



Matt White

# Diecast Report

## Hot Wheels Elite KITT (Knight Industries Two Thousand)

**Robin Hood reincarnated as a car.**

Remember the *Knight Rider* television series broadcast during the early 1980s? The car was a wonder of advanced automotive technology that just happened to resemble a 1982 Pontiac Trans-Am, which was driven by KITT's companion, Michael Knight (David Hasselhoff).

Together Michael Knight and KITT became a fantastic crime-fighting duo with many adventures and close calls to their credit. It was as if Robin Hood was reincarnated as a car to once again help the poor and downtrodden.

Writer and producer Glen Larson devised the part-sci-fi, part-western concept, which went on to be a great hit over four seasons. Car customizer Michael Scheffe came up with the original KITT design concept, while George Barris designed and built the convertible and super-pursuit cars. Of the 23 full-scale KITT cars built for the television series, it is thought that only five survived the numerous stunts and crashes. One car known for certain to have survived is on display in the Hollywood Star Cars Museum located in Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

With such a fantastic pedigree, only Hot Wheels Elite could do justice to this model in scale. KITT is available in two scales: 1/18 #X5469, and 1/43 #X5492. These models are sure to be very popular with collectors if, for nothing else, the fond memories of the television show that it will bring back to so many.

Hot Wheels Elite does a great job with its movie and television cars, and this one is no exception. Overall, the model looks well balanced, with KITT's shape faithfully captured down to the beautifully reproduced wheels and tires. Its glossy black paint finish is mirror-perfect, and the clear glass top-notch quality. The car, based on a second generation Pontiac Trans-Am, is sleek and, apart from the side mirrors, is devoid of unnecessary protrusions, so its outer surfaces are simple, almost plain in fact.



*Knight Rider's KITT has such a fantastic pedigree only a company like Hot Wheels Elite could do the model justice.*

The front of the car faithfully reproduces the split grille, but also includes the famed red light sensor panel that scanned during operation. Special features include working pop-up headlights, opening doors, opening rear hatch, removable Targa-tops and much more.

At first glance, the interior appears to be stock Pontiac Trans-Am, but KITT's ejection seats are reproduced, if only in simulation, and even if they are only decals, the model features all of the instrumentation, gadgets and props that made the television car famous as an effective crime fighter.

But the pièce de résistance is under the hood. That's where KITT's fabulous turbojet engine with modified afterburner resides. Considering the original Trans-Am's 5-liter (305ci) V-8 engine with 250hp output was a tire burner in its day, the KITT version leaves a stock Trans-Am eating its dust.

According to the design specifications, KITT can accelerate from 0 to 60 mph in 0.02 seconds (with boosters applied) and brake from 70 to zero in 14ft. Its eight-speed auto transmission and autopilot system allowed a fuel efficiency of 200mpg.

Yep, it's all there in this handsome Hot Wheels Elite model — faithfully reproduced and a must have in-stock item for customers of movie and television theme cars to add to their personal diecast collections. **HM**



## Full-Scale KITT at the Hot Wheels Elite Stand

**M**att White visited the full-scale KITT replica and crew at the Hot Wheels Elite stand during this year's international Toy Fair in Nuremberg, Germany, and was given a sneak peek at the 1/18 scale Hot Wheels Super Elite version of the KITT car which is scheduled for release late in 2013. And for those captivated by tricks of all kinds, this model will definitely grab your customers' attention.

Starting with what Hot Wheels is calling its Super Elite packaging, which will be a replication of the trailer KITT would enter after each successful mission, the model will be fitted with a sound chip and a high-quality speaker that will spout a host of quotes and key lines often used in the program and made famous from the series.

But best of all, Hot Wheels went all out and negotiated a special deal with Universal Music to include the awe-inspiring theme song that everyone remembers. With KITT displayed in all of his super elite glory, quoting lines and playing the Knight Rider series theme music, it would almost be foolish to overlook the planned release of KARR (Knight Automated Roving Robot) in 1/18 and 1/43 scales, as they would perfectly complement and complete this famous pair of Pontiac Trans-Am based diecast vehicles made famous by the television series *Knight Rider*. **HM**



*Other than the flashing red panel under the hood, KITT appears to be a stock production Trans-Am, but the car boasted of artificial intelligence, advanced weaponry and even collision avoidance systems. Wouldn't we like those features in today's world of congested traffic?*



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