

Green Magazine

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TOYS

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'BO' Lindeman crawler has fine features, also flaws

In recent years, there have been increasing numbers of manufacturers producing model farm toys and I have covered products made by several of them. Ertl is by far the largest producer and, as such, produces the greatest quantity of John Deere farm toys. A

smaller company (also located in Dyersville, Iowa) is Spec Cast. Until just a few years ago, Spec Cast did not produce any John Deere "toys" but did produce some pewter John Deere tractors for collectors that were rather crude at best. Around May of this year, John

Deere dealers began taking delivery of Spec Cast's newest release in 1/16th scale, which was a model "BO" Lindeman crawler. It carries their stock number JDM-116.

This particular model is packaged in the typical open front box and

is actually wired in place to prevent movement and damage. I have seen this product advertised in some of the toy literature as a collector's edition or special edition model but the box does not carry any such identification nor does the model itself. Quantities may have been limited to dealers, but I don't know that for sure at this point.

The model itself has some nice features as well as flaws. The bulk of the crawler is made of die-cast metal with a few plastic pieces scattered in as is typical of many models being produced these days. The hood is a single piece with the radiator cap and covers for the air intake, fuel tank and gasoline tank all cast in place. The gasoline tank is part of the hood casting and, although it has what appears to be the filler cap on top, it is somewhat oval in shape rather than round.

Engine detail is fair in that you can identify most of the major components such as the air cleaner, engine block and manifolds, but they are all rather smooth and blended together. Likewise, a cylinder is cast in place for the radiator fan without providing any of the fan detail. The belt pulley is part of the main engine casting and thus does not turn. The flywheel is a separate metal piece but is held in place with a green phillips head screw and also does not turn. To make matters worse, the flywheel is painted a slightly brighter shade of green than the rest of the model.

The operator's platform has many of the controls including the steering levers, gear shift lever, high and low range shift lever and clutch lever. These items are made of a very soft plastic material that holds its shape well but can be bent without damage. This is

especially nice in preventing the levers from breaking off if the tractor is at all manhandled. The metal seat pan is riveted to the seat support and seems to be pretty close to scale. However, the seat support on my model was



installed with a lean to the left.

The best parts of this tractor are the tracks and undercarriage assembly. The tracks are made of individual metal castings that are snapped together. Their detail is very good and they seem to accurately reproduce those found on the real tractors. The drive wheels are die-cast plastic but also carry a very nice level of detail. They turn and so the entire model is capable of moving on the tracks. The name "Lindeman" is cast on the panel between the drive wheels in addition to what appear to be the three guide rollers.

What ruins the whole thing is the fact that the undercarriage is attached to the main frame with black and green screws. Green screws all around would have been a better choice and rivets would have been the best choice. Instead, the black screw heads really

stand out and look out of place.

Another area of improvement would have been with the means to secure the two body halves together. Two holes were cast in place on the right side of the model, one just ahead of the belt pulley and the other in the lower portion of the radiator side. These holes are also for screws which are buried deep within. The problem is that the tractor looks funny with these two open spots. It sure would have been nice to cover the holes with caps or plugs. Again, rivets would have been a better choice.

The paint finish on this model is very good with no runs or flaws. The "John Deere" identification on each side of the hood and on the front of the radiator top tank are silk screened in place. The traditional John Deere logo is found on the face of the gasoline tank and is silk screened in place as well. It would have been a nice touch to cast the "John Deere" name in place on the top of the radiator.

The price for this model is pretty typical of most new toys these days. I paid about \$42 for mine and anything in the \$40 to \$50 range would be about right.

I have been tough in this particular review only because I believe that with each new model that comes out, the manufacturers must improve in the level of detail and overall quality. Sure, this particular piece is pretty good for the price that is asked, but a few refinements could have easily made it better. If you don't care to spend tons of money for a custom made "BO" Lindeman, this one will fit nicely into your collection despite the imperfections.

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