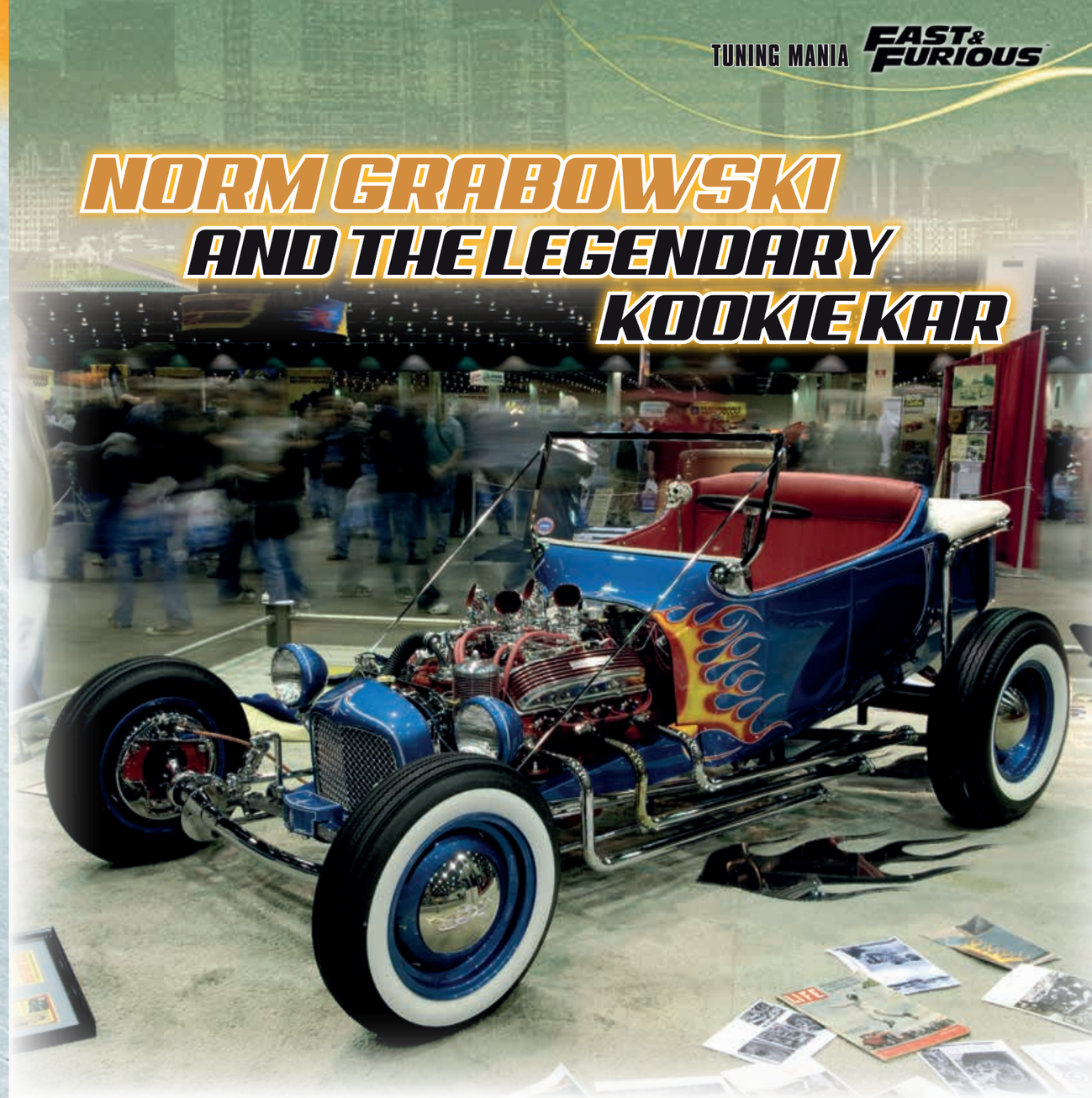


STAGE 4 FINAL RESULT



You have now attached the first wheel to the brake disc and suspension components. Keep what you have built so far in a safe place, together with the 4I spring that you will need in one of the next assembly sessions for your model car.

