

Ambassador Report 10

April 2016

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1. Matchbox returns production to old Lesney factory in England!

We just heard the breaking news that Matchbox production will move back to England into the old factories of Lesney in London. Even the old Lesney busses will be restored and get back in service soon!



What a fantastic news on this Friday
April the 1st!

2. First sun in 2016 and disclaimer!

As I don't know if all parts of the world know and celebrate the 1st of april tradition I explain the news of topic 1 as fake!

Here in Germany it is a good tradition to play people jokes on 1st of april – today local radio told the people that there will be no beer on the biggest “Oktoberfest” in my area for example! Which isn't true as well as our topic 1 here – so production stays at Thailand where it is now giving us superb models at \$1 price point!

By the way the factories were knocked down for the Olympic games anyway!



We used the first sun and nicked a car from my father for a first ride ... and yes of course a Merc ;)

Let the spring come and have fun with the rest of the report !

Dirk

3. Questions to the team and their answers

We did really put a lot of questions forward to the team and we really thank them for their effort to answer as many and as accurate as possible

I have worked on a 2015 listing, and have filled in all I can. But we are missing 4 numbers of unknown vehicles. Can you tell us which vehicles were MB23, MB92, MB100 and MB120. I assume one of them is the Range Rover Evoque. Plus are these 4 all still coming for 2015 in later 2016 batches. **MB23 would have been the Range Rover that got pushed back to 2016 MB92 is Questor, MB100 is Rock Shocker and MB120 is Jungle Crawler all three vehicles were pulled out when we went from 15 mixes to 12 in 2015 and I didn't carry them to 2016.**

US domestic long card assortments have been reduced from 36-count boxes to 24-count boxes. Are there plans to reduce the ROW international short card assortments from 72-count boxes? The biggest problem is (particularly in the UK), stores only sell 36 at a time. Therefore they take the top row of the box and put them up, which is only half the models. Then when they go they put the other half up. Therefore quite often the choice selection is really poor.

Long Card is the AMERICAS version not just US, Latin America still receives 72 count boxes.

The Short Card for Europe/Middle East/Africa & Asia is still and will still be 72 count boxes

The Europe problem we can't speak to it, shelf space is limited and as Matchbox is only been well distributed (and that is debatable) in Germany and the UK, anywhere else would just fall below that even more.

Can we ask which year the 9/10-packs are for which contain the Oldsmobile Vista Cruiser and Chevy El Camino as exclusives. Normally, we get 8 packs per year, with the first pair arriving in time for Christmas. In 2015, the first pair arrived for Christmas 2014, with another pair in April and another in

October. Then this pair arrived for Christmas 2015. Was it just a case of catching up with the 2015s, or did we only get 6 packs for 2015, and these are the first of the 2016 9/10-packs.

There are no longer 8 packs in the line, only 6.

Can we ask how many 5-packs are due for 2016 (names of the packs would be very useful too)? We used to have 12 per year, but for 2015 it was reduced to 9. We assumed it was to accommodate the 3 Jurassic World 5-packs.

8 new packs with 5 Carry Overs for a total of 13 available packs throughout the year.

Will the 5-packs feature all exclusive liveries or will there be some pulled from the mainline? This started 2 years ago and is not very popular as we much preferred having all exclusive liveries in them.

All exclusive vehicles and liveries.

We were shown sneak peeks of a Muppets licensed 3-pack being released in 2015 ages ago (in fact the London Bus was shown in 2014). Is this pack still coming?

NO

What happened to the Jurassic World Roar-by-Four model? It was listed on the back of the card as being released but never appeared.

Cant speak to distribution in Europe.

It has been noted recently that all licensed new models appear to have 1/64 scale put on their base regardless of what their exact scale is. Is there a reason for this? It is not proving to be a popular decision. Since 1980 we have seen scales put on models, and they may not be 100% accurate due to the models being tweaked in ways to accommodate wheels, fattened to look better etc, but it was a general idea of how small they were in relation to the real vehicle. Suddenly saying they are all 1/64 scale just seems wrong.

This is actually a mistake, and he's right, either we don't call out the scale or we should be true to it.

How are things looking on the distribution front for the new "Best of" series. Which stores in USA are looking to get them? We notice a multi-lingual package for them. Does this mean that other countries are taking them too? If so, which countries?

It's a north America productline being sold in US & Canada only.

Is there any thought to any store exclusives? Walmart had some singles as exclusives a few years back (4 models from the basic range were in exclusive liveries for Walmart). Target had some special sets created a few years ago with exclusive models just for them.

