

# '57 Chevy Coupe in 1:12

Revell-Germany Kit #07489  
The Model Car Garage #MCG-2283  
Detail Set



Review by John Martin

2012 Celebrates 100 years of Chevrolet! Way to go Chevy! That's an achievement few can match. I recall stories my dad, Bud, told me growing up about the '57 Chevy's he and his best friend, George, owned. My dad's car was the convertible with a continental kit, a true cruiser. His best friend's car was ordered ready for the track. George was afraid of running it against other cars, but not my dad! He had no problem dropping the hammer on some unsuspecting blowhard. Perhaps that's the reason I got a Chevy for my first car...a Monza! I suppose he thought I would try to outperform his efforts. A story for another time...

Though it's been said a multitude of ways, except for the Corvette, the 1957 Chevy Bel Air is the most recognizable and iconic of all Chevrolet's. Many other models bring in the appropriate number of "ooh's" and "ahh's," but it's the '57 with its big fins and twin windsplits that make it the most desirable and the one even the most novice of car buffs can recognize. Naturally, it makes an obvious subject for scale modeling. Revell-Germany stepped it up a notch with its 1:12 big scale kit. Did I mention it's **BIG!?!** If you're up for a 'Big Scale' challenge, by all means **Buy This Kit!**

This project was a friendly challenge of my skill as a modeler by "Right On! Replicas," Doug Cole. Doug's challenge: build a "show-worthy" model using the Revell-Germany kit and aftermarket photo etch set from The Model Car Garage. Doug supplied the kit and photo etch, and I could build the car any way I wanted. Reluctantly, I acquiesced to Doug's convincing proposal. Perhaps it was time for me to push myself into new territory. Despite personal challenges over the past 2 years, the kit was finished in time for the IPMS National Convention in Orlando, FL in August 2012.



Displayed kit on my 7 ft. air hockey table!

The 1:12 scale Revell-Germany kit can be built 1 of 3 ways out of the box. The modeler can choose between street, strip, or stock versions of the Bel Air. This is not a kit for a novice builder. Realistically, a kit of this magnitude requires a modeler that has had a moderate amount of building

experience. The box kit contains just over 180 parts plus decals. The photo etch set includes 77 pieces and a film with 4 images for the interior gauges and clock faceplate. I intended to model this kit as a “Working-Man’s Classic ’57.” Something a regular “Joe” would have picked up after years of saving his butt off, and making small changes in its appearance to suit his personal taste. So, you will see little changes in the car that were clearly not stock options – a true “work-in-progress.”

The size of the parts aids in showing off the detail of the kit’s features and lines. That being said, where flash exists on the parts there is a significantly increased amount of sanding required compared to regular 1:24 scale models. The thickness of the plastic makes sanding away unwanted plastic more labor



**The body positioned on a standard laptop.**

intensive.

Ejector pin marks are especially difficult to fill, cover, and sand smooth without destroying any detail. This is particularly evident on the underside of the hood. The upside to this is that there are fewer marks you need to worry about compared to smaller scales. The fenders of the kit also required a significant amount of filling and sanding. This was accomplished using 1-step Bondo. Molded body detail was removed by using a straight edge hobby blade, and then sanded smooth.



**Photo etch detail set and instructions.**



**Ejector pin marks make removal difficult.**

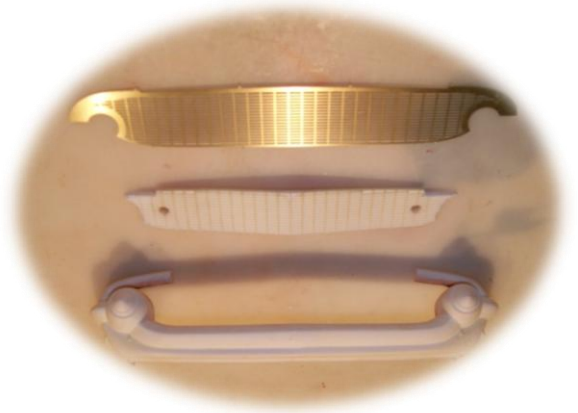
**Removal of body detail.**



**Bondo used to fill fender**

The next challenge was preparation of the grille. The front bumper and grille come molded in one piece. The grille must be removed to use the photo etch grille. Again, the thickness of the plastic makes this a difficult task.

