FAST & FURIOUS™

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DODGE CHARGER R/T



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NEELA
THE DRIVER IN THE BLUE CAR

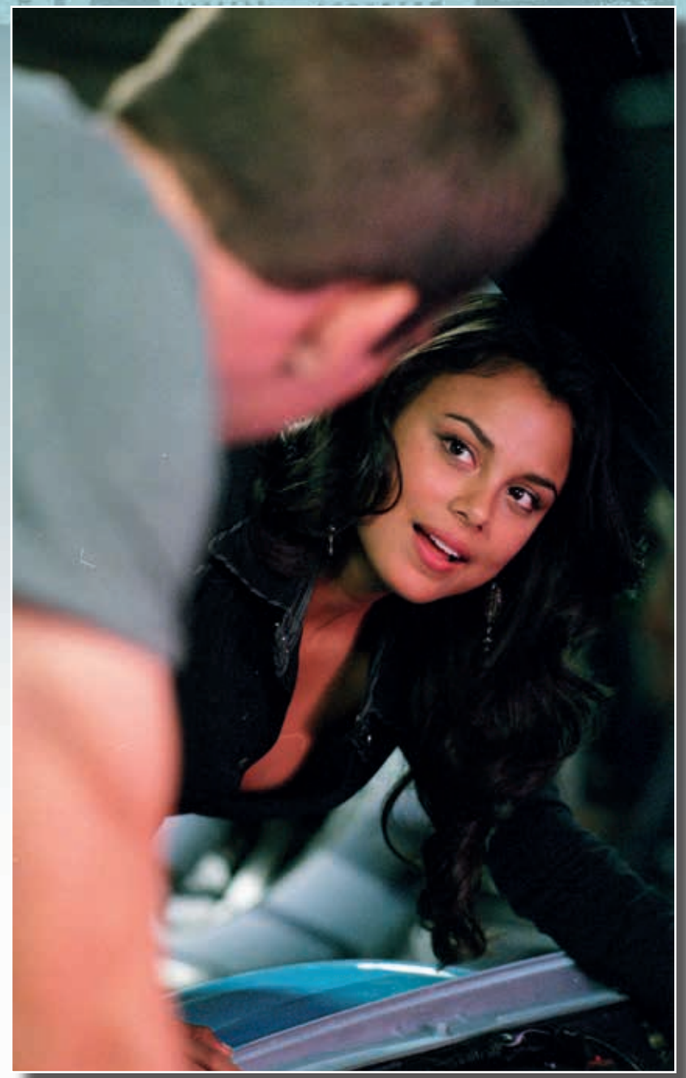
The world of *Fast & Furious* is not off limits to women. After we met Letty Ortiz and Suki, who drive cars at incredible speeds, *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift* introduced a new female character to be reckoned with: Neela, the genuine queen of drifting.

When Sean Boswell notices Neela for the first time, she looks just like an ordinary student at Madakura High School in Tokyo. However, when, shortly afterwards, he sees her burst into the parking lot where car enthusiasts meet at the wheel of her amazing blue 2004 Mazda RX-8, his opinion of her immediately improves. "You hear that? It's still not right for the way I drive," Neela complains when parking the car. "You wouldn't have that problem with a V8," Sean says, trying to catch her attention. Something immediately clicks between them. But even an innocent conversation can turn very dangerous, especially when Sean discovers that Neela is the girlfriend of DK, the drift king and the guy who controls the street races in Tokyo. "Trust me, you don't wanna be a part of this world," she warns Sean, to keep him out of harm's way.

Looking just like any ordinary student at Tokyo's Madakura Institute, Neela has the indomitable spirit of a woman who is fascinated by speed.

A DREAM COME TRUE

When the director Justin Lin was looking for the female lead in *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*, he soon noticed a new Australian actress who had been in Los Angeles for a while, attempting to make her way in the far-from-easy film industry. Her name was Nathalie Kelley.



Neela feels a great connection with Sean Boswell from the moment she meets him. But it will not be easy for her to get close to him without causing problems.

"From the age of 12, I wanted to be an actress," she confesses. "It's something I was sure of, and I knew that I had to go out and look for it, because the opportunities were not going to come by themselves."

When she was offered the part of Neela in *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift* Nathalie could not believe it. "I was about 16 or 17 when the first movie in the franchise was released and it left me speechless. I think this movie will surprise the fans because Justin is proposing something really new."

Right from the start, the director wanted the actress to feel as comfortable as possible. And, to do this, he insisted that her character should keep her Australian accent. "Curiously, when I arrived in Holly wood I went to classes to lose it," Nathalie says. "Then they decided that they wanted it for this movie, so I had to relearn it. Nevertheless, it made sense: my character goes to an international school; why shouldn't there be an Australian there?"

