



1:66, BMW, HERPA, MERCEDES-BENZ, OPEL

HERPA JUNIORS – PART TWO

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By Robin Godwin with contributions by Daniel Beck

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I would like to start this article by incorporating information provided by **Daniel Beck** in response to part one of my articles on **Herpa Juniors** which may be found [here](#).

Daniel says:

“many thanks to **Robin Godwin** for his interesting article on the **Herpa Junior** series. I like these simple yet accurate diecast models, although (or because?) they were obviously no success. I have some additional information which could be interesting for **Robin** and other readers, since I found an article on the range in an old **German** magazine, and I have the **Opel Corsa** model in my own collection.

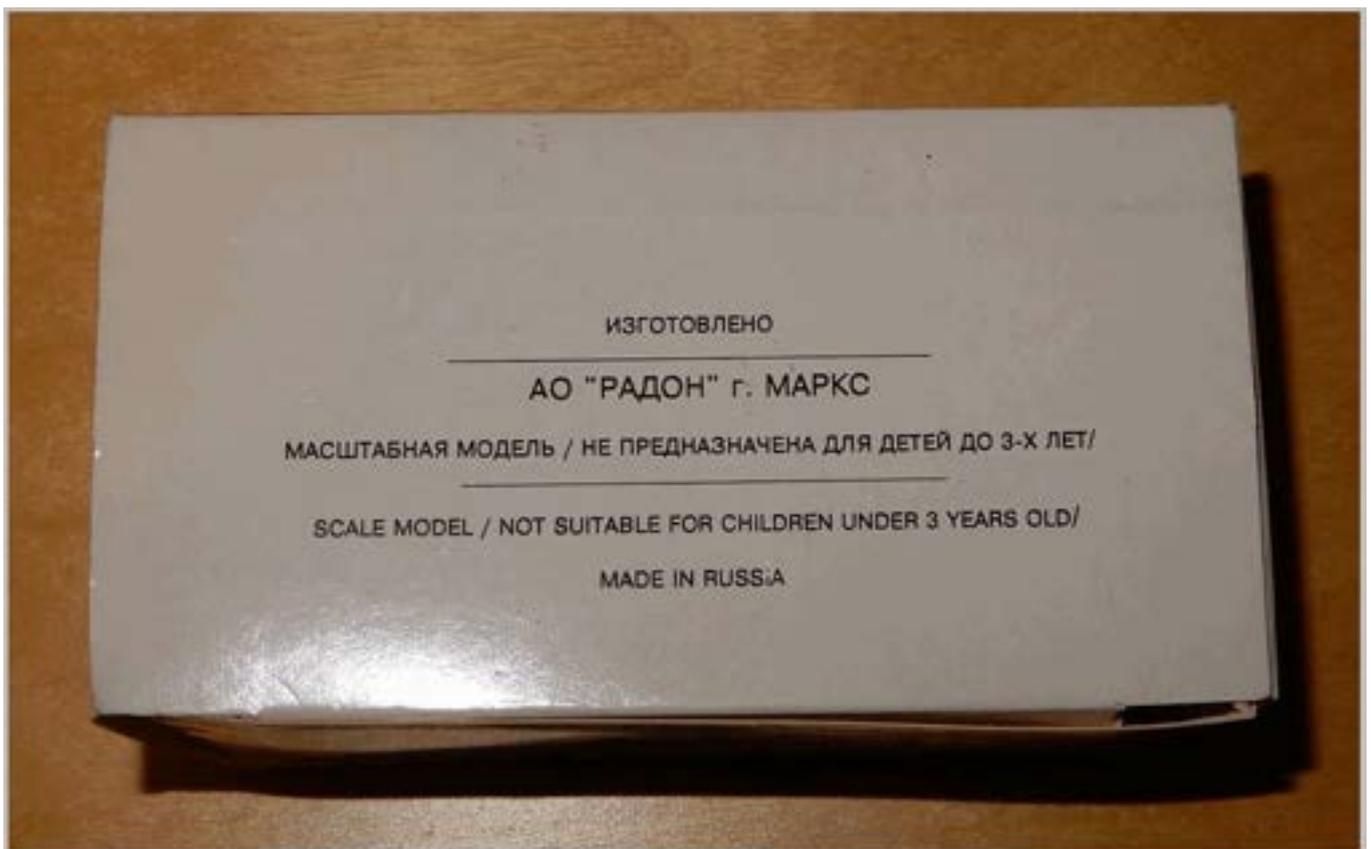
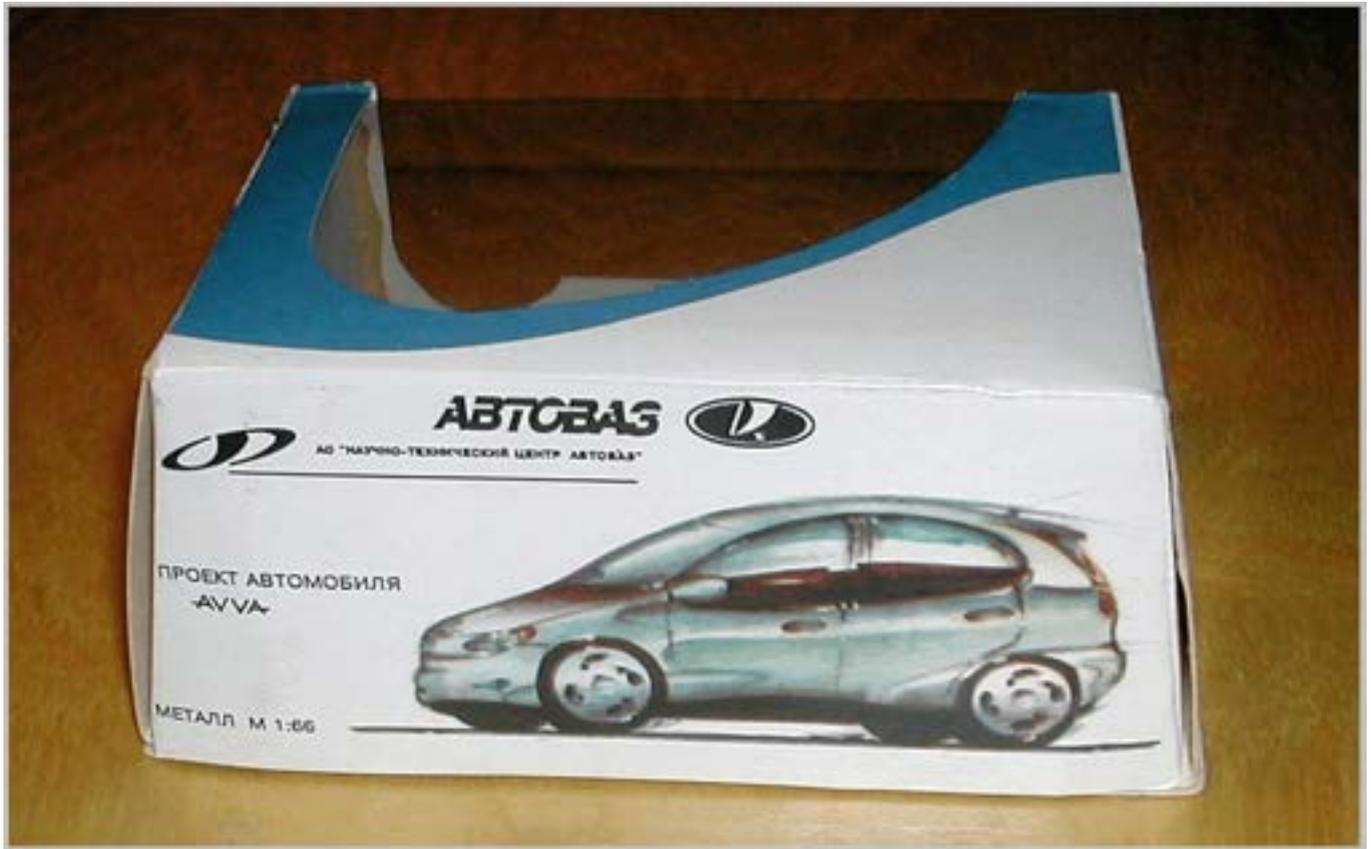
The **Herpa Junior** range was in fact presented in a **German** model car magazine in February **1993**,

