

## **Audi just 3D printed a mini 1936 Grand Prix race car**



People are 3D printing all sorts of things these days, from [cat armor](#) to [bikinis](#). Audi just surpassed them all, though; it 3D printed a replica of a 1936 Grand Prix sports car.

The car is a 1:2-scale rolling model — made from metal — of the the “Auto Union Typ C” sports car that knocked Mercedes-Benz off the winner's podium in the late '30s. That, however, isn't the highlight of this story. Although it's a sweet little scoot-around, to be sure, it's how Audi made it that's remarkable.

With this pint-sized copy, Audi Toolmaking demonstrates the prowess of its new 3D printer. It can laser-melt steel or aluminum metallic powder with a grain size of 15 to 40 thousandths of a millimeter (roughly half the diameter of a human hair). It calls the process "sand-

printing." While the new printer cannot, say, print an entire car, it can make forms as large as eight inches cubed.

This is perfect for producing parts that would otherwise have either been machined or cast, which is a far larger undertaking. Not only that, it can also create parts that before now were considered impossible or impractical to produce, as it is capable of intricate geometries. Moreover, the resulting 3D-printed parts are sturdier than those made by die casting or hot forming.

Audi plans to put the 3D printer into series production. And although you won't be able to buy a 3D-printed A4 sedan anytime soon, this new tool will help produce sharper contours in the sheet metal of car bodies.

Until then, you'll have to see if you can hitch a ride in the mini Grand Prix racer.

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