

I started MRP in 1970 with Bob Welch. I was 22 years old at that time.

Prior to starting MRP, we were both working in the Boeing Model Shop as wind tunnel model makers. We had both grow up flying model airplanes and had progressed to an interest in sports cars.

When the R/C cars were first starting to be developed and raced, most were scratch built, because there were virtually no manufactures then. Since we were both professional model makers, it was natural for us to just build our own cars. With our model airplane and wind tunnel skills, it was a perfect fit for us to make our own cars. Bob had already built 2 cars before I started mine, when we saw a notice for a "1968 Nationals" race in Anaheim, CA in the RevUp newsletter. I can't remember exactly how it happened, but Bob entered the race and asked me to tag along as pit man. We both had relatives in California. His parents lived in Tracy, and I had a bunch of relatives in Stockton and San Francisco, so it gave us an excuse to head south and take a vacation from work.

The race is another story, but the short story is that we created quite a stir with the local hotshots, when Bob's car literally blew away all the competition. It clearly outclassed anything there. It stripped out the bevel gears in the transaxle in the main event, so we DNF'd our first Nationals, but at least we were there. One of the attendees was so impressed with the car, he built an exact copy from pictures that he had taken. He was Carl Tobin, a tooling engineer from Hollister, CA.

We met Roy Moody for the first time at this race. He was the only other out of State attendee that I recall. The Mid West style of cars that he brought were built like tanks and weighed about the same too. But, I have to admit, they didn't break. If my memory is any good, I think it was Roy who won that first Nationals race.

After the racing was over, a couple of the people approached and introduced themselves to us. It was Hi Johnson and Jack Garcia from Dynamic Models no less. I knew the names, and had even used Johnson motors in my model airplane days, but didn't know them in person, since Seattle is a far cry from the hotbed of modeling that southern California was. They invited us over to their shop to take a tour. We had no idea what was to come. They showed us the prototype of the first Dynamic R/C car! To this day, I always wondered why we had the privilege of seeing this car before anyone else.

As our racing exploits and cars progressed, we both remarked that there was a lack of scale looking wheels for the cars. At that time there was a lot on interest in making the cars look as realistic as possible. Scale models of the full size cars that we could race and afford, since a full size race car was a little bit out of question. So I said to Bob, "Why don't we start a company and make scale looking mag wheels to sell." Since we were both model makers, it seemed like a piece of cake. I had a Craftsman lathe, so we did some research on the cost of casting the wheels at some local foundries. Our first products were scale wheels in 4,5,6 spoke designs. They were patterned after the dominant full size cars at that time, McLaren and Porsche CanAm, and the Eagle Indy cars. I came up with the name of the company because I wanted something catchy that reflected what we made. We had more enthusiasm than business sense then, but Model Racing Products, or MRP as it is know as, was born in my basement.

At a later Nationals, I think it was San Jose, the winning Concours car was a Porsche 917. It had MRP 5 spoke wheels on it. It looked great as I thought to myself, "Yep, those wheels came out of my workshop."

One of the local racers approached us about starting a full fledge company. He was a very successful business man that owned a construction company in Seattle. He bankrolled us for a year and would later, buy us out entirely. MRP would later become a 4½ million dollar a year business under the leadership of Tony Bellizzi.

Marvin Lew
Co-founder of MRP