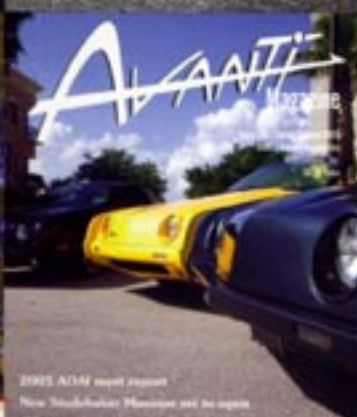


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AVANTI Owners Association
International, Inc.



Avanti in Miniature

BRASS AVANTI

Fiberglass & brass: The long road to completion

Story and photos by
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Special to Avanti magazine

Progress has been slow for the last part of the job: the tires. It's frustrating, for example, now I'm trying to do a white wall insert but the material will not cure! Why? Maybe I made a mistake with the catalytic agent. As the mold is made with wax, removing the uncured material means having to redo the mold. It's not complicated but time consuming.

I continued with the master tire production, and salvaged one from the Oldsmobile Toronado and with some modification I could do the one for the Avant. Letters and numbers on the tire are done with paint - A steady hand is necessary!

As I was still researching the proper material to do the tires (the former supplier does not exist anymore), I began constructing the wheelcovers. I made two forms in brass and "stamped" a sheet of brass in between. Of course, there were many steps in between; I don't feel the necessity to explain it all.

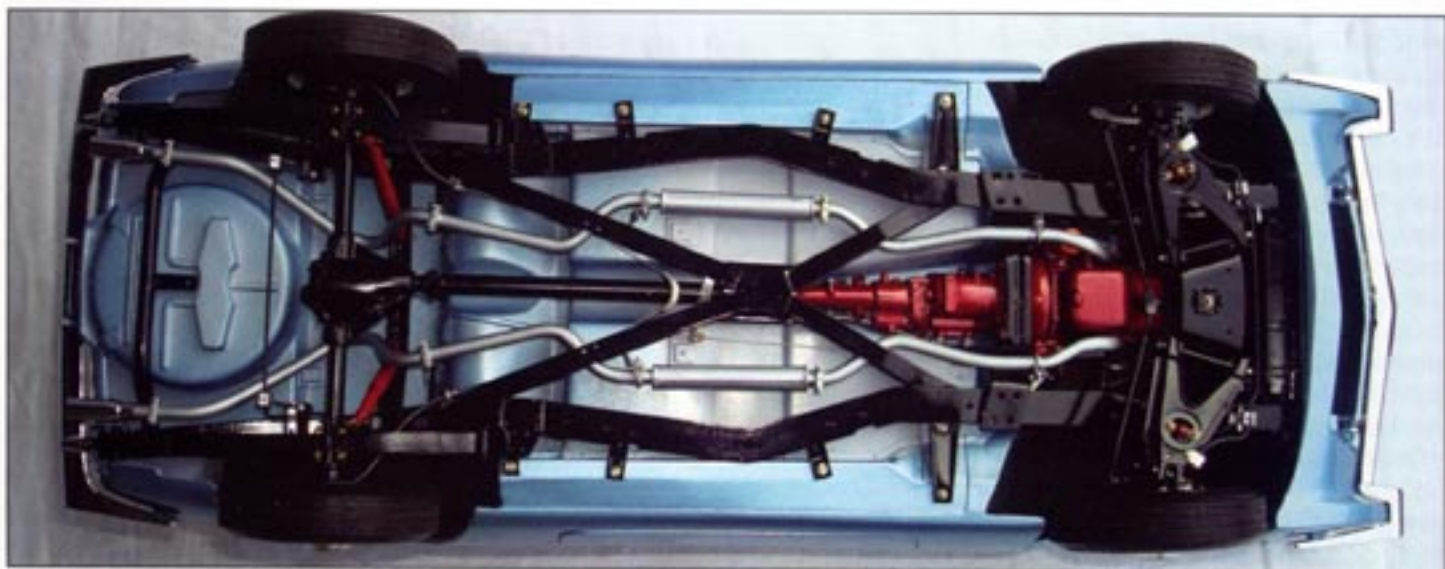
I did a rear license plate with an "Avanti" script.



Back on the tire project, the first negative forms were ready. With these forms, I did two half tires with the same material. These positive forms permitted me to cast the nega-

tive forms in polyester. Then I was able to cast the tires, one after the other.

With some minor exceptions, the



Avanti in Miniature

car is finished. *Toy Studebaker Club* editor and *Avanti Magazine* contributor Joe Parsons is very upset because I could not install the headlamp plastic covers as I originally planned. The culprits are the screws, which are too short. I tried to modify a longer screw with a hexagonal head I have; the modification went well; unfortunately, the material is brass and does not withstand the stress of a screwdriver. As long as no longer steel screws are available, I just consider the front of the car having super clean headlamp covers!

Some considerations about this model: When I began to refresh it in 2003, I wanted to do the least amount of work as possible. I noticed that the rear of the car was way too wide; as a real Swiss guy, I did a compromise: reducing the width a good deal, but not completely. I'm wondering where I had my head the day I made that decision. At the end, the work was the same: a new trunk lid and extensive reworking of the body at the rear. In fact, I had more work: I had to calculate a repartition of the extra 3/8-inch between the various elements at the back.

Fortunately, it's now hard to notice that the rear of the car is too wide; maybe the designers would notice; sadly, they are no longer here.

Another compromise I intended to do was with the wheels and tires. It was my intention to keep the hard

rubber "original" wheels; it was only when the car was almost ready that I made the decision to replace them with something more correct. I'm happy I did that; the look with the new tires is a real improvement.

Despite the difficulty, the wheel-covers are also a nice change compared to the old ones. The only regret I have with them is that I did not polish them well enough before plating. The plater gave me the explanation: he had to media blast the recessed parts to get the dull look; if he had put a thicker layer of copper/chrome, the effect may have been greatly reduced.

I was also lucky with the interior. You may imagine that to find leather in the original color was not possible. I ordered the proper colors from Studebaker International and they sent them surface mail. Some months later, the international surface mail was cancelled by the U.S. Postal Service - shipping of spray cans is now almost impossible.

During the reconstruction, more details were added as originally intended. The fact that my pictures were published in the *Avanti Magazine* and into a French forum was a huge incentive - exposure reduces the risk of mediocrity! Had I published pictures from day one, some compromises or simplifications would have been greatly reduced!

Anyway, all in all I'm satisfied with

the final result, even if some details are a bit from perfect. This adventure has been shared by many readers; I hope it was not annoying and I thank also all who helped in one way or the other in the construction of the model: Werner Grossenbacher in Switzerland who allowed me to take some dimensions and pictures, David Crone, Lew Schucart and Joe Parsons and probably others who I forgot.

As I hope I still have some years to live, I began a new project. This model will keep me busy for six to 10 years. It's a 1956/57 Continental Mark II which will be documented on the Mark II forum. Another adventure!

Thank you for your patience; I have appreciated sharing my work with you.



BELOW: Roger Zimmermann at work, milling brass parts for his scale-model Avanti.

