

WELCOME TO

The NAVIGATOR

ALAMO SQUADRON'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER • SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

FEBRUARY 2026 Edition



THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

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MODELFESTA 44 SPECIAL EDITION



THIS YEAR'S SHOW THEME

COLD WAR

Click or tap on the links below to navigate to the feature you wish to see:

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FEBRUARY 2026 Edition

The President's Corner

By Keith Rule



ModelFiesta 44 is now in the books, and it was a resounding success! The show featured 504 contest entries and 160 display entries from 171 contestants, with vendor tables completely sold out. In addition to the contestants, more than 400 visitors came through general admission to enjoy the show. Alamo Squadron members stayed busy throughout the day supporting our new open judging format, along with registration, vendor coordination, the raffle, and the Make & Take program.

Tim Holland from the Model Geeks Podcast and President of Modelers Without Borders visited and spoke at the Awards Ceremony. It was a well-run event and I am proud of our club's teamwork and efficiency. Well done, Alamo Squadron. My thanks to all of you for your help. ModelFiesta 45 is scheduled for **February 20, 2027**.

Dana Mathes served as our Head Judge implementing our new Open Judging System where entries are judged against a standard for Gold, Silver, or Bronze Medals. With 504 entries, 79% received medals, of which 45% were Gold, 29% were Silver, and 26% were Bronze. Dana continues to work with the Lead Judges analyzing and improving the Open Judging System.

Our next meeting is on Thursday, **February 5, 2026** at Abiding Presence Lutheran Church, 14700 San Pedro Avenue, San Antonio, TX 78232. We will continue to judge our Contest Models with our open system, and, of course, we will have Work in Progress.

See Ya',

Keith

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January 8th 2026 Meeting Photos

By Julio A. Caro | Page 1 of 3



Our January 8th gathering brought many of our members together once again for an evening filled with creativity, craftsmanship, and camaraderie. Whether you were presenting, learning, or simply enjoying the atmosphere, the meeting was a great reminder of what makes our club so special. Enjoy the highlights! below!



Dana Mathes briefs club on ModelFiesta 44 Results.



Chris Menold talks about possible themes for MF-45.



Gerardo Escobedo gives demonstration on creating water effects for watercraft.



Models in progress on the Work in Progress table.



Rob Booth talks about the figures and tanks he's currently building.



Richard Larrumbide talks about his foil builds of a Boeing 727-200 and 737 airliners.



John Kress discusses the build progress of his 1/200 U-boat submarine.



Gerardo Escobedo's F-4 Phantom signed by Vietnam War ACE Charles "Chuck" DeBellevue.

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January 8th 2026 Meeting Photos

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Relaxing and socializing before the meeting is called to order.



Relaxing and socializing before the meeting is called to order.



Several aircraft models proudly displayed on the Work in Progress table.



Several tanks and armor kits by Rob Booth on the Work in Progress table.



Rob Booth's World War II generals figures in various stage of completion.



Impressive F-100 1/32nd Scale F-100 Super Sabre by Dana Mathes.



David Auth's 3 in 1 Customizing Boat AMT kit on the Work in Progress table.



Jerry Escobedo's Prince of Wales battleship on display on the Work in Progress table.



Jerry Escobedo's RN ROMA battleship on display on the Work in Progress table.

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January 8th 2026 Meeting Photos

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Chris Lenahan talks about various 3D printed figures he's currently working on.



Several 3D printed figures by Chris Lenahan on the Work in Progress table.



1/200 U-Boat submarine by John Kress on the Work in Progress table.



Nicely done P-51 Mustang in-flight on display by Gerardo Escobedo.



727-200 by Richard L on display on the Work in Progress Table.



Boeing 737 by Richard L on display on the Work in Progress Table.



Collection of Japanese World War II airplanes by Kent Knebel on the Work in Progress table.



1923 Fiat Mephistopheles race car Alamo Squadron's 2025 Model of the Year model by Keith Rule.



Truer words were never spoken!