Where the modeler may just use a hobby knife to cut away the grille with a sharp edge or a saw blade on a smaller scale kit, on this project it was just too big to accomplish easily. I opted for using a small drill in my rotary tool to make a series of small holes to take away a large portion of the plastic. Then I cut between the holes until I could use a saw blade in my exacto handle with relative ease. Basically, it was just a case of “keep working at it” until it finally came off the molded piece. Here’s probably the biggest “trade-off” of the whole project. The photo etch grille offers much crisper detail than the molded part, but the trade is the grille is now out of scale with the rest of the project. The photo etch part is too thin. Overall, I think the aftermarket part adds to the aesthetics of the finished product, but it’s the most obvious mismatch.



One of the first things I do with any car model is to remove the factory chrome plating. This is easily accomplished by immersing the trees in “Super Clean” automotive degreaser, formerly marketed by Castrol in the purple gallon jugs. You can find this product in Walmart. Though it’s not as harsh as other products used for paint removal (i.e. brake cleaner), it’s still a good idea to use gloves when handling this product, as well as use of a respirator if you’re not in



a large, well-ventilated area. Once the plating was off I washed the parts with dish detergent and water. This helps take the “gum” off the parts so they can be sanded efficiently. There is a large amount of bonding agent left behind that must be sanded away to get down to plastic. Skipping this step will leave you with an uneven surface during painting. Did I mention there was a lot of sanding involved? Later, I prepped the parts to be chromed with Alclad II Gloss Black Base (ALC 305). I’ve tried other paint products

as a base for the Alclad II Chrome (ALC 107) with mixed results. My personal experience has proven to me that using the Alclad II base produces the most consistent results on my projects. Next, I moved on to the interior.

Every modeler has to deal with seams that need filling when gluing parts together. One of the difficulties that come with putting the seats together happens when there is a textured surface involved, as like you will find with this kit. One of the tricks I’ve tinkered with over the



years with a fair amount of success has been to use Tenax-7R plastic weld. Use a brush with the bristles cut short and flat. Apply the Tenax-7R with the flat brush at a 90° angle to the surface and “dimple” the surface until the seam fills in and the textured appearance of the surface has been obtained. Due to the large texture of this kit’s seats, I opted to use a regular sable brush that I regularly use to apply the Tenax-7R. This technique is more of a “short-cut” option. One could always fill, sand, and scribe the intricate detail, but I have patience issues...



I had decided to use a combination of black and white to simulate a different twist on the upholstery. Much of the time I use blue painter’s tape for masking. Several attempts at masking the instrument cluster were unsuccessful. Though I’d never tried the next technique because I thought it was like throwing money away, I decided to use Bare Metal Foil for the masking process. The foil is much more delicate to work with, but is much easier to

mold into lines you want to mask off from the surrounding area. The instrument cluster on the big ’57 was about as irregular a surface to mask off as you’re likely to see. Overall, use of the bare metal foil proved to be the right choice. I was able to airbrush the dash black without disturbing the white cluster. I painted the chrome strip by hand, as well as the “Bel Air” script between the radio and clock. The photo



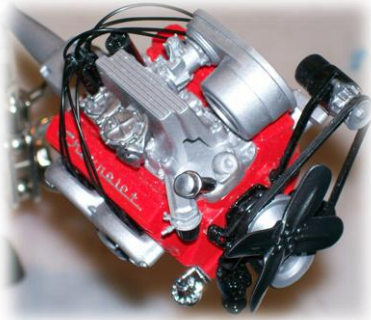
etch set doesn’t come with many pieces for the interior; a steering wheel center cap and some script (2). I used only the center cap.

The detail set comes with film of the instrument cluster gauges and clock. The film was brittle, difficult to cut easily and keep a clean edge. Also, the detail had a tendency to “rub” off if touched inadvertently leaving little room for error. I cleaned up the films and set them in the gauge cluster using Future Floor Wax



