

DARRYL STARBIRD'S PREDICTA

by Mark S. Gustavson



The 2017 NNL-East Predicta display set is entirely fictional -- Monogram never produced a hobby store promotional display featuring the very rare pearl red plastic version of the kit.

In late 1963, Darryl Starbird restyled and rebuilt his Predicta show car in a style and color that would have a huge sales potential for the pending Monogram kit. One change that Monogram insisted upon was that the car be painted a bright metallic red color.

To best promote their new model of the famed Predicta, Monogram Models created a version of the then-product wide display base on which a factory-built Predicta model would be displayed to generate sales. Hobby stores ordering a case of Predicta kits received the factory-created display base *and* a model of the Predicta.

Jazzed up by the bright metallic red color of the Predicta, Monogram product manager Roger Harney wanted to try something new – mold the model in a special red metallic color to mimic the color of the car that Monogram had purchased. The company ran hundreds of kits in this pearl red plastic, and released them to the public before company officials, when responding to some negative hobby store owner comments, determined that the pearl powder wasn't spreading evenly around the entire model, resulting in splotchy areas. Roger and others in the company agreed that such a mottled appearance would doom the substantial sales numbers the company was counting on. So, the pearl red plastic was discontinued; all remaining kits (about 1.4 million through 1968!) were molded in the

now-famous bright solid red plastic. The pearl red plastic kits were withdrawn from the warehouse and destroyed. However, about 740 pearl red kits made it to the marketplace and were sold. No known promotional photo was ever taken of the pearl red model sitting on the special display base.



This is an authentic Monogram 1964-era display: original display stand, and solid red plastic familiar to kit buyers.

Some 53 years after the kit was first issued, almost no unbuilt pearl red kits remain and only a *very* small number of built-up kits are ever seen.

In late 2016, Mark S. Gustavson announced his long-planned Predicta Project and signed a book deal with McFarland Books. One part of The Predicta Project focuses on the Monogram kits: the book will contain an Appendix on the pearl red kits, showing a few of these kits that the Project has acquired and other details. The photo of the pearl red model and base you see here will appear in that book.

The Predicta Project is pleased to donate a built-up pearl red version and a modern reproduction of the Monogram display base to the NNL-East auction for the benefit of the **International Model Car Builders' Museum**.

Just before delivery to Monogram, Darryl Starbird stands next to his iconic masterpiece -- painted metallic red!



Credits: The pearl red Predicta model, purchased from an Ebay auction, was cleaned up and detailed by Paul Bringhurst. Digital restoration work on the reproduction display base was performed by Steve Roullier.

Visit the The Predicta Project for more information and details: thepredictaproject.org/