NORM GRABOWSKI AND THE LEGENDARY KOOKIE KAR



Even now you only have to mention Norm Grabowski's name and more than one fan will automatically think of the T-bucket, the type of hot rod that he created in 1955 with his revolutionary Lightnin' Bug. That car, better known as the Kookie Kar, became so famous in the USA that it ended up as a benchmark in the world of tuning. Its reputation is still alive and kicking, something demonstrated by the very high figure for which it has been sold.

The history of tuning is full of charismatic characters who became forerunners of a massive trend. In the USA, it was Norm Grabowski who in the 1950s first managed to draw the whole country's attention to the T-bucket phenomenon, which up to then had gone more or less unnoticed.

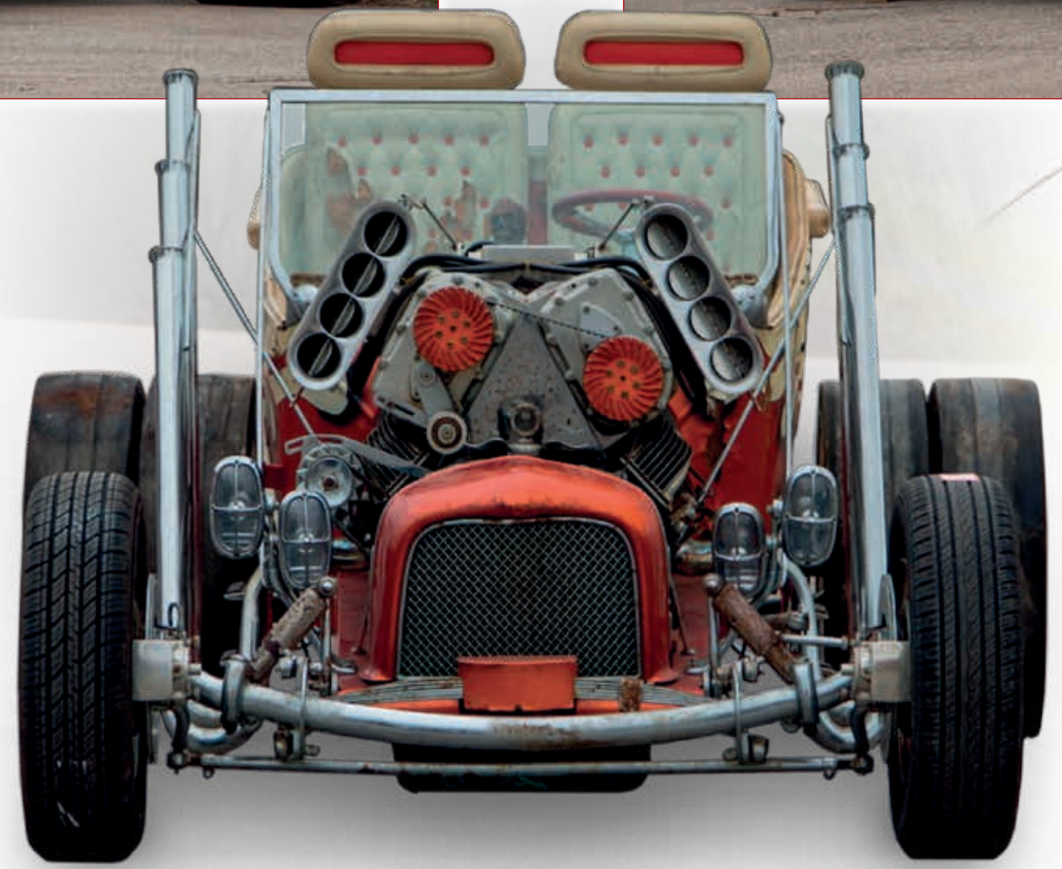
ARTISAN ... AND ACTOR

Born into a Polish American family on 5 February 1933 in Irvington, New Jersey, Norman David Grabowski soon caught the hot rod bug. In 1952, aged 19, after leaving the army for health reasons he decided to build his own

A perfect replica of the Kookie Kar, by Von Franco. It reproduces the way it looked in the series *77 Sunset Strip*.







The Kookie Kar seen from the front, after Jim Street's modifications: notice the exhaust pipes mounted vertically and two compressors on top of the engine.

car. It took him three years. After several attempts, he managed to combine a Ford Model T with a Ford A, both purchased for a few dollars. From that combination a very original hot rod emerged, with a two-seat open cabin, an exposed engine and front wheels far smaller than the back ones. In this way Grabowski and his strange creature gave rise to the appearance of a new category: the T-bucket.