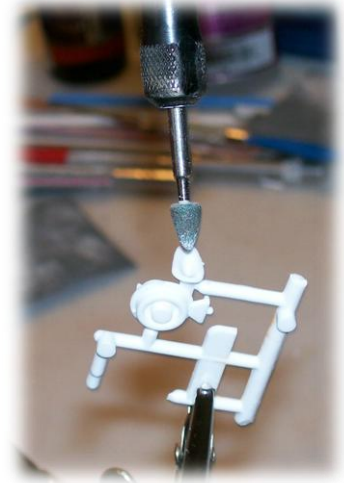
(now marketed by Pledge). I allowed a small puddle to form over the films. Once dry they give the appearance of glass. If I were to attempt this kit, or like kits, again and had a detail set like

this to work with I would opt for dry brushing the kit's details and finishing with Future. Just for fun, I added the detail set's grille shield in gold as a "plate" for the interior tub's rear deck lid. (This part doesn't work with the kit's grille, it's larger than the kit part. In small print on the detail set's instruction sheet you'll find information about a resin part that is available for use with the set's photo etch set. I assume this part was meant for that resin cast. But, that was not supplied to me for the build and I didn't realize there was another part available until I was far too deep into the build to consider using the resin part. I was rushing to finish the project for the IPMS National Convention, which ultimately proved to be my undoing. In the end the kit turned out respectable but not really "show" worthy.) Moving on...



I completed the engine subassembly as the stock fuel injected power plant. The kits parts have very good detail, and offer good fit and finish. I added a little detail by hand brushing the "Chevrolet" script on the valve covers and other details on the engine parts. The only photo etch

parts for the engine is the spark plug wire looms and radiator cap. There are many knobs and bolt heads in the detail set, but I did not opt for using anything but the radiator cap. The cap must be placed directly on the radiator or else the hood will not shut properly. I used a rotary tool with a stone grinding cone to cove out the bell of the twin car horns.



My greatest nightmare with the build was painting the body. Now, I did myself no favors here...I went with gloss black. Notwithstanding my own demons, if you attempt this kit be prepared to spend a great deal of time painting, wet sanding, buffing and polishing. I found the Zona polishing cloths ([www.zonatool.net](http://www.zonatool.net)) to be a great sanding/buffing tool once I got the surface down to a 3000 grit wet paper finish. The Zona package came with cloths that start at 30 micron and step down to 1 micron (30, 15, 9, 3, 2, 1). These cloths can be used to

sand out scratches in clear plastic (windshields). Start with 30 micron cloth and keep polishing down to 1 micron. Be patient and use each cloth as recommended. Dip the polished part in Future and you'll have a great part when you're finished.

The photo etch set has some very good detail parts for the exterior of the build. They take paint very well, and the instructions come with options for finishes. The set I was given had a couple of manufacturing flaws; the grill had several pieces of metal flake off after separating from the plate. Fortunately, these parts were all on one side and I located that side facing inward toward the engine compartment. The most difficult repair I had was with the fin inserts. One of them bubbled up down the entire side of the part across the largest section of the fin. After pressing the metal out, sanding and painting, the flaws were not noticeable. However, this did take a great deal of work to fix and was my biggest disappointment with the detail set.



Now, let's not misconstrue things too badly. The photo etch set had very good detail. Overall, use of the set will really crisp up the details of your project. This set has a few flaws as well. The license plate frame is too large for

the plastic plate parts provided with the kit. The same could be said for the front grille emblem (shield). As I said before this part was probably meant for the resin counterpart, but at the time of the writing of this review I didn't have confirmation of that fact. Obviously, if you choose to go that route be certain of your choices before you get too far down the road. There were also some manufacturing defects with a few of the parts from the detail set with plating separation and bubbling. Close inspection

of the detail set would be recommended prior to use.





This build was a great deal of work. The Revell-Germany kit hides nothing in this large scale. The detail of the molds was very good and there were no noteworthy alterations that needed to be made from the stock parts. This can would be a very good build straight out of the box. With or without the aftermarket parts, this is definitely not a “weekend” project. Be prepared to spend some time at the bench and you’ll have a model you can be proud to show off to your friends.

**Kit:** No. 07489 **Scale:** 1:12

**Manufacturer:** Revell-Germany

**Kit details:** Injection-molded, 181 parts, decals, 2 sizes of rubber lines.

**Pros:** Very good detail, minimal fit problems. 3 options to build. Accurate instruction detail.

**Cons:** Thick plastic makes sanding difficult. Ejection pin marks difficult to fill and sand without losing nearby detail.



A little “Scale Perspective” with a 1:24 VW Bus



**Kit:** No. MCG-2283 **Scale:** 1:12

**Manufacturer:** The Model Car Garage

**Kit details:** Nickel/silver alloy  
Photo Etch, decal film

**Pros:** Excellent detail, thorough instruction sheets, takes paint well.

**Cons:** Manufacturing process flaws, size mismatches with kit parts. Decal film brittle and details rub off easily.