



Keith Pruitt

Model Kit Report

Not Science Fiction, But Real Space Vehicles

A look at a variety of space-related plastic kits.

This year, 2011, is a monumental year in mankind's quest to explore outer space. It marks the 50th anniversary of the first man in space, for both the USSR and the USA. This year is also the 25th anniversary of the *Challenger* disaster, which took place in 1986. The Space Shuttle fleet is also flying all their final missions and will be retired for use as museum displays. To commemorate these historical events in the continuing conquest of space, this month's column looks at model kits of real space subjects.

Squadron's Space Shuttle Discovery

Squadron Products offers several kits from a variety of manufacturers. The Revell of Germany 1/144 Space Shuttle *Discovery* with Booster Rocket Plastic Model Kit #RG4736 can be built as any one of the six space shuttles with the extensive decals included in the kit. The Space Shuttle can be built as a stand-alone model, with opening bay doors that allow display of the mission payload, which also includes the robot arm and an astronaut figure. By adding the fuel tank and boosters, the shuttle can be displayed in launch position on the tracked crawler base.

Tamiya's Lunar Spacecraft

Tamiya America produces a 1/70 Apollo Lunar Spacecraft #89788-4600, which depicts the famous vehicles that carried the astronauts to the moon. The kit includes models of the command/service module (CSM) and lunar module (LM) used in the moon missions. The LM model can be completed in the various stages of transport, either in stowage mode as it was inside the Saturn V rocket or attached to the CSM ready for deployment to the Moon.

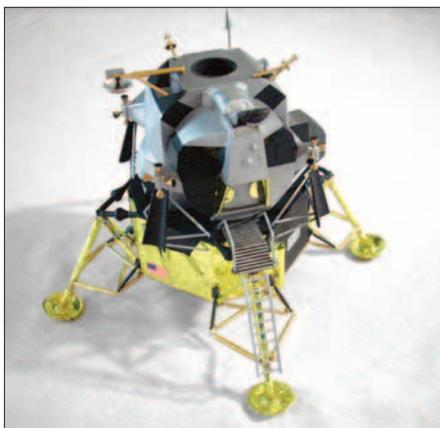


Hasegawa offers several Space Shuttle kits. This one is of the *Discovery*, and it includes a model of the Hubble Telescope.

It can also be displayed as two separate models, the CSM alone with the LM resting on a molded base.

Squadron's Sputnik

Squadron Products also carries the Mach2 1/72 Sputnik 1 #MCLO011, the rocket that started the "space race." On October 4, 1957, the USSR launched Sputnik 1, the first satellite placed into orbit around the earth. Mach2 has finally filled a void in real-space modeling with its Sputnik 1 kit. The kit features recessed surface detail, separate rocket nozzles, supplemental boosters and a display base. Instructions are of the exploded-view-assembly type, and no decals are included since there were no markings on the actual full-scale rocket.



Revell's 1/48 Apollo 11 Lunar Module depicts the *Eagle* as it appeared when it landed at Tranquility Base in 1969.

Airfix's Skylab

Airfix offers a newly released 1/144 Saturn V Skylab #A11150. Skylab was an American space station that orbited the Earth from 1973 to 1979 and housed a manned workshop, solar observatory and various other systems. It was launched by a modified Saturn V rocket on May 14, 1973. Airfix's release is a modified reissue of its original Saturn V from 1969, with newly tooled parts to create the rocket that placed Skylab into orbit. The kit features include the major sections of the rocket, which can be separated to show the various stages, and it comes complete with illustrated instructions, painting guide and decals.

Revell's Apollo 11 Spacecraft

Revell has been producing real space models for many years. Revell's 1/32 Rocket Hero Buzz Aldrin Apollo Spacecraft

#85-5086 is one of the largest scale versions of the CSM used in the Apollo missions. Apollo 11 was the famous mission that first successfully landed men on the lunar surface. Revell's kit builds into CSM 107 *Columbia*, in which Buzz Aldrin orbited the moon, while the LM descended to the surface. The kit includes 128 parts in silver, white, clear and gold-plated plastic. It is designed so that the interior details are visible through the clear side panels. The kit includes illustrated instructions, painting guide and decals to build a large, impressive model of this historic spacecraft.