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ModelFiesta 44 General Information

ModelFiesta is the longest-running annual modeling event in IPMS Region 6. Since its early beginnings, the contest has steadily grown in both scale and quality, now averaging over 120 vendor tables and more than 500 contest entries each year. With a consistently strong international turnout, including modelers from across Latin America, **ModelFiesta has become one of the most unique, diverse, and highly respected IPMS events in the region.**



ModelFiesta 44, was held on Saturday, January 3, 2026, at the New Braunfels Civic/Convention Center located at 375 S. Castell Avenue, New Braunfels, Texas. The show featured over 400 outstanding scale models spanning a wide range of genres, including:



Young Modeler



Aerospace



Military Vehicles



Automotive



Ships & Nautical Vehicles



Figures



Fictional Vehicles



GunPla



Miscellaneous



The event employed the **GOLD-SILVER-BRONZE** judging format, allowing modelers to be evaluated against an established standard rather than against one another, a system that continues to be well received within the hobby.

THIS YEAR'S SHOW THEM WAS: THE COLD WAR

FEBRUARY 2026 Edition

ModelFiesta 44 Event Photos



If you were unable to attend **ModelFiesta 44** on January 3rd, 2026, you missed an excellent show filled with great models and great fellowship.

We're pleased to share a few photos to bring a little of ModelFiesta 44 to you.

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ADMIRING A COLLECTION OF MODELS



TOP & BELOW—AUTOMOTIVE JUDGING



MAKE & TAKE Tables



AEROSPACE MODES ON DISPLAY



WOW AWARD –VW Pickup & 5th Wheel

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ModelFiesta 44 Show Medal Breakdown



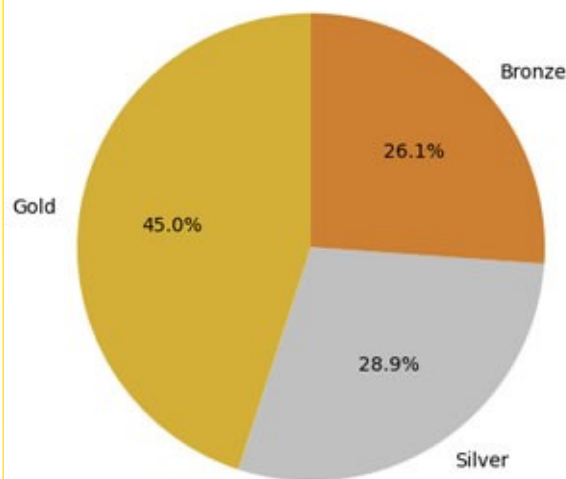
The event employed the **GOLD—SILVER—BRONZE** judging format, allowing modelers to be evaluated against an established standard rather than against one another, a system that continues to be well received within the hobby.

ModelFiesta 44 Medal Breakdown

With 504 entries, 79% of those entries (or 398) received a medal: 45% were Gold, 29% were Silver, and 26% were Bronze. Here's a more detailed breakdown of those numbers:

Total Receiving a GOLD:	179
Total Receiving a SILVER:	115
Total Receiving a BRONZE:	104
Total Entries receiving a medal:	398

Medal Distribution (398 Medal Recipients)



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ModelFiesta 44 Alamo Squadron Winners Circle

By Julio A. Caro | Page 1 of 7

The following pages feature a selection of ModelFiesta 44 Award winners who opted to showcase their winning models on our newsletter. While many other members earned medals and awards at the event, not all winning entries are represented here. We extend our congratulations to all award recipients for their outstanding work.

