

# Living in a Yellow Submarine

Sky of blue, sea of green,  
and lots of styrene  
in between shine up  
AMT's toylike reissue

BY RANDY FORGO



**L**ife may have been easy for the Beatles aboard the *Yellow Submarine*, but building a model of it was a challenge. MPC originally issued the kit in 1968 with kids in mind. AMT's 1/25 scale reissue appears unchanged after almost 50 years.

In addition to a two-piece hull, the kit features a three-wheel "roll & go" design, a hidden buoy, *and* an elastic propeller drive. Definitely fun, but not the look I was going for.

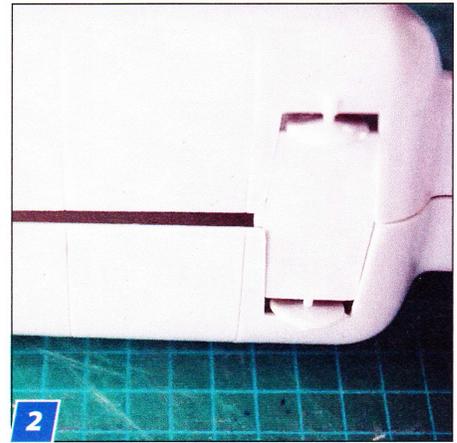
Primarily a car modeler, I wanted to improve my skills by working with a new genre. Who would have thought that a windup toy based on an animated movie could teach you so much!

I ended up discarding most of the gimmicky parts — including the hand crank used to propel the sub when submerged in water — and making extensive modifications to the hull. My focus was on creating a sub with striking colors and clean lines.

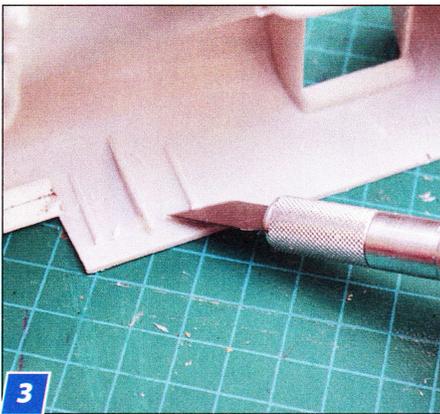
**1,200,000**  
Number of  
copies  
of  
Yellow  
Submarine  
sold within four  
weeks of the  
song's U.S.  
release on  
August 5, 1966.



In the town where I was born, lived a modeler who sailed to sea. However, this modeler only had the box art and an old cassette as research material. With the help of the Internet, I confirmed the cassette cover art was the more accurate choice as far as color scheme was concerned.



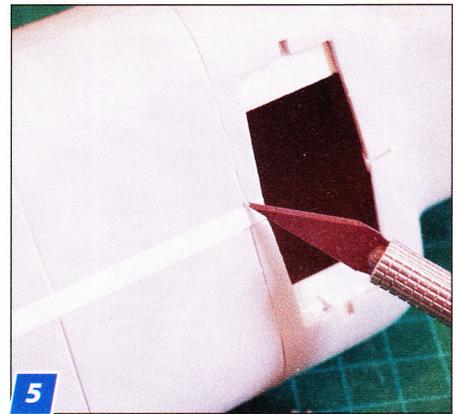
A test-fit of the two-piece hull with the "roll & go" wheels clearly showed where most of the filing, filling, and sanding would take place to smooth the hull.



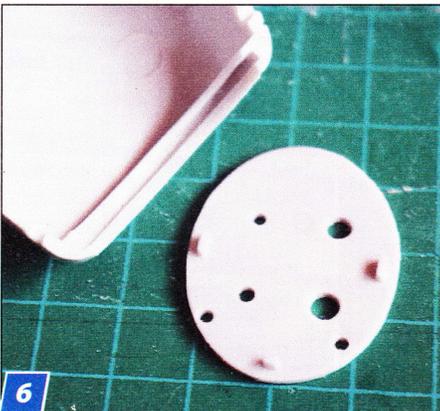
Numerous molded-on pins and holes helped with the hull alignment, but they were removed from the bilge to make room for a thin strip of styrene used as backfill to help bridge the 3mm gap that ran along the length.



Gluing the hull was a complex procedure requiring a large vice, rubber bands, and numerous clamps to align the long seam between the halves.



I glued a second length of thin styrene on the outer side of the gap. After filing and sanding, the panel lines were carefully rescribed using the back of a No. 11 hobby knife.



The periscope mounting panel (also indicated as a recessed cover for a buoy in the kit instructions) was supposed to fit between two molded grooves in the periscope tower, as pictured. Instead, I ground away at the grooves to bring the panel flush with the top of the tower.