Fans immediately recognised the young man's merit. The prestigious monthly *Hot Rod Magazine* chose the model, named the Lightnin' Bug, for the cover of its October 1955 issue. His popularity grew and grew. He appeared again in *Car Craft* and, on 29 April 1957, in Life magazine.

Grabowski's T-bucket had become a national celebrity, but the best was yet to come: the car began appearing on television. In 1958 it became a permanent fixture in the series *77 Sunset Strip*, as the car of the eccentric Gerald Lloyd Kookson (known as Kookie), played by Ed Byrnes.

Kookie was hugely popular, and his car was partly responsible. Grabowski's Lightnin' Bug became known as the Kookie Kar and, besides being universally popular, it became the most sought-after model in the USA. In no time at all, the T-bucket craze broke out. A lot of people wanted one just like it. Grabowski got heavily involved in the television series. He stated categorically that only he could drive the car, even during filming, and so he was given a part in it. His robust appearance and his unusual crew cut hairstyle, typical of the army, were very striking and he later appeared in films like *Herbie Rides Again* (1974), *The Towering Inferno* (1974) and *The Cannonball Run* (1981).

Grabowski's increasing commitments on TV and in the movies kept him away from his main activity, tuning cars. Nevertheless, today he is considered a legend in the world of car building. His "signature", the wooden gear lever knob in the form of a skull, has become an unmistakable sign that has been imitated countless times.

Norm Grabowski died on 12 October 2012 in Cassville, Missouri, aged 79.

Rear view of the Kookie Kar in which you have a good view of the dual rear wheels added by Jim Street. This was how it looked in 2017 when it was sold at auction for $440,000.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KOOKIE KAR

As has already been mentioned, not only is this car Grabowski's most famous creation, it was also the first T-bucket, a very peculiar hot rod created out of a Ford Model T, with an open cabin, an exposed engine and dragster wheels.

To build it, Grabowski used parts of a 1922 Ford Model T that he bought in 1952 for just $5, and a 1931 Ford A V8 Roadster that cost him $100.

Norm Grabowski and the legendary Kookie Kar



Norm Grabowski's original roadster with the imposing air filter in the form of a mushroom. This photograph appeared on the cover of *Hot Rod Magazine* in October 1955.

Grabowski shortened the A Model's chassis and mounted the front of the Model T on top of it. He gave it a 1952 Cadillac V8 engine, with the GMC 3-71 reinforcement kit, with a large air filter on top in the form of a mushroom. For greater visual effect, he built the front axle with a lowered suspension and added the gearbox from an old truck, with the column almost vertical.

In its first version, the bodywork was completely black, and the cabin was upholstered in red leather. That's how it appeared on the cover of *Hot Rod Magazine* in October 1955.

The following year, when his creature had already become extremely popular, Grabowski decided to modify it: he installed four large Stromberg 97 vacuum tubes and painted the whole bodywork Dodge Royal Blue, with red and yellow flames by Dean Jeffries. As a finishing touch, Grabowski replaced the gear lever knob with a skull that he himself had carved. With this new look, the Lightnin' Bug was seen on the pages of *Life* magazine and in the television series *77 Sunset Strip*, in which it became known as the Kookie Kar.

In 1959, Grabowski sold his automobile for $3,000 to Jim "Street" Skonzakes, one of the most famous customised car builders in the USA, and a passionate automobile collector who has gone down in the history of tuning.

Jim Street was not content with owning the legendary Kookie Kar, however; he wanted to give it his personal touch. He painted the bodywork cream with a pearly effect, added some bright red flames and reupholstered the cabin in white leather. Later on, he added double front headlights, exhaust pipes sloping upwards at an angle of 45°, two gigantic compressors mounted in a V formation and dual rear wheels.

For several years, the Kookie Kar travelled all over the USA along with another famous customised car, the Golden Sahara from *Cinderfella* (1960), the film starring Jerry Lewis. Then it disappeared from view for a long period of time.

In 2018 the Kookie Kar was back in the news due to the sale at auction of Jim Street's collection, after his death in November 2017.

The car, which needed some work done on it despite the fact that it was in good condition, was sold for an astronomical sum, $440,000, which shows how much it was still loved by the public.



