



Volume 1: Breathing New Life Into a Golden Oldie, by Martin Aris

*Club Chairman Martin Aris shows how a small piece of inspiration can transform a kit that's languishing in your loft.*

I've had the old Airfix kit of Jabba's Throne Room kicking around in the loft for years, not really knowing what to do with it. Then, whilst wandering around the IPMS Abingdon Model Show last year, I spotted a nice and simple little box diorama. "That's it!" I thought, "that's what I'll do with the throne room!". After a quick scamper into the loft, the big Airfix box was out on the work desk. After a brief inspection it was evident to me that it was perfect for what I had in mind.



So, how was it done? Having never tried anything this ambitious before I was going to need guidance, and that came with the help of Sheperd Paine's fantastic 'How to Build Dioramas'. Inside there's a whole chapter dedicated to box dioramas.



First off I set about watching Return of the Jedi many times, especially the Throne Room scene (*"honest love, it's for research!"*), and then I drew up some plans of both the floor space and also any furniture that was missing from the kit. Another book that was invaluable was the 'Star Wars Technical Journal' by Shane Johnson.



Secondly the room itself was constructed, and as it was a box diorama and therefore a forced perspective I wasn't too worried about the full 3D aspect.

The stage was now built and was placed into a larger box made of MDF with enough room to run all the wires needed to light it up.

Looking down into the Throne Room, with the MDF box around it.

Next, it was time to add the cast for the scene. First of all I concentrated on the main figures or stars of the show. I sculpted a new helmet for the Princess Leia/Boushh figure and moved C-3PO's arms to a more agitated, panicked posture.



From left to right, C-3PO, Princess Leia/Boushh, and Chewbacca.

The second set of characters were the supporting cast, and these were made up of figures from the kit whilst the Jawas were made from 1/72 scale Airfix soldiers with milliput coverings.

Below, the rest of the figures.

Finally, with the figures all painted, it was a case of adding the cast and crew to the scene and adding the ceiling and lights. The lights were all LEDs, in a parallel circuit, and wired up to a mobile phone charger and taped down.





And there we have it! For a first time effort I was chuffed to bits with it and also learned quite a few things that I would do differently next time. Maybe the AMT USS Enterprise command bridge could be on the books - who knows!



Look out for more volumes of The Expert's Eye, IPMS Middleton Cheney's series of reviews and articles, in the near future.

For more information about the club, please [visit the website](#).