in **Modell Fahrzeug** no. 2/1993. The actual **1:66** scale models are not pictured in the article, only the **1:87** scale versions of four cars announced in the new range: **BMW 325i**, **Mercedes-Benz C 220**, **Opel Corsa**, and a **Mini Cooper**, which was probably never released by **Herpa** in this scale. According to the text, the models were designed to meet the **European CE** standards to be sold as children's toys for ages 3 and up, at a price of five German Marks per item, which is in fact half of the contemporary price of **Herpa 1:87** scale plastic cars. However, **Modell Fahrzeug** estimated that it would be a challenge for **Herpa** to build up new distribution channels for their diecast toy range, since supermarkets and filling stations would be an important place where such products were sold. In the same article, the then-new **Microchamps** range of detailed **1:64** scale models for collectors made by **Minichamps** is also introduced, a concept that proved to be more successful in the long run. In the **1990s**, the price for a **Microchamps** model was around 15 German Marks.











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On the base of the **Opel Corsa** from the **Herpa Junior** series is in fact moulded '**Made in Russia**'. The model was probably made by the **Radon** factory in the city of **Marx** in the **Saratov** region, one of the leading diecast model manufacturers in the former **Soviet Union**. At the same time, **Radon** produced a quite similar model in **1:66** scale under their own name, which is quite unusual because they otherwise mainly focused on **1:43** scale. The model reproduces the **AVVA**, a prototype of a compact hatchback car made by **VAZ** (Lada) in the early **1990s**, but its base is almost identical to the one of the **Opel Corsa**, apart from the moulded scripts. It would be interesting to know more about the collaboration between **Herpa** and the **Russian** manufacturer... "

Daniel Beck

To return to part two of the article on **Herpa Juniors**:



Illustration from the small leaflet showing a "Rallye" series that, as far as I can tell, never made it into production. The Opel was available as a regular passenger hatchback in four (perhaps more) different colours and illustrated in the leaflet. The Golf VR6 was apparently never produced, despite these illustrations appearing to be photos of actual models. The Golf was also shown as a regular passenger vehicle, also in four colours. Doubtless, duplication of racing numbers/stripes was intended to keep costs down



The initial packaging was blister type with a prominent star announcing “new from herpa” in German. There are five languages describing the range on the back – German, English, French, Italian, and Dutch. There is no leaflet included with this packaging



The second blister packaging with 'neu...' removed and a modified blister to accommodate the leaflet. The third type of packaging was shown above with the Opel, and I would assume that all models were eventually available in the third type. Italian and Dutch were dropped from the third type

At some point, **Herpa** produced the **BMW**s and **Mercedes-Benz**s as promotional models for the car manufacturers. All three Mercedes-Benz items appeared in special boxes featuring a unique Mercedes-Benz part number, a round hole in the side to determine the colour of the contents, and

only two languages on the box – **German** and **English**. The **BMW** boxes were much more impressive, with colour appropriate illustrations on three sides and both end flaps. A **BMW** part number was on the remaining side, but I don't know if it was unique for each colour. Box language was **German** only except for 'Made for BMW by Herpa' on the bottom.



E-Klasse as a promotional for Mercedes-Benz. The box is plain, but unique since you can just see “E-Klasse” and the part number on the end flap. Note viewing hole on the side



The colour coded BMW box was way more impressive. I have also seen this box in red, with a red vehicle inside. I have never seen a promotional box for any of the “utility” models such as ADAC or Polizei. Don't waste your time trying to find that part number online



This was a special set produced by Herpa, presumably for BMW dealerships. I have seen a few of these for sale online and all have had the blue passenger sedan, as per the outer box illustration, so this may be a factory error or an owner swap

This was an excellent small range, reminiscent (for me anyway) of many late 1960s Matchbox products, but produced to a constant scale. They were more accurate than most contemporary small scale vehicles. Wheels/tires could have been better, after all, they were just decent looking whizzwheels, but as mentioned, display very well. Their simple construction ensured the robust-

ness required for child's play.

Why did they go away? Despite an attractive price point, their main competition would have been the well-established **Siku** range, competitively priced and slightly larger. **Schuco** reissued its **Piccolo** range in the same time window, pushing nostalgia buttons for collectors, so the small car model market was busy. Did the **1:66** scale keep collectors away? I recall buying these at hobby shops, which mostly leaned towards **H0** scale model trains, **Herpas** traditional sales outlets. Perhaps that was the wrong market to pitch to, or was it just too much for the market to bear? Except for the **Opel Corsa**, these can be found quite easily on major online auction sites.

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