A proud Grabowski poses with his Kookie Kar, by then a real celebrity in the USA. It was a second version of the model, which had been painted blue with yellow flames, and air intakes had been attached to the engine.

Grabowski's signature

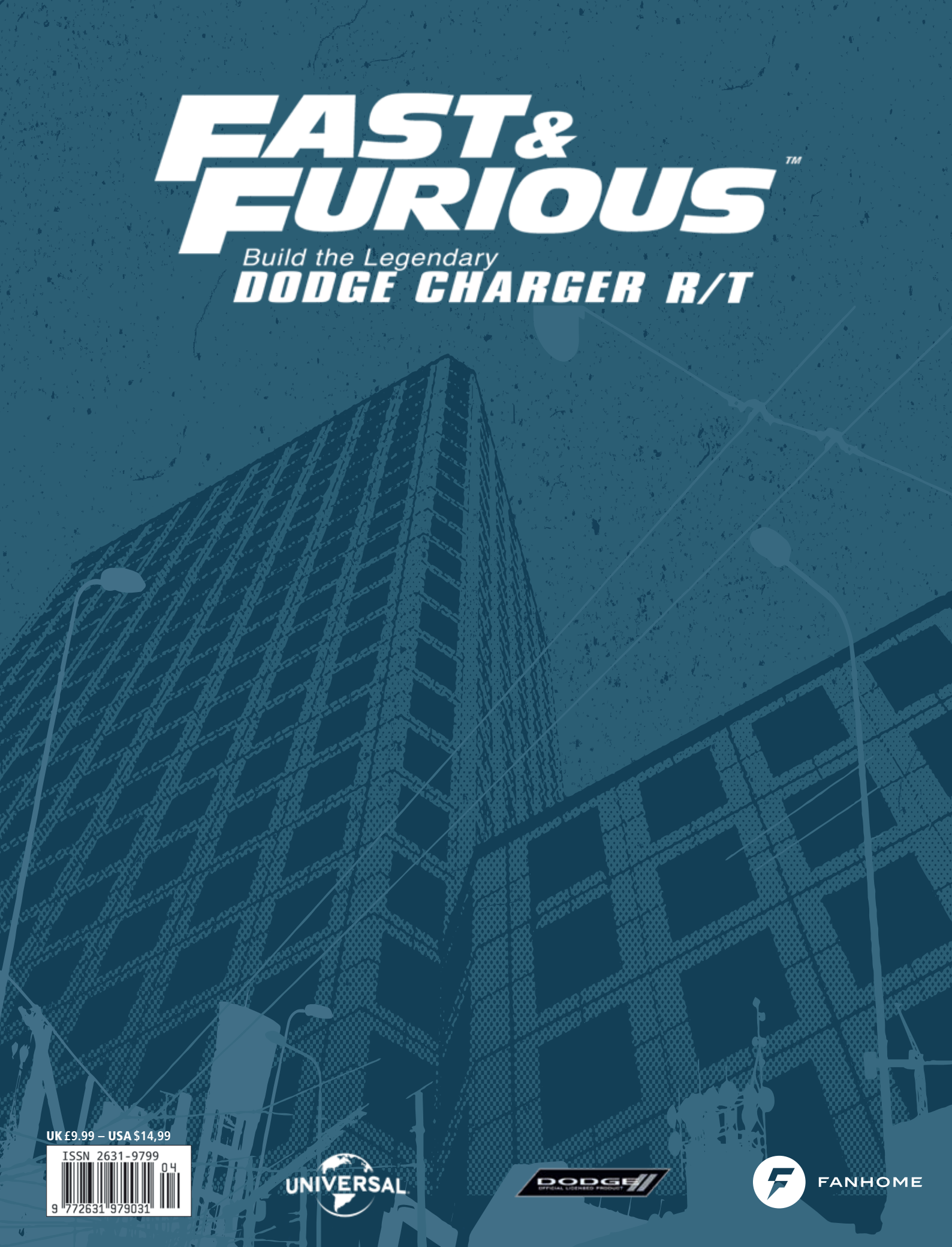
As well as being an actor and a creator of customised automobiles, Norm Grabowski was an expert woodcarver. One fine day he had the idea of replacing gear lever knobs with the skulls that he so liked carving. Nowadays these pieces have become highly sought-after collector's items that are sold at specialist auctions.





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