Jeep and Land Rover are coming 2016

Is there any thought to bringing back some of the popular items from before? Simple twin packs (2 models for twice the price of a single) is a very popular example. Convoy would also be popular, particularly with the new Ford Cargo in the basic range, having rear sections would be amazing. Also, 10-pack 1st Editions was a popular item. It had 10 models from that year's new castings in new liveries. With the packs now being 9 or 10-pack depending on market, makes them something awkward. But maybe the idea of the 1st Edition somewhere else? Maybe a 5-pack of 1st Editions at the end of the year. Perhaps a seasonal Christmas offering with new castings included that have variations to their single issue and 1 or 2 in Christmas style liveries. Just ideas being thrown out for that one, as 1st Editions as an idea was popular.

Nope, we don't have any plans for any of the above for the time being.

With 125 models being released in 2016, are we right in assuming there will be none that appear in 2 liveries. Recent years have seen a 1-120 with 5 models in 2 liveries and a total of 125.

Total vehicle count 138 vehicles. 13 vehicles pending from 2015 and 125 new liveries/models for 2016.

How many of the 1-125 will be appearing in the Power Grab boxes?

ALL

Will these all be simply models pulled from the mainline or will there be any exclusives thrown in?

all vehicles come from the mainline

Also, will the Caddy One be included? I assume not due to its extra length.

Correct

Or the Mauler Hauler due to its height (if it is in the 2016 range)?

Mauler Hauler is not in the 2016 line

The MB1002 Heavy Railer (or Heavy Freighter as its base says) has a hook on the back for trailer units. Are there any in the pipeline? Hint, this could also be a great way to re-introduce twin packs, as this model with a trailer would be a perfect fit.

I wouldn't expect any other trains in the mainline for the time being.

What are unique challenges to the distribution of mainline Matchbox releases that may not be the same as those experienced by Hot Wheels?

Smaller brand vs HW

With the name recognition to the non-collecting general public being better with Matchbox than Hot Wheels, has any recent consideration been given to

combining the two lines and dedicating a Matchbox sub-brand of Hot Wheels to collectors or vice-versa?

Nope.

Which model has been the most surprising success in the past decade?

I can only speak to the models dating back to 2015. The Nissan Skyline has probably received the most buzz that I can think of currently.

How can collectors and other retail purchasers most effectively influence the decisions on which licensed models are released?

You can send the design team coffee.... Hahah. You can send the marketing team coffee too. LOL.

Or alcohol. LOL!

Dirk says: We will surely do that in ABQ this year!

Most Volkswagens (along with some other licensed models) seem to fly off the shelves but are perceived to have limited and sporadic distribution and production. If these sell so well, why is production not keeping up with that demand for these models?

All vehicles are produced in similar fashion across the year. There isn't a rational to specific makers or models to determine how many get produced. Same formula is used in other Mattel diecast brands.

The cost-reduction of the light bar on many models is not proving popular. Is there any chance of returning the separate light bar piece on models? This is proving to be most popular with customizers who like to "civilianize" their models.

We can revisit this in the future. Maybe for 2018.

What is the process/criteria for picking and choosing what new models get introduced to the Matchbox line? Is it about how easy it is to get the licensing/permission from an automaker to make their model or how complicated making and mass producing a model is? Is it possible to make models from automakers that are extremely exclusive or even non-existent anymore? (Rolls Royce, Saab, Hummer, etc)

A very long and complicated answer is needed here. We work on this as a team for months. Design puts together an initial list comprised with both licensed and original models. It is possible to produce castings for vehicles that are non existent, depending on if we can get the rights.

Is there any chance Matchbox can make a hypercar again? You know, the really high-end supercar vehicles that Hot Wheels keep doing.

No

Many people still see Matchbox as a more posh brand than Hot Wheels, and as such see that Matchbox should be sold at a higher price point. Keeping

the price low constantly is damaging and the addition of a light bar, a full tampo print, an opening part, metal bodies etc. are features that were very well known with Matchbox. This comes from many, MANY people who would like to see a more premium product as a baseline for Matchbox. Can the price point be increased to allow for more of the Matchbox features of old to be brought back?

It will mostly likely come down vs Hw in the foreseeable future.

The range is currently at 125. The biggest problem is many of the generic models are not popular, sitting on pegs and causing delays in getting more stock rotating through. Would it be a better idea to reduce the range down, taking away generics from all of the excess numbers? If we have say 60 models out of 125 needing licenses, surely 60 out of 75 would still require the same licenses, but with only 15 generics filling up the remaining spaces in the range, there is much less pegwarming of unwanted models, and more products will be sold? BTW 75 is where most would like to see the range return to. As a way to keep things fresh, make tweaks to the vehicles through the year. Alter the livery a little. Change wheels, or interiors on different runs. Change the color of the vehicle. Making a model exactly the same on multiple runs can lead to a backlog of a model sitting on a shelf/peg. Running changes are a good thing.