A MYSTERIOUS PAST

The first to be surprised by her accent is perhaps Sean Boswell himself, who attempts to find out about Neela's background. Whenever he asks her about it, however, she becomes as evasive as she is mysterious. This leads him to play at guessing it, like a smart detective: "Your father was in the army, you moved around a lot. Your mama and daddy were never home. So you spent all day on the street, until these drift nuts became your family." Neela looks at him and, unable to hide the fact that she doesn't like this game, she says: "Zero for one, cowboy," before continuing on her way.

Sean's friendship with Neela is not easy. She tries to keep her distance and gives him few opportunities to get close. At the same time, he has to fight against all the elements that are against him: being a newcomer in a world that he does not feel part of, owing Han a car, being in DK's crosshairs, having constant rows with his father … Even when he stands up for his friend Twinkie, the latter reacts angrily. Everybody seems to be against him. When she sees him so confused, Neela decides to drop her guard a little and she goes over to him and says: "Not easy saving the day, is it?" Sean takes advantage of her coming over and apologises for playing a guessing game with her: "Sorry about the other night. Your life isn't any of my business."

THE TRUE STORY OF NEELA

DK seems more possessive every day, and Neela does not look comfortable by his side. So why does she stay with the drift king? She offers Sean the answer to that question one night when they are having dinner together and she tells him about her background: a sad and complicated childhood, due to her father's absence and her mother's premature death when Neela was just ten years old. "She came here from Australia when she finished high school. All I know about her is that she went to work in a hostess bar. DK's grandmother took me in."

Memories of the past cloud the girl's eyes. Of the past and the present too, as she is deeply upset by DK calling Sean a *gaijin*, a name that means "foreigner", but also "outsider", and which she was also called when she was young. In some ways, that feeling of not belonging is what binds Sean and Neela together even more closely.

NATHALIE KELLEY

Born in Lima (Peru), when she was just two Nathalie moved with her parents to Sydney (Australia). She went to the prestigious North Sydney Girls' High School, where Nicole Kidman was a former pupil and, like her, from an early age she dreamed of being an actress. After living for a while in São Paulo (Brazil), where she worked as a model for the L'Equipe agency, she left Australia to fly to Los Angeles, where she began auditioning to make her dream of being an actress come true. Justin Lin gave her the chance to make her debut in front of the cameras as Neela in *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift*. Her excellent work enabled her to start working regularly in the movies and TV from then on. Apart from her experience in *Fast & Furious*, Nathalie had the most success on the small screen, playing Grace in *UnREAL*, Sybil in *The Vampire Diaries* and, especially, Cristal Flores in the remake of *Dynasty*.

Besides that, there are other things that both of them share, like the passion for cars. In her Mazda RX-8, Neela takes Sean to the mountains, where at night the cars slide in a drifting choreography similar to that of a ballet. "We used to come up here when we were kids," she says as she lets her car slide gently round each bend. "Even before we could drive we'd cut class, sneak out, come up here and watch the older kids drift. Things were different back then. Once I got my license I practically lived up here. Back then, kids just drove whatever they had. We just made do. No one bothered us." Later the first races arrived, the first victories and with them the feeling that for a moment nothing else matters. "No past, no future. Just the moment."

