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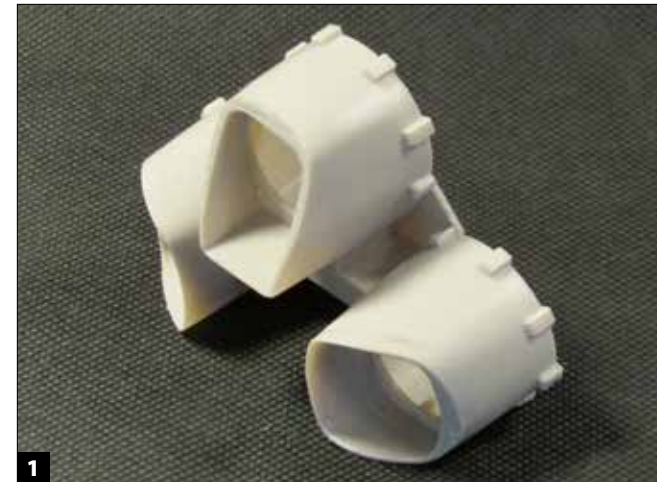
10 Make a Viper see red

BY BRAD HAIR

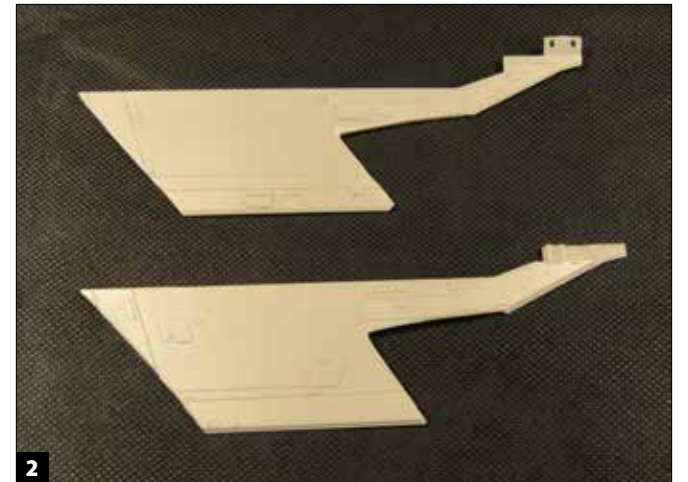


Originally mentioned in the novel *Battlestar Galactica Armageddon* by Richard Hatch and Christopher Golden, the Scarlet-class Viper, or more simply Scarlet Viper, imagines improvements and upgrades to the Colonial fighters. Based on Hatch's vision, Steve Parady designed Scarlet Vipers for *Battlestar Galactica: The Second Coming*, a proposed revival of the 1978 TV show; they later appeared in a trailer. I reproduced this version by modifying Moebius' 1/32 scale Viper.

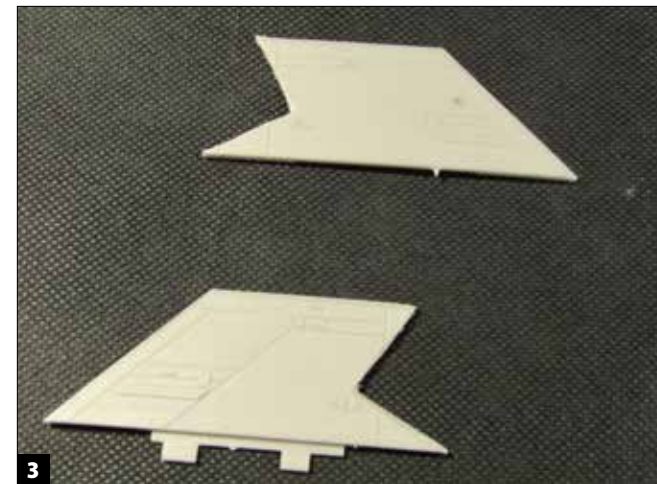
Like many modelers, Brad started building models in childhood and has been at it ever since. "I build for the love of the hobby, the history, and the artistry of the modeling subjects, and I love to build all genres of science fiction," he says.



