

MICRO-MECANO "GUINA" The parts in this small Spanish system have much in common with those in the 'Matchbox' sets described in 6/131, although they are painted and the Rods are steel instead of wood. In size they are similar to the MACÓN type, rather than those in the commonly found Matchbox sets such as the German CLOU, or the American/Japanese MATCH BOX CONSTRUCTION SET. GUINA also differs from the Matchbox sets in the packaging, in having more Strips & fewer Flanged Plates, and in the models. Two types of packaging are known for GUINA, one conventional with the parts strung in a box, & one, Matchbox fashion, with the largest Flanged Plate packed with all the other parts, inside an outer sleeve. On models, GUINA has only 12 compared to the 100 for the Matchbox sets, but they are generally a little more attractive looking.

This note is based on several examples of the conventional sets, all complete except that none have a model leaflet, and photos of two of the matchbox type, both near complete with model leaflet; one was from Ebay and one from a Spanish dealer. In the latter's description the set was said to be from the 1950s and that Guina was the name of the company which produced it. MCS gives dates of '1935 to about 1939' but doesn't say anything of the type of packaging. One possible clue to dates is the Model Sheet (as in Fig.5 and in MCS) which has a model called 'HELICOPTERO', a name, I think, little used before WW2.

The Conventional Set The box is 21¾*16¼*2cm and the lid is shown below. There is no name on it anywhere but



Fig.1

along the bottom in tiny, faint letters is: LIT. MIJOS DE C. ALBORS, S. A. - ALCOY. The '25,00' rubber stamped on is perhaps the price.

Most of the parts can be seen in the open box below, and



Fig.2

they appear to be well made. Holes are 2.1mm Ø at 15.0mm pitch. The Strips are 12.4mm wide. The Rods are 2.03mm Ø and there are 4 each 50 & 66mm long. Also 8x 26mm wrapped in brown paper which has about 30cm of the pink, silky Cord used to string the parts, wrapped around it, with a 16mm long

Wire Hook at the end. All the parts are steel except the 4 yellow plastic Wheels and the 26 Stops (threaded onto a wire). They are respectively 15½ & 7¾mm Ø, and 1¾ & 2mm thick.

The Matchbox Set Below the top & bottom of the sleeve.



Fig.3

On the sleeve's side is: Fabricado por GUINA, and under that: Permiso núm. 5.542 [B].

Fitting the parts into the 3*5h Flanged Plate (right) is much simpler than with other Matchbox sets. The 5h Strips sit across the bottom with the smaller Flanged Plates on top of them, & the other parts inside, or alongside them.



Fig.4

The Model Sheet, about A4 size or a little larger, is shown below, with its side edges folded over. The top & bottom

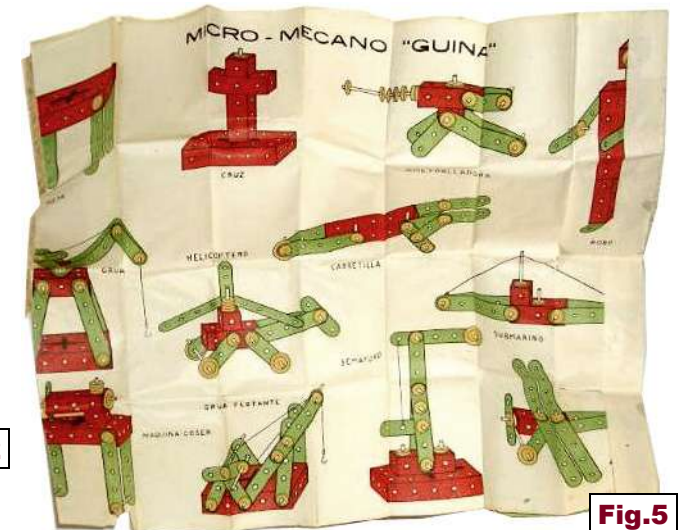


Fig.5

models on the left are a Table and a Sewing Machine. As can be seen the Sheet is folded 8 times one way and 4 the other to fit into the sleeve. The Rods of course hold the parts together with Stops at their ends. Compared with the other Matchbox Sets the greater number of Strips allows a little more scope for slightly more interesting models.

I made the Sewing Machine. The Stops were reasonably easy to push onto the Rods and gripped adequately. The legs of the stand needed some extra bracing and there were enough parts to provide cross members, but 2 more Stops would have been needed. The only other problem was that the 50mm Rods were not quite long enough to mount the legs outside the Flanged Plate, as per the Model Sheet. But having them inside was a simple remedy which both improved the appearance and prevented them from splaying outwards.