AGAINST ALL ODDS

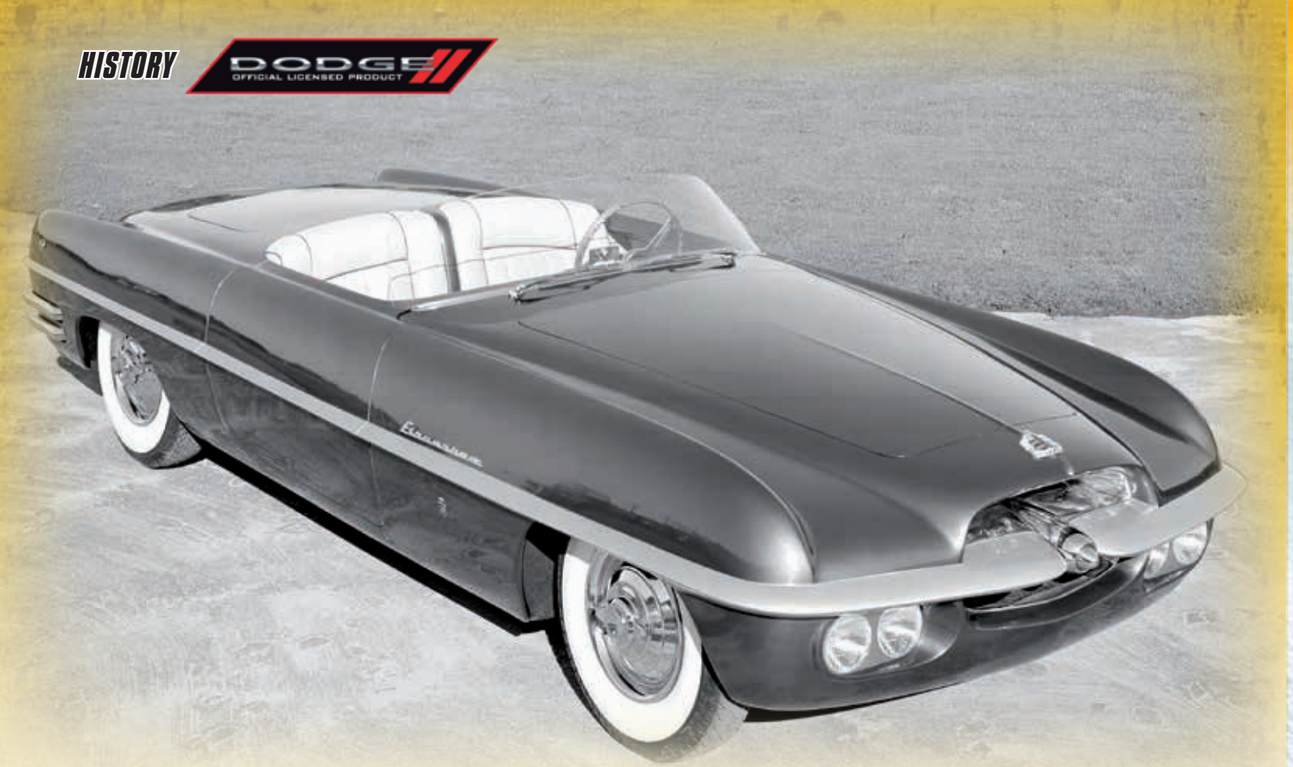
Sean thus understands why Neela is with DK: it's not a relationship based on true love. Somehow, it's a way of thanking his family for offering her a home when she had been left with nothing.

The next day, Sean goes to school with the marks made by the blows on his face still very visible. Neela suspects what has happened and decides to put an end to this situation once and for all. Without weighing up possible risks, she goes to DK's headquarters and tells him that she wants to break up with him, something he is not going to take lying down.

After Han's death, and when she sees DK threatening Sean with a gun, Neela understands that she has no option but to go back with the thug. She is trapped, there's no way out, no hope, no future. Because at that moment, she doesn't even suspect that Sean will be capable of risking everything in a definitive race in which he will stake his own freedom and Neela's too. The *gaijin's* undisputed victory therefore opens up a new period in Neela's life.

Actress Nathalie Kelley poses next to the car her character drives in the film: *The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift.*





DODGE FIREARROW

With the name Firearrow, Dodge and the Italian bodywork manufacturer Ghia presented four concept cars that explored future lines of design. Created between 1953 and 1954, they were sports cars in different formats (two-seat roadster, coupe and four-seat convertible) that generated notable expectation in their day.

The first version of the Dodge Firearrow, designed by Ghia for the Dodge company, was characterised by the grey trim halfway up the bodywork that split the car lengthwise and which also served as a doorguard.

As a good concept car, Dodge Firearrow was never mass-produced. It used a chassis and an engine from the Dodge factories, but the bodywork was designed with absolute creative freedom by Virgil Exner and they were produced in Italy by Ghia.

The first model, presented at the Turin Motor Show in 1953, was an open two-seater painted red. Its two most unusual features were the windshield without a metal frame and a beige strip that ran right round the car halfway up. The headlamps were placed below this strip. The Dodge Firearrow II followed the same concept and, besides its pale yellow color, the front distinguished it from the first version. In this case it had a very large conventional radiator grille, and the all-round element stopped at the headlamps.



The Dodge Firearrow IV, a model with more conventional lines, was the convertible version of the third prototype, and the only one with coupe bodywork.

If the first two concept cars were two-seat roadsters, the third representative of the series, the Dodge Firearrow III, was the only one with a fixed roof. It was a coupe painted blue and noted for a very "Italian" line, especially in the rear pillar. The front with four headlamps framing a large grille was very aggressive whilst the rear was cut short. It had some small fins. The absence of fenders was another of its characteristics. At the end of 1954 the fourth and last representative of the series was presented at the Chicago Auto Show. In this case it was a four-seat convertible (upholstered with checkerboard material) but with the same aesthetic characteristics as the coupe.



MOUNTING THE RIGHT REAR WHEEL

In this assembly session you will assemble the right rear wheel and attach it to the corresponding side of your model's rear axle.

