

The Tamiya Panther G will provide you with about one or two weekends of fun assembly and detailing. It won't take you weeks to build, and many of the parts can be assembled (if you like) before paint in a few hours, so that painting isn't a choreographed dance of painting, assembly, masking, more assembly, and painting. If you are looking for a high level of detail, comparable to their Pershing, the Tamiya Panther may disappoint a little. The texturing and surface features of the actual tank, such as casting roughness, welds, flame cutting, and armor plate pitting, isn't really there. Most of the parts are smooth and have extremely clean lines and edges, where as the actual Panthers had very rough edges, welds, and casting surfaces. You as the modeler will need to provide the surface texturing if you want that level of detail. Various aftermarket suppliers have the detail kits and upgrades that will enhance an otherwise nice kit, as Tamiya quality is still second to none and their packaging and instructions are (as always) extremely well presented. Essentially, Tamiya made a perfect show-grade Panther. We all know tanks are not 'show room perfect' though, especially front line Panthers like the G. The Tamiya Panther's only working hatch is the commander's cupola. For those who like operating features, the other hatches will need to be modified to make operable. I'd like to see a working loader's hatch on the back of the turret. There is no machine gun provided with the tank, even though there is a machine gun mount on the commander's cupola ring. There is no commander figure also.

The mechanical aspect of the tank kit is nothing new, with a torsion bar suspension and two gearboxes driving the heavy die-cast drive sprockets. The design of the chassis will be familiar to anyone who has built a Tamiya Tiger 1 or King Tiger kit. The idler wheels are very beefy, and they are adjusted by a system similar to what is on the Tiger 1, with a long screw and an arm that cranks the idler wheel around to provide track tension. It is interesting to note that it is recommended that when track tension adjustment can no longer be made, to remove one track link. This means the track may stretch at some point.

The gearboxes are the standard metal and plastic units which are fitted to the Tiger 1 and King Tiger tank, except the drive sprocket axle shafts are longer. The motors appears to be a different 380 style motor as well, but I don't have any information on what difference they may have.

The road wheels can be fitted with ball bearings! Tamiya did a great job of providing nice rubber tires for the rims too. This is all good news. The idler wheels can't be fitted with ball bearings but they do have a single bronze bushing inside. I'd also like to see ball bearings inside of an idler wheel, as the idlers take considerable stress and strain on any tank. I want to mention that if you use ball bearings in the road wheels, be sure the lubricant that is inside of them is safe for use with plastics, as some ball bearings contain lubricants which will soften and chemically attack styrene plastic of the type that Tamiya uses on their models. In this respect it is safe to assume that using name brand Tamiya products will assure no disasters with incompatible lubricants and plastic. If you don't know if you want to use bushings or bearings, you need to choose before you assemble the tank. Unlike the Sherman, which can be retrofitted with bearings fairly easily after assembly, the road wheels on the Panther are glued for assembly, so once you fit

bushings, you won't be able to take the wheels apart for servicing or repair, without breaking the glue joints.

The electronics of the tank are recognizable as the same electronics seen in a Tiger 1 or King Tiger tank kit, but it has a newer version of programming. The turret rotation, cannon elevation, and recoil mechanism and wiring are all recognizable as standard Tamiya full option assemblies. The recoil mechanism is the shorter Pershing style unit.

Tamiya provides documentation for three versions of the Panther G. Thanks for reading!