

# SHIFT

AUTOMOTIVE

Daily Star



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## COLLECTIBLES

HO scale (1:87) cars



The Hot Wheels 1:64 scale is the most common for all collectors to begin with. Easy to carry and easy to lose under furniture. It's also the most collected scale. While the Hot Wheels craze has reached its peak last year and has come down to a steady state right now, there's an even smaller scale than the typical 1:64. That's HO scale.

HO (pronounced 'aitch-oh') scale is a special terminology used for the most common scale of model trains at exactly 1:87. And model trains need model cars. The boxed cars you see here are by High Speed. They are metal and intricately detailed for the size. The 300SL Gullwing even has a red interior with a separate white steering wheel to match the ivory unit on the real thing.

**Pro:** Value for money as I've bought most of them for an equivalent of 200tk. Many shops in Dhaka were selling as high as 500tk. Interior detail is often better than the larger Hot Wheels.

**Cons:** Paint quality is excellent on most but some suffer from oxidation and bubbles. Most are apparent from day one. So look carefully before purchase.

The brown Crown (pictures online) on the other hand is a much more detailed yet plastic unit by Tomytec. It's heavily detailed with separate lenses for lights, full interior and intricate scripting on the trunk lid. It goes to show that sometimes the best things come in small packages.

For more pics and details, visit our site.

E.R. RONNY

## TEST DRIVE CHIC URBAN MOBILITY

2010 Toyota iQ

Tiny cars have always fascinated me. There's something ultra-cool about compact mobility. Now when a chic iQ gets in the equation, I cannot resist the temptation to check out Toyota's ultimate expression of refined and environmentally efficient urban mobility.

From an aerial view, it is almost like a box. But we humans are not birds. From our POV, the car, with its stubby nose and squat arse stance has an aura filled with controversial exterior design cues. It grows on you and you will eventually realize it is one of the cutest things you can lay your eyes on the road. Especially Bangladeshi roads, where both cute things and cute two legged beings are hard to come by. Don't be fooled by



the size factor of the iQ- for a car that is about 3 metres long, 1.5 metres high and around 1.7 metres wide, there is extraordinary interior space, thanks to the clever placement of the wheels at extreme corners of the vehicle, giving the miniature car a robust stance. It is stereotypical of Bangladeshis to jump to a conclusion that a small car is a girl's car. No, the iQ is NOT a "girls only" car. Any gym going muscle-busting bloke would look metro in it too. Our rather bulky photographer looked a bit out of place while he was in the driving seat doing what he does best. It's probably his funny hairdo.

Just because it is a coupe hatch, it is not fast. Sorry racer dudes. The 1,000 cc multidrive CVT of this little car is as unresponsive as a happily fed lazy kitty at the dab of the soft throttle. But give it a moment or two and the measly 68 lb-ft of torque will eventually start to show from 4K RPM onwards. As the miniature RPM gauge nears 4,500, the CVT shifts up a notch to accommodate my heavy throttle foot. I noticed I was doing well over 70 KPH suddenly which implies the transmission must have shifted gears before that. You won't feel a thing as the lab-coats at Toyota did some sort of magic with the tranny that enables smooth shifts eliminating the 'shift shocks' we usually experience with gear changes. Once I was doing over a 100 (which did take some time, I'll be honest- only 67 bhp, that too at 6,000 RPM), I started paying attention to other details.

Cool factor alert: there's an ECO driving indicator lamp on the multi-information display of the iQ. This encourages more economical driving by signaling when fuel is being saved and, consequently, emissions are reduced significantly. Current and average fuel consumption are also permanently on display. It almost does 15-



20 km/l depending on your right foot and our vicious traffic system. It has a 32 liter fuel tank positioned cleverly to increase interior space further. Because of its petite configurations, we at SHIFT reckoned the iQ will be relatively unsafe. Interestingly though, global safety rating of the iQ has been reasonably acceptable between three to four stars among most categories. There are eight airbags in that small car. I repeat, EIGHT. ABS and EBD comes standard with electric power steering control to minimize the risk of under or over-steer. The front disc and rear drum squishy brakes felt good enough to stop the little car.

The ride height is a little too high, the front



MacPherson strut and rear torsion beam suspension a tad jerky. The iQ lacks the tight feel of grip, despite this particular car coming with a nice set of wheels and semi-sticky Bridgestone tyres. As a result, you will not be comfortable taking sharp turns or curves. But why would you? Toyota's purpose for the iQ build has been solely urban functional mobility. The iQ might struggle up hills, but it has sufficient juice to zip around its natural habitat. The best thing about the iQ is its truly astonishing turning circle of 3.9m. This city car pulls a U-turn unlike anything else I've ever driven. Parking is effortless. Unless you are reverse parking on a steep driveway; the thing groans like a miserable old woman.