PIECES FOR THIS STAGE

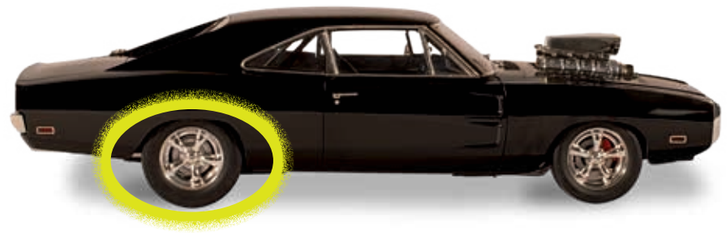


Editor's note: The parts shown here may differ slightly from the parts supplied with this issue. This does not affect the quality or the assembly instructions in any way.

42A Rear right tyre
42B Rim (outside)
42C Tyre valve
42D Rim (inside)
42E Hub cover
42F Washer
HM Screws 2 × 3 mm, (x 4)*
IM Screws 2 × 5 × 5 mm, (x 2)*

* Some of the parts are spares.

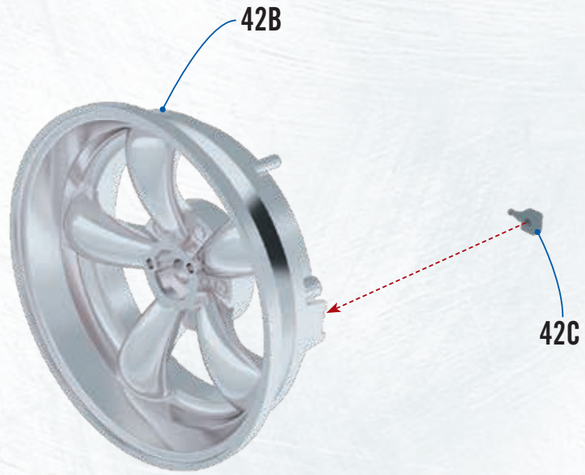
ASSEMBLY AREA



THE REAR AXLE

Mounting the right rear wheel

42.1 **SLIDE** the tyre valve **42C** onto the small pin on the outside of the rear right tyre rim **42B**. ▶



MODEL BUILDING NOTE

The wheel you are assembling is a replica of the one installed on Dom Toretto's Dodge Charger R/T in the first *Fast and Furious* film.

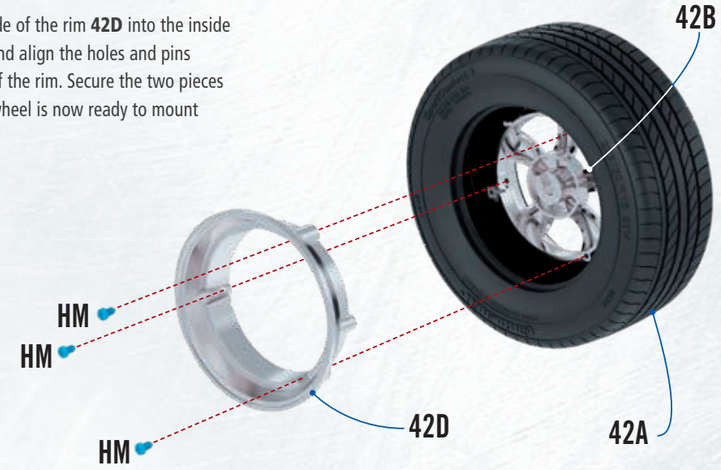
- Tyre: Continental Sport Contact
- Front measurement: 255/45R18
- Rear measurement: 285/50R18

The tyre markings have been faithfully reproduced on all four of your model's tyres.