Note: *Winners are listed in the order their work was received.*









JULIO A. CARO | ModelFiesta 44, January 3, 2026

PHOTO	DESCRIPTION	SCALE	AWARD(S)
	Willys Jeep MB U.S. Navy Shore Patrol	1/35	
	Hawker Sidney Buccaneer S.Mk.2	1/100	
	VC-54D VIP Transport	1/144	
	VC-54D VIP Transport Airlifter WWII to Present Award	1/144	

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ModelFiesta 44
Alamo Squadron Winners Circle

By Julio A. Caro | Page 2 of 7












JUAN NOLTENIUS ModelFiesta 44, January 3, 2026			
PHOTO	DESCRIPTION	SCALE	AWARD(S)
	Somua Tank	1/35	
	38T Tank	1/35	
	Panzer II Tank	1/35	
	P-38 Lightning	1/48	

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ModelFiesta 44 Alamo Squadron Winners Circle

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JOHN KRESS | ModelFiesta 44, January 3, 2026











PHOTO	DESCRIPTION	SCALE	AWARD(S)
	1965 A/C Cobra	1/42	
	GMC 2 1/2 Ton 6x6 Truck	1/35	
	Austin Powers Shaguar Roadster	1/25	
	German U-Boat	1/700	
	XB-70 Disaster Begins	N/A	
	1968 Mustang GT - Bullitt (Display Model) Outstanding Ford Award	1/25	Outstanding Ford Award

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ModelFiesta 44 Alamo Squadron Winners Circle

By Julio A. Caro | Page 4 of 7

DAVID AUTH | ModelFiesta 44, January 3, 2026











PHOTO	DESCRIPTION	SCALE	AWARD(S)
	1947 Chevy Fleetmaster	1/25	
	1969 Chevy Nova 427	1/25	
	1988 Toyota MR2	1/24	
	1995 Jeep YJ Wrangler	1/24	
	1985 BMW 635 Rally Car	1/24	

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ModelFiesta 44 Alamo Squadron Winners Circle

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ROB BOOTH | ModelFiesta 44, January 3, 2026







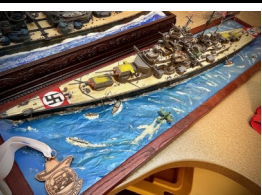

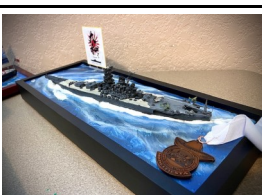

PHOTO	DESCRIPTION	SCALE	AWARD(S)
	Der Fuhrerwagen	1/35	
	Der Kubelwagen	1/35	
	Polikarpov I-16 Soviet Fighter (Russian Steppes)	1/48	
	3D Printed U.S. Air Force Pilot (Vietnam Era)	1/32	
	3D Printed The Mandalorian Armorer Bust	N/A	

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ModelFiesta 44 Alamo Squadron Winners Circle

By Julio A. Caro | Page 6 of 7

GERARDO "JERRY" ESCOBEDO | ModelFiesta 44, January 3, 2026

PHOTO	DESCRIPTION	SCALE	AWARD(S)
	KM Scharnhorst Battleship	1/700	
	RN Roma Battleship	1/350	
	HMS Prince of Wales	1/350	
	KM Bismarck Battleship	1/350	
	IJN Yamato Battleship	1/700	

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ModelFiesta 44 Alamo Squadron Winners Circle

By Julio A. Caro | Page 7 of 7

KEITH RULE | ModelFiesta 44, January 3, 2026

PHOTO	DESCRIPTION	SCALE	AWARD(S)
	1950 Olds Custom	1/25	
	1971 Wide Body Mustang	1/25	
	Corvette Funny Car	1/25	
	Lotus Super 7	1/25	
	1923 Mefistofeles Race Car	1/25	

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MODELFIESTA 44 Special Awards