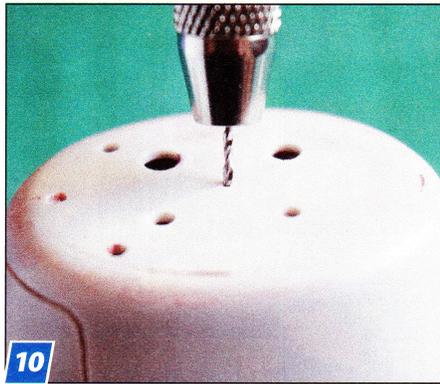
After much sanding, the flush-mounted periscope panel creates a smoother, more streamlined appearance.



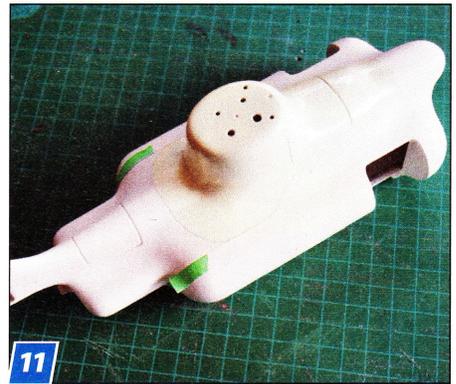
I filled mold-release holes on the rudder and removed the top and bottom hinge pins. I used a pin vise to drill a hole through the rudder and inserted a length of tubing. A small metal axle would be added in final assembly for a hinge.



**9** I filled holes for the original screws using scrap-styrene rods that were filed and sanded smooth. The hole in the bow intended for the elastic propeller windup crank was also filled with styrene.



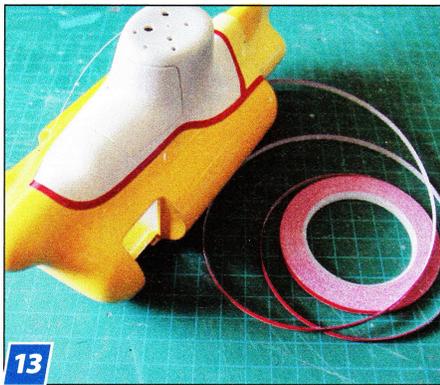
**10** Once complete, the model would hang from a small chrome display stand. I drilled a hole into the periscope tower and would thread fine gauge fishing line through after the model was painted, but before the painted character panels were added.



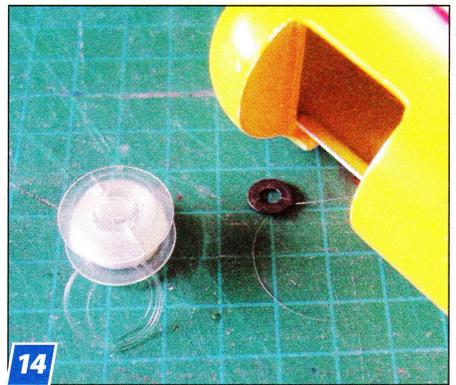
**11** After the final filling, sanding, and priming, the hull received white primer coated with Testors clear gloss. Each color on the hull was wet-sanded to a glossy finish.



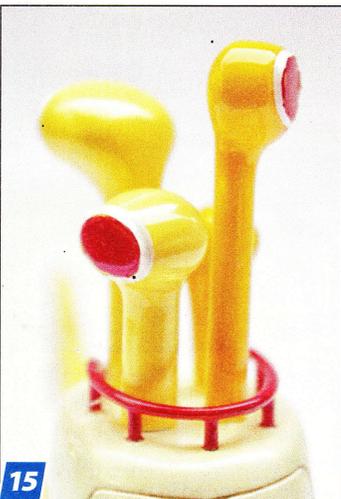
**12** Extensive masking was needed to achieve a clean three-tone finish. The paint scheme didn't follow existing panel lines, so careful masking was required. Humbrol gloss yellow (69) was airbrushed for the darker shade and then mixed with Humbrol gloss white to create a paler yellow.



**13** Admittedly, painting isn't my strongest skill. So, instead of attempting to paint the dominant red hull stripe with another tricky masking job, I opted to use automotive pinstripping. The result is a clean, straight, smooth finish.



**14** Ready to do final assembly, I threaded fishing line down through the periscope tower and out one of the hatch openings. A small washer was tied to the end to keep the line from slipping back out the periscope hole.



**15**



The fishing line goes unnoticed when looking at the periscope tower. I predrilled holes for the rudder hinge before painting and installed the rudder afterward. After final assembly, minor filling, sanding, and painting concealed the hole in the tail. And our friends are all aboard! The port side hatch opens to reveal Chief Blue Meanie, and the starboard-side hatch houses Captain Fred. With that, the *Yellow Submarine* was finished. So we sailed into the sun! **FSM**