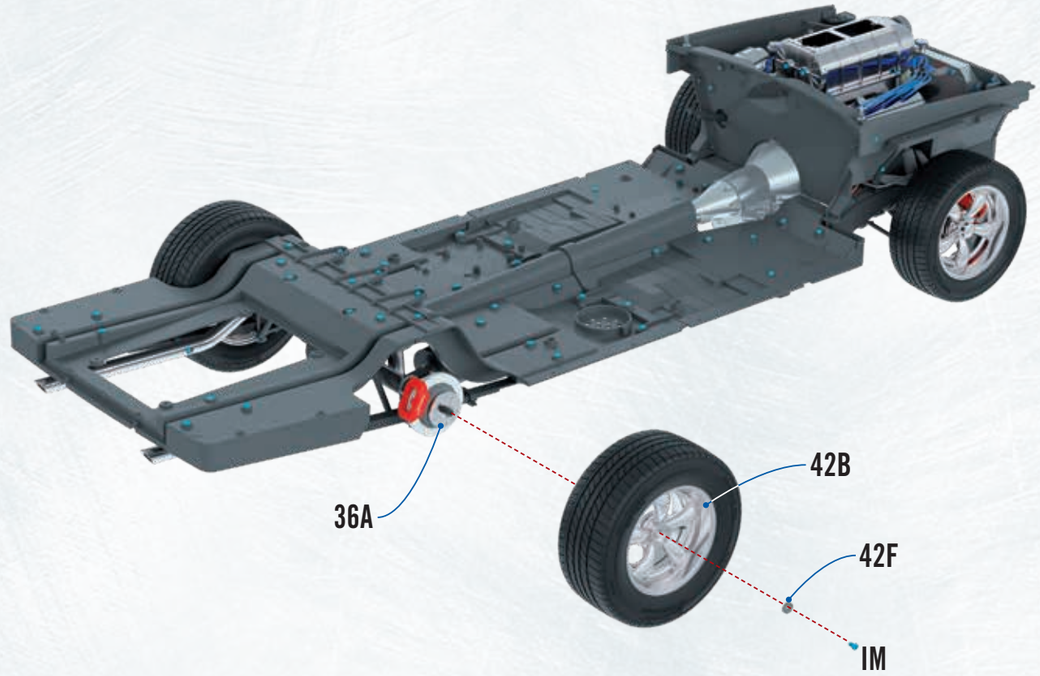
42.2 **NOTE** that one side of the tyre **42A** has «inside» written on it, and the other side has «outside» on it. Put the outside of the rim **42B** on the outside of the tyre. Join the two pieces. ▼



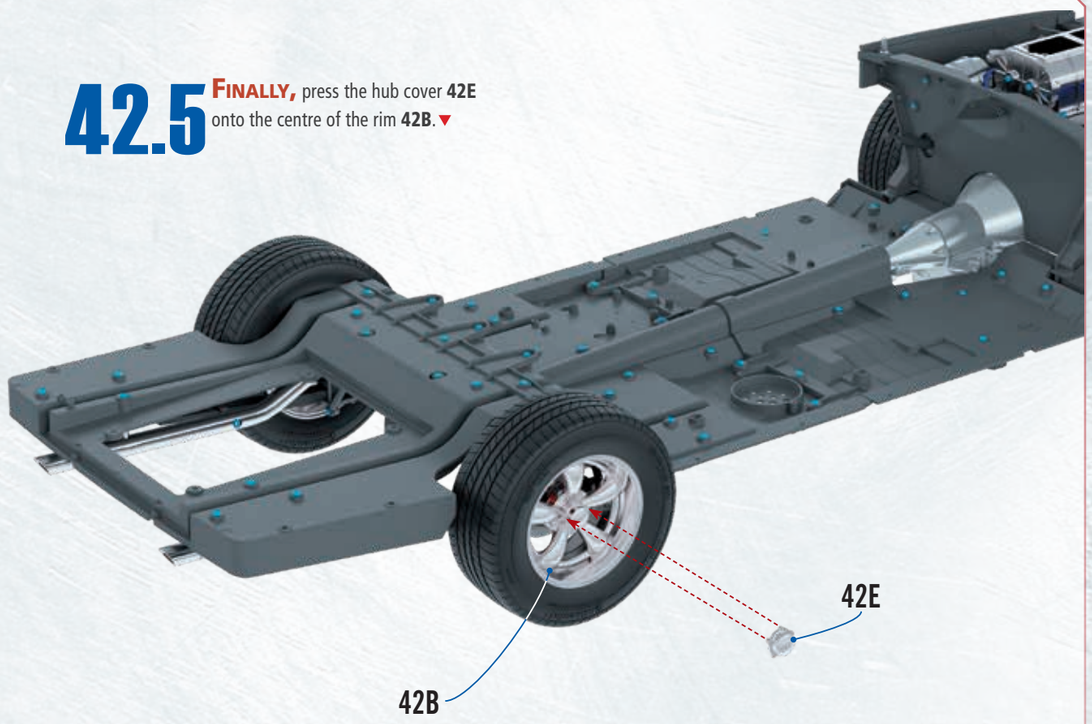
42.3 **INSERT** the inside of the rim **42D** into the inside of the tyre **42A**, and align the holes and pins of the two parts of the rim. Secure the two pieces with three **HM** screws. The right rear wheel is now ready to mount on your model. ▶



42.4 **SLIDE** the wheel you have just assembled onto the right end of the rear axle **36A**. Put a washer **42F** onto the middle of the wheel and secure it with an **IM** screw. Don't tighten it too much, otherwise the wheel won't move freely. ▼



42.5 **Finally,** press the hub cover **42E** onto the centre of the rim **42B**.▼