By Julio A. Caro

Special Award	Winner	Model/Subject
Best Young Modeler	Daniel Li	HMS Eskimo
USAF Subject Award	Darryl Miller	F-4G Phantom
Korean War Aircraft	Kent Knebel	Korean War Display
Minuteman Aircraft Award	Xavier Perez	F-16C Gunfighter
Airlifters WWII to Present	Julio A. Caro	VC-54D VIP Transport
Jolly Green Award	Ernesto Vidal Hallam	Super Lynx
Best Aerospace	Justin Felderhoff	Corsair Mk II
Outstanding Small Army Markings Military Vehicle	Stan Spooner	T-90A Syrian Tank
Mike Picard Memorial Award	Greg Friddle	Good Girl
Lynn Julian Red Star Memorial	Darryl Martin	Russian T-34/76 with troops
Best Military Vehicle	Darryl Martin	Russian T-34/76 with troops
Iron Resurrection	Jeff Elhart	VW Pickup and 5 th wheel
Trucks, Yeah Award	Jeff Elhart	65 Chevy Stepside Ice Cream
Outstanding Ford	John Kress	1968 Mustang GT - Bullitt
Best Automotive	Jim Rogers	1983 Husqvarna 430XC
Best Ship	Mike Malone	U-9 U-boat WWI
Best figure	Gilbert Moreno	Conan the Adventurer
Best Fictional Vehicle	Greg Friddel	Patch, SAFS Raccoon
Best Gunpla	Clayton Pfeifer	Weathered Gogg
Best Miscellaneous	Alexander W. De Leon	The Icon goes to War
Tamiya Award	Toby Nelson	P-38J Lightning
US Veteran award	Joseph Chapa	FM-2 Wildcat
People's Choice Award	Bruce Macraw	Nazis Quit
WOW Factor	Jeff Elhart	VW Pickup and 5 th wheel
Contest Theme Award	Will Skeeters	Post Flight Bell X-1
Best of Show Award	Jim Rogers	1983 Husqvarna 430 CX

FEBRUARY 2026 Edition

Alamo Squadron's Model of Year for 2025

By Julio A. Caro



Keith Rule Wins Model of the Year Award for 2025!

The Model of the Year award represents the very best of our club's modeling achievements, selected from an already high-caliber field of award-winning entries.

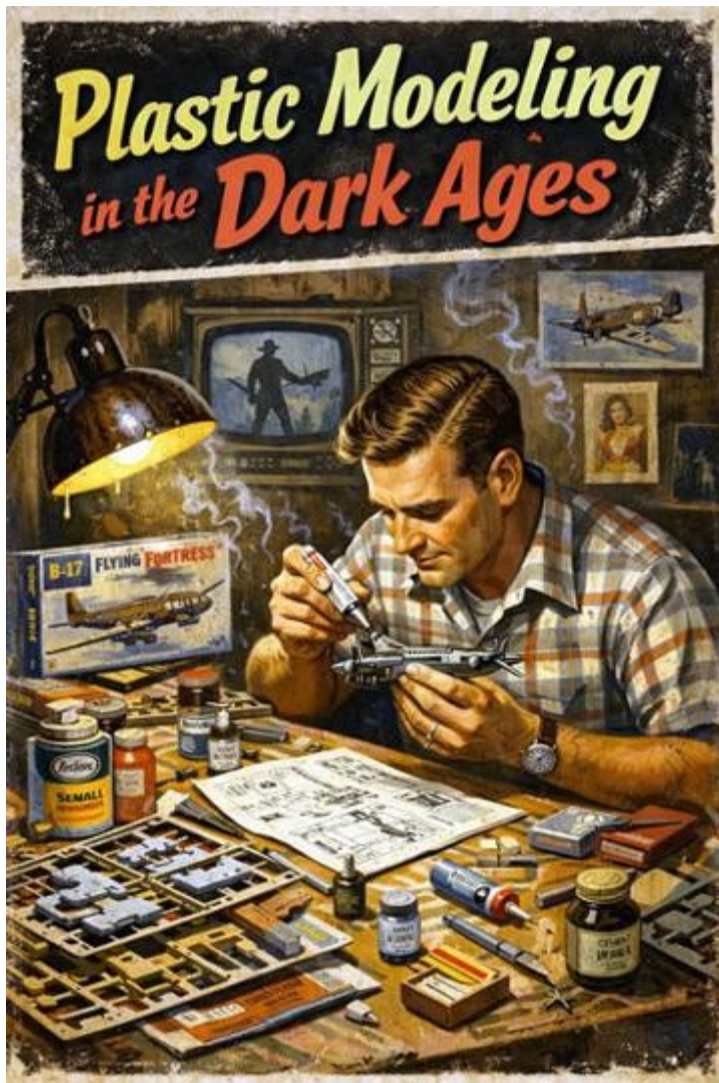
Keith earned this distinction with his stunning build of the legendary **Fiat Mephistopheles** race car—an iconic subject brought to life through his exceptional craftsmanship, research, and attention to detail. This achievement is a testament to Keith's dedication, skill, and continued contribution to the high standards of excellence that define the Alamo Squadron.