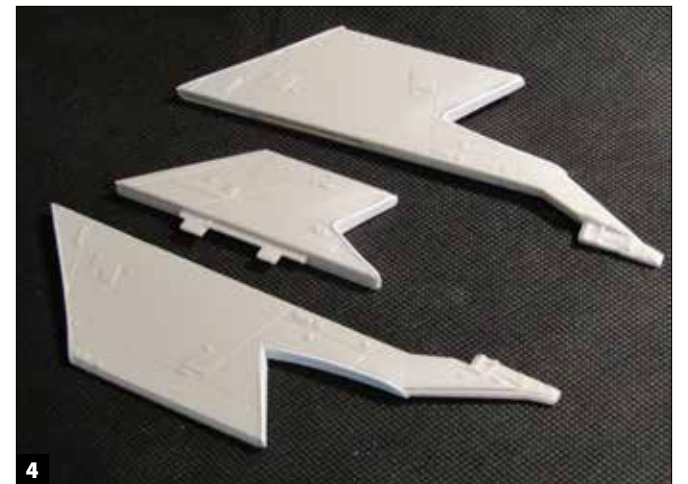
1 To make the Scarlet Viper, a little surgery to the kit is required, starting with the intakes. With a razor saw, I cut the intakes at around a 45 degree angle, and then sanded them smooth and to shape.



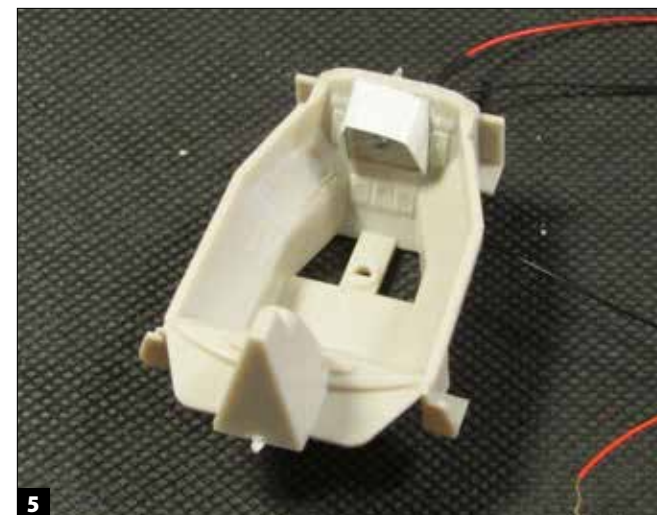
2 In a second round of surgery, the Viper's unique swept wing is achieved by cutting a triangle out of the wings and filing and sanding to shape.



3 The upper fin will be reversed on the finished Viper with the sloped edges at the rear. I made more cuts in the new front.



4 After gluing the wings together, I filled the cuts with .030" styrene Putty and sanding filled minor gaps and blended the strips.



5 To liven up the cockpit, I added a 3mm green LED to the main navigation and targeting screen. To enhance the control panel, I added a shroud for the center display made of sheet styrene.



6 I kitbashed the pilot figure using kit parts and a resin torso. I blended the components of the female Colonial Warrior with Aves Apoxie Sculpt.

12 Master Gundam style

BY STEVE PONTIUS



In 1979, *Mobile Suit Gundam* revolutionized the mecha genre of science-fiction anime. Gone were “right vs. wrong” stories, replaced by complex subjects such as the human costs of war, the role of youth as soldiers, and the causes of armed conflict. In the far future, humans establish large space colonies near Earth to supply the overpopulated and polluted planet with resources. A faction of the colonists plan to declare independence from the Earth Federation and create a new government in space known as the Principality of Zeon. Secretly, the colonists modify the large humanoid robot suits used to construct colonies, and turn them into weapons of war known as *mobile suits*. To counter this threat, the Earth Federation develops their own powerful prototype mobile suit, the RX-78-2 Gundam.

Since 1979, Bandai has produced scores of kits of many sizes, scales, and complexities. Over the years, there have been many interpretations of the original Gundam. I built a kit based on a version seen in a recent manga adaptation, *Mobile Suit Gundam: The Origin*. The 1/100 scale Master Grade RX-78-02 Gundam (*Origin* version) features a wide selection of accessories, including removable armor and a fully articulated inner frame.

Bandai’s engineering on its modern Gundam kits is exceptional with injection technology that is among the best in the industry. Dips, flash, and pin marks are rare, and its push-together fit lets builders of any experience create a nice replica out of the box. Painting presents challenges because the tight tolerances and numerous moving parts require good color adhesion.

For experienced modelers, the fun of building these kits lies in designing and modifying the parts to create something unique. Some builders try new variations of suits to fit a specific theater in the series, much as an armor modeler does. Others keep the

design the same but add detail and enhance the realism. And some modelers imagine what their own mobile suit would be like. A recent trend is modifying and painting the kits to look exactly like the old low-budget animation cels. From flashy candy paint to heavily rusted husks, mecha builds allow for an enormous degree of freedom. The only rule is “Do whatever you think is cool.”