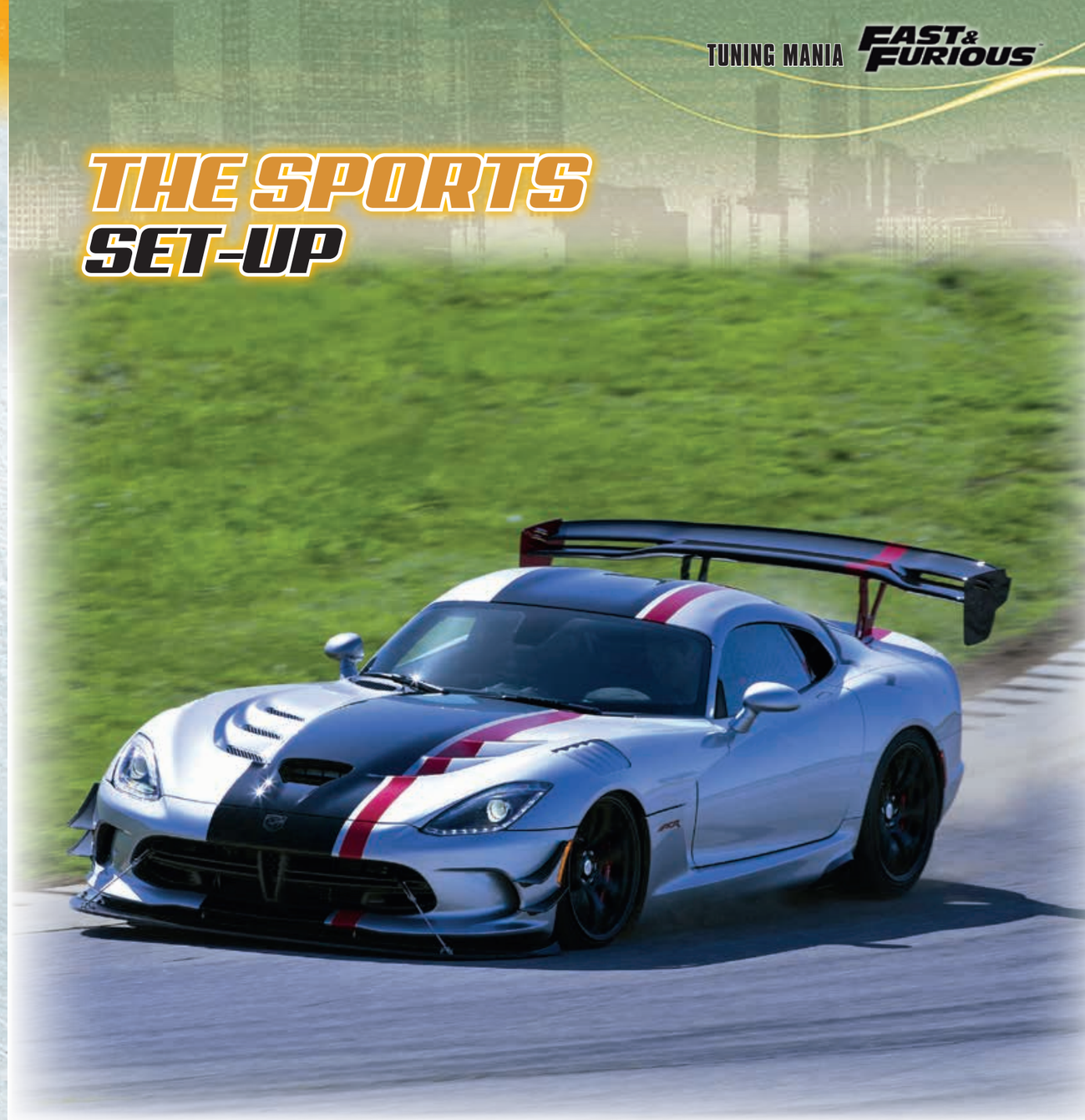


STAGE 42 FINAL RESULT



You have assembled the rear right wheel and attached it to your model.

THE SPORTS SET-UP



Usually, the standard set-up of production vehicles does not satisfy the most demanding enthusiasts. However, there are plenty of different solutions on the market that improve a car's handling and dynamic response.

When a car is designed and built, manufacturers have to consider production costs but still satisfy most buyers by compromising on certain components. For example, the suspension set-up cannot be excessively sporty, except for specific car types. Even then, costs have to be kept within reasonable limits. For everyday motoring, the configuration is usually perfect. But a car can become dangerously unstable if pushed beyond its design limits – for example, taking it onto a racetrack. Fortunately for enthusiasts, there are many cost-effective alternatives on the market that can improve handling and performance. Let us work through the list.