We'll have a couple running changes for 2016.

Has any thought started about the 50th Anniversary of Superfast yet? We know it is a few years off (2019), but how about coming up with ideas for a special range to celebrate its half century. Re-casting some original Superfast models (also there is a Blue Shark casting sitting there which could also be used maybe in light blue, with a 50th Anniversary logo on it).

No plans to celebrate Superfast outside a collector focus item, similar to Best Of Collection

Which countries are likely to see Power Grabs?

No way to know

Dirk says: They are turning up in place where dealers orders them like Czech republic. If they are not in your place ask you dealer for them. If many dealers ask the Mattel distribution in one country they will listen some day!

It has been noted that some Power Grabs are in glued flapped boxes, and others are taped closed, bit both are simply a fold over end which does not tuck in. Obviously this is causing a few issues with people who like to open the models and display them with boxes. Has any thought been given to using a proper end flap that tucks back in (even if it was just one end to ease the problem)?

Not at the moment

Also, to combat theft, maybe shrink wrapping the boxes for sale may be a better choice than gluing or taping?

Not at the moment

Distribution issues. This is a huge thing for those trying to find Matchbox. Can these be passed on to whoever is in charge to try and do something about? Here are some of the known places that have been marked down as problematic....

USA – Target stores. Most products have vanished from them.

Fixed as of 2016

Dirk says: This is a very good news for the US market!

Malaysia – nothing at all. Could Hot Wheels being made there have an effect?

No effect, Matchbox not sold in Malaysia.

Dirk says: Ask your dealer for it – 1 question might be ignored, 10 might be noticed, 100 will be noticed, 1000 might be the success!

India – a huge market with nothing available.

Matchbox not sold in India.

Australia/New Zealand. This was one of the biggest markets outside USA, yet appears to be fading fast.

We are working on fixing for 2016

UK. Again, one of the biggest markets outside USA, with products drying up in most stores. The UK is the birthplace of Matchbox, and as such should be an important market to sell them. (It was widely known 10-15 years ago that the 3 biggest markets outside USA were Germany, UK and Australia/New Zealand).

We are working on fixing, no clarity if it will happen in 2016.

Netherlands. Only 1 stores still seems to stock Matchbox. Considering the Netherlands address is on the bottom of every model (1186 MJ, 1 NL), this country must be significant in some way. There should be more than just one stockist for the brand.

Smaller toy market carry smaller portfolios of brand and products, likely Matchbox is only offered as an exclusive for certain stores in the region

4. MODELS WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE MADE

(Fifth installment by: Larry Scaduto)

Well, Spring has arrived (In this part of the world) there has been several Auto Shows where vehicle manufactures have been showing with pride all their new models as well as ideas for the not too distant future. In this reports Models article I'm going to be showing a selection of new models that would make excellent additions to the Matchbox line. I will also have pictures that were sent in by collectors and a selection of concept cars from the 60's & 70's that made it into the Matchbox line at the start of the Superfast era. A trip down memory lane. (As we say!) Hope you enjoy my segment and if you have some great ideas for future models, please send them to: matchboxamb10@outlook.com Larry



2016 Bugatti Veyron Grand Sport



2017 Chevy Camaro LT



1973 Lamborghini Espada



Hyundai Vision S Concept



Opel GT Concept



2016 Maserati LeVante



Zil Punisher



Lamborghini Centenario



2016 Ford Ranchero



1968 Harley-Davidson Chicago Police Servi Car



2015 Koenigsegg Agera RS

Design Ideas submitted by Collectors:



International Terrastar Ambulance



Vermont State Police Ford Interceptor and Explorer



Royal Canadian Mounted Police Ford Mustang



Mercedes SLS AMG Polizei

60's & 70's Concepts in the Matchbox Line:



1967 Lamborghini Marzal



1968 Alfa Romeo Carbo



1970 Mazda RX500



1970 Nissan 126X



1968 Dodge Charger III

Well, I hope you enjoyed reading my article this time around. I had some very nice ideas sent to me for future models as well as for models currently available in the Matchbox lineup. I also ran across an article online about some of the best concepts over the years from a variety of manufactures. It just happened to feature models that were released by Matchbox during the Lesney era. I was pleasantly surprised by what was pictured so I included them here. Thank you for reading. Have a wonderful day one and all!

Regards, Larry