



DIE CAST REPORT

Matt White



1931 Mack 6-BK-3S Parlor Coach

An awesome piece of pre-war transportation.

Mack Trucks' history began when Jack and Gus Mack became involved in vehicle manufacture during 1893 when they bought the Fallesen & Berry Carriage Company, where Jack had been an employee. When a third brother, William, joined Jack and Gus in 1894 the Mack trio turned their thoughts and endeavors to dabbling in steam and electrically-powered motor cars.

In 1902, inspired by the pioneering work of inventors Orville and Wilbur Wright, and Henry Ford, the Macks formally established the Mack Brothers Company in New York.

The subject of this review, a 1/50 model from Iconic Replicas, represents a 1931 Mack 6-BK-3S Parlor Coach operated by Greyhound Lines (16001). The full-scale prototype is the only example in existence, and it is kept housed in Los Angeles as part of the Greyhound Bus Lines historical fleet. The 6-BK-3S was one of 182 front-engine buses of that type built by Mack between 1930 and 1934 and represents less than three percent of the total number of Mack buses delivered from 1920 to 1938.

Introduced to meet an increasing demand for modern motor buses on long-distance routes, Mack's 'BK' series had a new six-cylinder, 525ci (8.6-liter) gasoline engine with greater displacement and horsepower than its 'AL' predecessor. A Stromberg Model UU-2 carburetor was fitted. Gasoline was fed by vacuum tank.

The transmission consisted of a single-

plate clutch linked to the midships-located four-speed manual gearbox by a drive shaft with Mack torque insulator. An inverted hypoid gear rear axle/differential was mounted on underslung springs. The

BK was the first Mack bus equipped with four-wheel brakes, which were operated via a BK vacuum booster, with a separate emergency (hand) brake acting on the drive shaft.

This subject represents a coming together of two of the most renowned names in American mass road transportation history. Mack is one; the other is legendary Greyhound Lines, or simply Greyhound as the company became known, evolved into the largest operator of intercity bus services in the USA.

Attractively decorated and finished, this model replica has a reasonably well-detailed interior with tampo-printed curtains, although representation of the driver's controls is basic at best, with the possible exception of the steering wheel and central cluster of gauges.

Externally, the replica comes into its own with GREYHOUND LINES titling. The NEW YORK EXPRESS destination board and other signage contribute healthy doses of realism. Along the sides is an eye-catching roll call of major cities on Greyhound's route network. Complementing the Mack's overall appearance is lots of hardware and brightwork, ranging from the headlamps, correctly colored sidelights, taillights, and other auxiliary and running lights, to chromed front bumper



The first vehicle made by the Mack brothers was a bus, with another 156 produced until the outbreak of WWI in 1914, followed by many other bus types from 1925 through 1978 and beyond (including trolley buses and school buses in more modest numbers), but surprisingly, Mack buses and coaches are not as well known or written about – or even modeled as miniatures – in comparison to mighty Mack trucks.

bar. Of special interest are the two cylinders at the front, just behind the bumper and inboard of the headlamps; they are Gruss Dispatch Type Air Springs for providing a smoother ride than a standard suspension.

The manufacturer of this replica has commendably captured the elongated lines and looks of a classic North American long-distance/intercity motor coach of the thirties. Regarded as one of the more luxurious coaches in its day, it starts with the hooded engine sitting prominently out front, ahead of the passenger cabin, its radiator emblazoned not with the storied Mack bulldog logo—as you would expect—but the equally recognizable emblem, representing another breed of dog, the operator of the bus, Greyhound Lines.

At the opposite end of the coach, scaled down from its actual length of 32ft 3in, is the model's quirkiest feature: a faux rear porch or veranda. It is evocative of the fenced platform sometimes seen on the tail-end of the last car in a railroad train, especially in old movies or magazine pictures. Standing on the porch, a politician or dignitary on a tour of small-town America would address his adoring public, then wave to them as the train pulls out of the station and recedes into the distance.

On the Mack parlor coach, however, such a porch was no less than impractical. Apart from being inaccessible from inside



The chromed theme continues on the hood with plated handles and fasteners, individual studs or knobs on the six 'flip-flap' engine vent shutters fitted to each of the hood's side panels, plus the 'sprinting greyhound' logo in plated relief.



With thoughts of political campaigns and country-wide speech tours in mind, the Greyhound company added a rather quirky, if not totally impractical addition to the back of some its buses; a patio, something that later proved to be totally useless.



The product is protected by a closed box, something that prevents a look at what is inside without the package being opened, but it does feature a good quality image of what's inside.

the vehicle, and safety considerations notwithstanding, there was hardly any standing room because most of the 'real estate' was occupied by two spare wheels.

Rounding off this great-looking package are plated twin air horns on the roof, luggage rack and ladder at the rear, eight rooftop cabin air vents, and a particularly

smart set of color-coded wheels with the Mack script on the front hubs.

A limited edition of 999 pieces of the 'Iconic Replicas' 1931 Mack 6-BK-3S Greyhound Lines Parlor Coach are available, so secure this awesome die cast slice of American pre-war road passenger transport history. **HM**

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