By replacing the springs and shock absorbers with sports components, we can lower the car and improve its dynamic behaviour, as well as making it look more aggressive from an aesthetic point of view.



There are essentially three types of products on the market: spring kits and sports shock absorbers with fixed lengths (which can vary from -30mm to -90 mm); adjustable screw-type shock absorber kits that allow us to adjust the height as we wish, and more expensive options that also offer calibration adjustment.

SPORTS SPRINGS

The first modification that will improve a car's roadholding and stability is to install a sports spring kit. This is an inexpensive first step. As we have seen in previous instalments, a shock absorber's function is to damp down any bouncing caused by the coil springs when they respond to road conditions. The bouncing occurs due to driving dynamics, pitch and roll caused by weight transfer, and the roughness of the terrain. The springs absorb the energy of those stresses by compressing. But then they release the energy by expanding very quickly. With a sports spring kit, we can replace the stock springs with high-performance components that are more rigid. Sports springs, in addition to lowering the vehicle (the amount varies according to the model and brand), offer the advantage of strengthening the suspension. They make the vehicle less sensitive to lateral forces during cornering, and longitudinal forces (pitch), during acceleration and braking. In addition to the "fixed" springs, height-adjustable spring kits have recently been developed. They make it possible to adjust the ride height as required. They allow the user to change the height within a specific range, even after installing the springs, thanks to threaded height adjusters. Of course, this option would only apply to cars with brand-new shock absorbers. If they are worn out, installing adjustable springs will make things worse. The best solution is to combine the new springs with a set of new sports shock absorbers. They work together to improve the car's handling. Here, too, there are different alternatives. We can choose between sports shock absorbers, shortened stem shock absorbers, and sports shock absorbers that are adjustable for height, rebound and compression.

SPORTS SHOCK ABSORBERS

By now, it is probably clear that if you want to improve performance, it is not enough to simply install new coil springs. They must be combined with sports shock absorbers that counteract the increased energy released by the springs. This will ensure maximum stability even in the most demanding of high-speed corners. The objective is to reduce diving, rolling or squatting caused by acceleration, braking and cornering. There are many specialised manufacturers, and they all make products that satisfy the needs of both the amateur and those who want a product like the ones used in the world of motorsport, that are adjustable with different parameters. Sports shock absorbers usually have a shorter stem. The reason for this is easy to explain: In a production car, the shock absorber piston is built to compress to about half of the full suspension range. Consequently, when the car's suspension is lowered, the amount of travel is reduced, and the shock absorber will not work optimally. In the case of holes, bumps, or any high load situation, the shock absorber would be unable to cope and will bottom out. A shortened stem solves the problem.

ADJUSTABLE SHOCK ABSORBERS

The advantage of sports shock absorbers is that you can choose products that are adjustable in height and cali-

Detailed structure of sports shock absorbers:



bration. Therefore, you can adapt the car to your own driving style, correct its track behaviour, and find the right compromise between sportiness and comfort on the road. Most consumer or OEM replacement shocks have single or dual adjustment settings. These types of shocks allow for on the fly tuning for performance requirements. They can be reset back to your regularly scheduled "commute" setting at the turn of a knob. The adjustment is independent, so it is possible to modify the vehicle's reactions when accelerating, braking, and when entering curves. You can even differentiate the height of the front and rear axles. Some shock absorbers come with rebound adjustability, which controls how much force they push out to help maintain tyre contact with the ground. Others help to adjust the ride height.

Having the possibility of setting different predefined heights allows us to opt for an ultra-low setting at the track. We can then return to a more conventional height when we are back on standard roads. For the most demanding, manufacturers have created kits that are derived directly from the world of competition. However, they are also intended for road use. These versions use the highest-quality materials. In addition to height, they also allow you to modify the calibration of the shock absorbers by varying the extension of the stem and the compression of the spring. Adjustment is straightforward, all done with an adjustment bezel that allows the user to choose from several predefined settings. For example, by adjusting the compression, it is possible to influence the car's pitch without changing the characteristics of the springs that may be well suited to your needs.

In the same way, by adjusting the extension force, we can improve the car's handling and comfort. If we increase it, we can reduce the roll, gain more contact with the road, and improve the car's control in fast curves. Separate modification of rebound and compression also makes it possible to adapt the set-up to a wider wheel and tyre combination.

Special bezels allow you to adjust the extension and compression of the shock absorber to pre-set levels. The separate adjustments allow you to find the best set-up for each track.