You will be only be satisfied with its interior if you slightly lower your expectations, as honestly, Toyota didn't endow any touch of premium in it. The model we got to test had a standard trim package with no push start, no smart key, no soft key controls on the sting ray styled center console, not even the rear passenger seats. It

## The badge-engineered half-brother of the iQ: Aston Martin Cygnet

With EU's anti-pollution laws crippling automakers, Aston Martin took a sly approach at reducing the average CO2 emission by the brand's notorious engines- rebadge the iQ from Toyota and market as Aston Martin Cygnet.

Its a Toyota iQ with some minute cosmetic details such as the front and rear lamps, the signature Aston grille, hood and side vents, and aero. Interior also got a makeover with black/red leather. The same Toyota drivetrain now makes 98hp and 123 Nm torque; which



for an Aston, is hilarious.

Aston Martin had an ambitious plan of selling 4,000 units, of which they could manage only 143 in two years. A sane mind won't buy a car worth 12 lacs for 50 plus, just because of a badge. Eventually, due to a buildup of negative brand image, the marque scrapped the Cygnet.

We reckon the Cygnet would be a hit on Dhaka streets. There's enough folks out here with fat wallets to flaunt one.

does have a pair of comfortable fabric mesh front seats, stereo control mounted grippy steering wheel, nicely finished two tone door panels matching the exterior cherry red hue, cool air conditioning and vast amount of space for such a small car. We reckon that's all you require for zipping around the city in style.

The iQ is about to become a pop icon as the Prius; but in all the cool exuberant ways thinkable. Drinks little gasoline, exhales even less gas. Looks fabulous too. While I was driving around from one end of Dhaka to another on a bright Friday noon, the iQ turned more heads than my hot hatch Glanza V ever did, and that was a stunner.

Would I keep the iQ? For a little less than 12 lacs taka and half a parking space empty, I'd have the iQ in a heartbeat. For details, contact Car House Limited.

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## AUTO NEWS



### Special Bond Astons

The new Bond film, Spectre, just got released in the UK, and is slated for a worldwide release on November 6th. On the occasion, Aston Martin, the preferred marque for Agent 007, has released a special edition of the Db9 GT and released details about the infinitely sleek and mouth-watering DB10 (pictured) that Bond will be driving in Spectre. Head to our site for further details.

MAHBUB HUSSAIN

Micro-cars are nothing new. They've been around for decades, with offerings from all corners of the planet in various formats. Some were 3 wheeled, some were 4 wheeled, some were barely cars while others promised performance. What they all were, though, was great value for money and a statement of urban chic mobility that has been rarely matched. We missed out on quite a few while making this list (there are way too many good ones), so head to our online edition for a more comprehensive list.

# THE BEST OF THE MICRO-CARS



### AUSTIN MINI

The most well known micro car to date was a genius exercise in packaging and minimalist design by its engineer, Sir Alec Issigonis. It would eventually become a pop culture icon, a glowing emblem of 60's British chic.

### FIAT 500 (ORIGINAL)

The 500 was to Italy what the Austin Mini was to Britain: built for mass mobility, but used by hip city dwellers as the a fashion accessory. The gutsy little Fiat also handled well, which led to decent rallying efforts, much like the Mini.



### BMW ISETTA

The Isetta, with its weird design and even weirder entry-egress procedure, represented a turning point for post-war Germany. BMW transitioned from makers of motorcycles and war machines to motor vehicles with this "car".

### FIAT 500 (NEW)

The retro Fiat has all the cute looks and feisty nature of the original, though the target market has largely changes to urban hipsters who consider it an anti-fashion statement than anything else. In Abarth form, it's a maniac.



### AUTOZAM AZ1

It looks like a stunted child of a union between a Ford RS200 and the SW10 Toyota MR2. The AZ1 demonstrated the brilliant sporting ability that micro-cars could have if designed properly. It could smash GTRs in corners and make you a (small-ish) rockstar.



### SUZUKI CAPPUCINO

True to its name, the tiny Suzuki was a punch in the nervous system that made you feel more alive. Sold only in Japan, the Suzuki was way too girly to survive anywhere else, but it has scores of fans worldwide because of its nimble nature.

### DAIHATSU COPEN

Another case of a feminine micro-car convertible failing to impress outside of Japan, the rear wheel drive, turbocharged Copen could sling it in the corners as well as any supercar could. Bangladesh got a few of them, and people laughed at the owners, which is quite sad.



### MITSUBISHI 500

Probably the best looking micro-car ever, with flowy lines and an almost Jaguar-esque demeanor. It was a limousine among micro-cars, offering luxuries like fully padded seats, which was unheard of in other cars in the segment.

### FORD KA

A micro-car made by the Americans. Sounds like a recipe for disaster, but Ford Europe knew what it was doing and so the Ka became a bestseller in the UK and parts of EU. It looked funky and had an economy that was hard to beat.