For this build, I kept the design close to the original but added some detail.

A law student from Tulsa, Okla., Steve built models as a kid and has fond memories of watching Gundam Wing. Five years ago, he found a kit he hadn’t built and rediscovered the hobby. Mecha kits are his favorites because of the variety of designs, the blend of functional and aesthetic elements, and the freedom to customize.



1

I begin each build by assembling the kit according to the instructions. This gives me a chance to look for areas I can change and note how any modifications may affect movement or stability. This kit is equipped with the weapons used in the *Origin* manga.



2

Removing some of the armor reveals the ABS-based internal frame.



3

This pose demonstrates the range of articulation possible with the internal frame. There are two separate joints in the left knee, and the figure tilts in the middle of the waist.



4

I began by sketching out ideas directly on the parts for some changes I wanted to make.



5

Small pieces of styrene help maintain distance from other parts when scribing lines. The GSI Creos Mr. Line Chisel is my favorite tool for scribing—and I’ve tried almost everything!



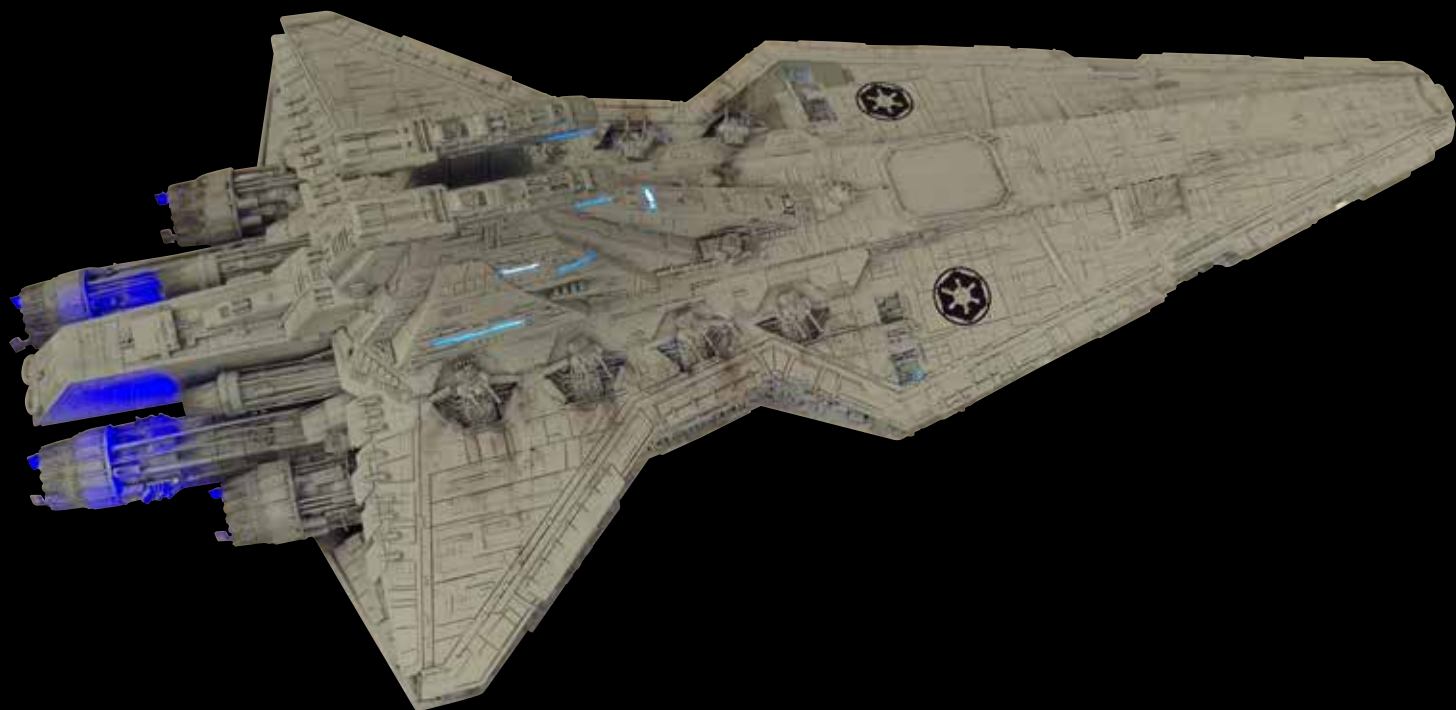
6

On the chest hatch, I added scalloped rectangular details that are common in mecha design. I cut thin sheet styrene and molded it to the top surface and then added a latch at the top.