The Minicraft 1/144 NASA 757-200 is a model of the flying laboratory ARIES that is based at Langley Research Center and is used to study aviation safety.

Revell's 1/48 First Lunar Landing #85-5087 is a smaller kit that depicts the landing of the Apollo 11 LM *Eagle* on the Moon on July 20, 1969. Revell has reissued this kit, which includes 48 parts molded in white and gray plastic, along with bonus gold foil to apply to the lower sections of the model for greater realism. Along with detailed instructions, various scientific equipment and two astronaut figures, the kit features decals and a molded display depicting Tranquility Base on the Moon's surface.

Revell's Space Shuttle

The Space Shuttle, officially called the Space Transportation System (STS), has been the cornerstone of the space pro-

gram since the *Enterprise*, a test bed for the design, made its debut in 1976. Over the life of the shuttle program, five operational space shuttles were built and 135 missions were flown. The shuttles were named *Columbia*, *Challenger*, *Discovery*, *Atlantis*, and *Endeavor*. For fans of large models, Revell offers the Monogram 1/72 Space Shuttle

with Fuel Tank and Boosters Plastic Model Kit #85-5089, which is a huge kit that builds into an incredibly large finished model. The kit features detailed space shuttle, fuel tank and booster rockets and includes a detailed opening cargo bay with optional payload assemblies, a display stand and decal markings for the *Enterprise* as well as the other shuttles.

Minicraft's NASA F-18

Minicraft Models has released its 1/72 NASA F-18 #11656. Space programs make headlines with dramatic rocket launches and wonderful photos of Earth taken from space. Yet at the Dryden Flight Research Center there are pilots who conduct research, using four F-18s, as well as other specialized aircraft. While these F-18s aren't as famous as their military brethren, the NASA F-18 sports an eye-catching paint scheme.

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Minicraft's Space Shuttle Endeavor

Minicraft Models 1/144 Space Shuttle *Endeavor* #11630 is a model of the last shuttle to be built. The kit includes the Space Shuttle, external fuel tank and solid fuel booster rockets. Even in 1/144 scale this is a relatively large model standing 16 inches tall on its base. It comes with many features, including the cockpit with consoles and four seats, as well as cargo bay doors that can be opened to show the included model of the Navistar satellite stored in the bay.

Minicraft's ARIES 757

Minicraft Models also issues another unsung hero from the NASA stable of aircraft. The Minicraft 1/144 NASA 757-200 #14600 depicts only the second 757 ever built, which NASA purchased from Eastern Airlines in 1994. It was converted into a flying laboratory named ARIES (Airborne Research Integrated Experiment Station) and is based out at the Langley Research Center. This airplane was used to conduct research on aviation safety, aviation systems and other aviation related subjects. Minicraft's kit includes white and clear plastic parts, with detailed instructions and painting guide, as well as Cartograf decals.



Squadron offers a kit of the rocket that started the "space race," the USSR's *Sputnik 1*.

Hasegawa's Space Shuttles

Hasegawa USA offers 1/200 Space Shuttle kits in several versions, including a separate shuttle kit, as well as the Hasegawa 1/200 Space Shuttle Orbiter with Boosters #HSGS1729 and the Hasegawa 1/200 Space Shuttle *Discovery* with Hubble Telescope #HSGS0676. The shuttle kit is identical in all the releases, featuring full landing gear for static display, opening cargo bay doors and a variety of equipment to fill the bay. The Hasegawa 1/200 Space Shuttle Orbiter with Boosters includes the fuel tank and booster rockets, as well as a display base pad to mount the model in launch position. The Hasegawa 1/200 Space Shuttle *Discovery* with Hubble Telescope includes a kit to build the Hubble Space Telescope, which was carried into space by the *Discovery* in 1990. Hubble's orbit outside of the Earth's atmosphere allows it to take extremely sharp images with almost no background light. Although not the first space telescope, Hubble is one of the largest and most versatile and is a vital research tool. This kit features operable payload bay doors to display the orbiter's cargo and optional landing gear for the orbiter that can also serve to display the model. **HM**

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