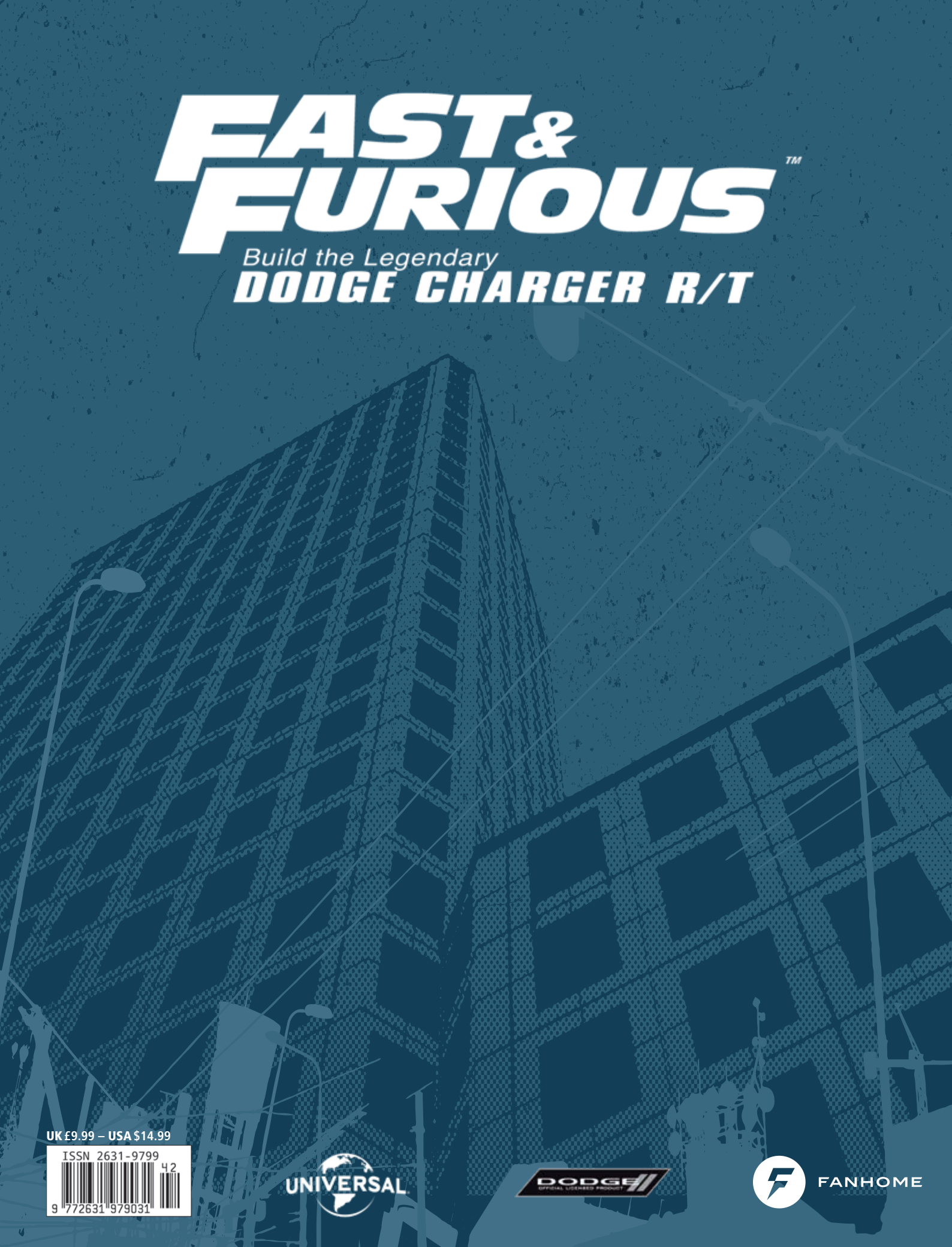
Adjusting the set-up with a simple click

If you are the owner of a super sports car, or if your car has a very low set-up, you will come across many "dangers" on the road – things like bumps, tracks, ramps and rough asphalt. For this reason, special kits have been developed that use a hydraulic pump. They allow the car to be temporarily raised, both on the front and rear axles, by up to 45mm. There are both universal and vehicle-specific kits that prevent damage to the aerodynamic components or the underbody of very low cars. Straight out of the box, you will find everything you need: Hydraulic pipes, a pump, and all the necessary accessories for assembly and installation. The unit with the hydraulic cylinder is installed on the threaded part of the shock absorber, between the spring plate and the spring. If you drive over a bump in the road, the response from your suspension is immediate. This is thanks to the independent dampers of the suspension that contain their own hydraulic fluid. That is how they are able to be independently pressurised or depressurised to deal with non-uniform surfaces. Another advantage of a hydraulic suspension system is that it is customisable. For instance, you can raise the shock absorbers in your vehicle to very different heights. However, the cost of buying and regularly maintaining a hydraulic system can be much higher than a steel spring set-up.



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