

NISSAN R390 GT1 #22
LEMANS 1997

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1:18 Scale Replica

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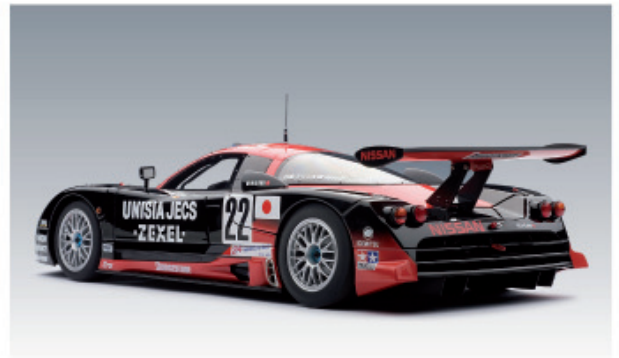
NISSAN R390 GT1 #22 LEMANS 1997

The Nissan R390 GT1 was a racing car built for the 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1997 and 1998. It was built as homologated road version.

After returning to sports car racing in 1995, Nismo (Nissan Motorsport International) had some measure of success with their Skyline GT-R LMs which had competed in the GT1 class. However, these cars were quickly outpaced by the influx of new manufacturers who were using loopholes in the GT regulations to build racing cars that bore little resemblance to their GT1 class competitors. This led to such machines as the Mercedes-Benz CLK GTR and Porsche 911 GT1, as well as the development of the McLaren F1 GTR. Nismo's Skyline GT-Rs therefore needed to be replaced with more purpose built machinery. Turning to Tom Walkinshaw Racing (TWR), Nismo began development of the R390 GT1, named to follow in the tradition started in the 1960s with Nissan's R380. The first decision for Nismo and TWR was the choice of engine. The previous Skyline GT-R LMs had used the trusted RB26DETT Inline-6 motor, but the design was old for a racing car, employing an iron block which added weight. Nismo instead chose to resurrect an engine from the Nissan R89C, a racing car from the Group C era. Its engine, the VRH35Z, was a 3.5L V8 which used an aluminium block, as well as having a lower center of gravity and a better ability to be used as a stressed member over the RB26. Thus the engine was upgraded and designated VRH35L, and would produce approximately over 600hp.

The car's styling group was led by Ian Callum, and the mechanical and aerodynamic design lead by Tony Southgate, both of Tom Walkinshaw Racing (TWR). Southgate was the designer of the Jaguar XJR-9 amongst other TWR Sportscars, which had won at Le Mans. Due to this, the R390 GT1 bears a resemblance to the Jaguar XJR-15, which was also developed by TWR and based on the XJR-9 and in fact used a modified version of the XJR15 monocoque. Development of the car was achieved in a small amount of time, especially due to not having to scratch-build an engine. Nismo and TWR also had to build a production version of the R390 GT1 in order to meet production regulations.

Completed in time for the 1997 24 Hours of Le Mans, the three black and red R390 GT1s were fast in their first competition, with Martin Brundle taking pole position in May's pre-qualifying with a staggering time of 3.43.15. At the race itself, one R390 GT1 (#22) was able to qualify in 4th on the grid and 2nd in its class behind a Porsche 911 GT1, while its partners qualified 12th (#21) and 21st (#23). During the race both cars were able to perform admirably, but soon began to struggle with gearbox problems and at around halfway through the race two of the three R390s (#21 & #22) finally succumbed to mechanical failure and were withdrawn. The third R390 was able to survive the rest of the race (albeit with two complete gearbox changes along the way) finishing 12th overall and 5th in class, although many laps down from the race winner. However the team was racing with better result, the car #32 finishing 3rd in the coming year (1998).

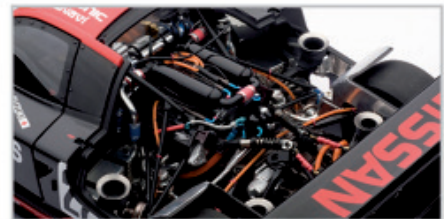


Actual Length: 10"

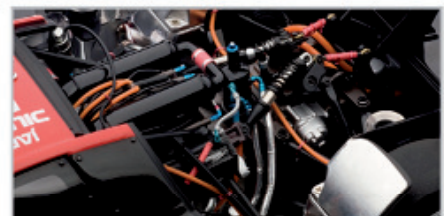
This model is made up of 638 separate metal and plastic parts, including photo-etched plates, metal wiring, screws and nuts. The model weighs 0.8 kg.



Functioning doors and bonnets open with precision and close with perfect fit.



The engine and relevant piping system are precisely replicated in highly detailed.



The suspension is fully-functioned, and duplicated in great detail.



Aluminum foil is applied on various panels and piping which look absolutely realistic.



Fully-decorated and detailed cockpit.
 Tiny metal wires are used to hold the piping.
 The instrument panel is glass-faced.

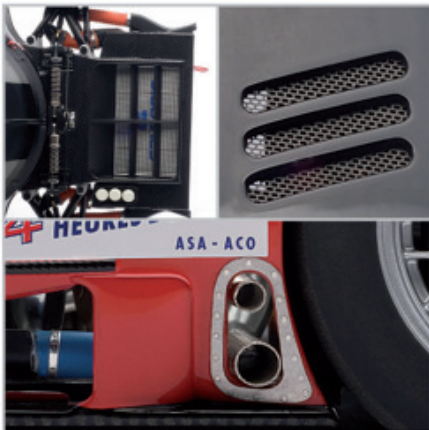


Photo-etched metal pieces are used for radiators,
 air-vent mesh and panel around exhaust end pipes.



Rubber cooling pipes for braking system are used.
 Metal aerial on the roof.



More than 80 pieces of tiny rivets are applied on
 window frame, headlamp covers and body panels
 manually piece by piece which indeed a costly process.



The tires are replicated by rubber nicely.



Precised machine cut metal are used for the supporter
 of rear spoiler, suspension, full filler neck and tow
 hook.



Realistic safety belt.