15

Light and detail a Star Destroyer

BY NICHOLAS SAGAN



First seen in *Revenge of the Sith*, the Venator-class Star Destroyer's bulk and sharp lines captivated me. Superior to its predecessor, the clunky-looking Acclamator-class assault ship, this modest behemoth served during the transition from the Old Republic to the Galactic Empire and its hulking Imperial-class Star Destroyer.

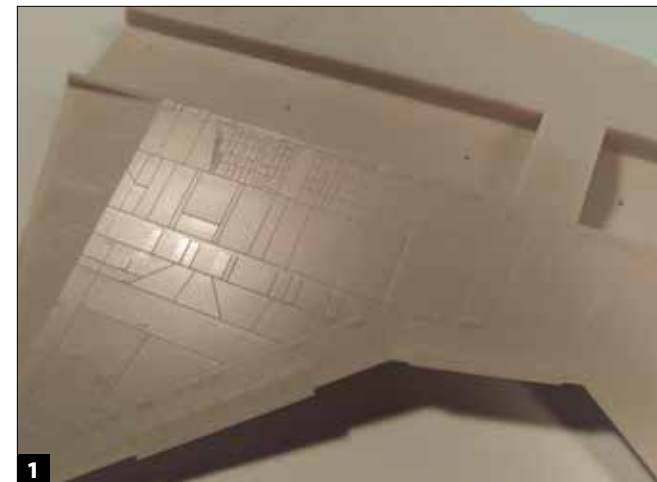
Revell produced a 1/2256 scale kit of the Venator in 2005 to coincide with the release of *Revenge of the Sith*. (In response, the odd

Like most kids who like science fiction, Nicholas' initial exposure was to Ertl kits, which his father picked up on business trips. After a long pause to discover growing up and everything that went with it, he dove headfirst back into the hobby in 2004 and has yet to surface.

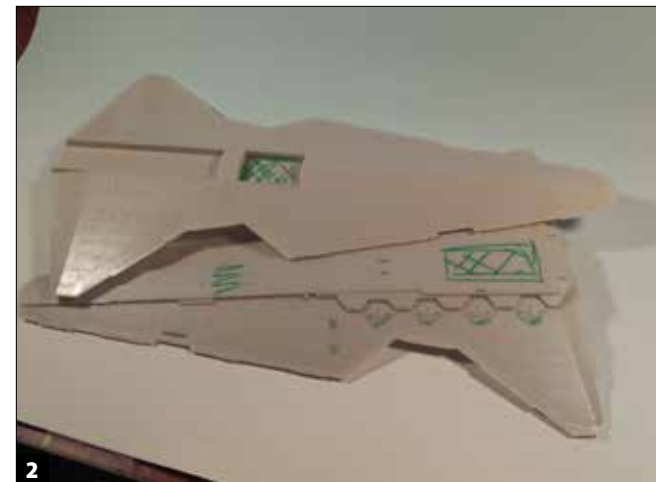
box-scale has become popular as a good middle ground for larger science fiction and naval subjects. Many frigates, destroyers, and other support vessels can be found in resin or 3-D printed on the aftermarket.)

I wanted to build a Venator from the transition period with details akin to the later Imperial-class ships.

Lighting a model can be intimidating, but with practice, lighting brings your ships to life. Different techniques can be used, and there's no one right way to do it. The choice comes down to preference, accuracy, ability, and feasibility. You can light just about anything if you plan.



1 Out of the box, Revell's Venator builds okay, but it lacks detail when compared to the screen shots from *Revenge of the Sith*.



2 After examining the kit parts, I marked areas in need of improvement or replacement.



3 Using 3-D modeling software (SketchUp), I created upgraded parts that could be produced on a 3-D printer. They will replace the sidewall trenches, ventral and dorsal hangars, main bridges, ventral trench, and the bays beneath and in front of the main turrets.



4 The hull required modification to fit the 3-D printed parts. I removed plastic to make room for the turret bay drops and dorsal hangar doors.



5 After cleaning up the new openings, I attached the black 3-D printed bays. They required extra trimming for a good fit, and scrap styrene helped align the parts and cover gaps.



6 Unlike those parts, the dorsal hangar doors easily dropped into place.