Congratulations to Keith on a well-deserved honor and on setting the benchmark for **Alamo Squadron's Model of the Year for 2025.**

FEBRUARY 2026 Edition

Plastic Modeling in the “Dark Ages”

By Lee Forbes, IPMS-USA Member # 2297 | Page 1 of 3



Kansas. However, my plastic modeling career began even earlier—during my first Air Force assignment in 1961 to the 4141st Strategic Bomb Wing (SAC) at Glasgow AFB, Montana.

The wing was equipped with a squadron of B-52D “tall-tail” bombers and a squadron of KC-135A tankers. In addition, there was a tenant ADC squadron of F-101B Voodoos on station. At the time I was single, living in the Bachelor Officers Quarters (BOQ), and had plenty of free time on my hands. There was a hobby shop in the town of Glasgow—the base’s namesake—located 26 miles away. I made the trek to town to check it out and ended up purchasing a couple of Monogram 1/48-scale blue-plastic U.S. Navy WWII aircraft kits (yes, the ones with the “1-to-1 scale” three-inch rivets), an X-Acto wooden box containing various knives and blades (incidentally, I still have the box), and a tube of glue. That marked the beginning of my more-than-50-year plastic modeling hobby.

I can’t recall exactly when I “really got started” building 1/72-scale aircraft models, but it was sometime later, after discovering that there were a couple of other plastic modelers also stationed at Glasgow AFB. One was the roommate of an NCO who worked for me in the Base Personnel Office and who himself worked in Base Operations. The other was an aircraft maintenance officer who had recently returned from an assignment in England.

I no longer remember the NCO’s name, but the officer’s first name was Harry. He lived in Capehart Housing and had a basement where we often gathered for “build weekends.”



No doubt I’m probably the oldest Alamo Squadron member in the room at our monthly meetings, sporting a four-digit IPMS number that I acquired way back in 1966 when I was the freshman AFROTC instructor at the University of Kansas in Lawrence,

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Plastic Modeling in the “Dark Ages”

By Lee Forbes, IPMS-USA Member # 2297 | Page 2 of 3

Both the NCO and Harry had been introduced to 1/72 scale plastic models while assigned in England. That scale was dominant in Europe at the time, and in some countries it still is today. Both had brought back bagged kits—mostly WWII subjects—from FROG, Airfix, Keilcraft, and several other brands whose names escape me now. Harry had returned with a footlocker full of these kits and generously shared them with me.

I was immediately “hooked” on this scale for life. The models represented a constant scale, took up less display space, and were available from kit manufacturers worldwide—a situation that remains true to this day.

At that time, we didn’t have the tools, liquid glues, sanding sticks, fillers or putties, color-matched paints, airbrushes, resin or metal conversion parts, and other conveniences modelers take for granted today. We were limited to what was available. We used X-Acto knives with No. 11 blades to cut parts from the sprues, cloth-backed metal sandpaper in various grits for sanding, and—if you could find them—metal jeweler’s files in flat, round, half-round, triangular, or pointed shapes.

Paint choices were limited to the small square bottles of Testors gloss paints in basic colors, which had to be mixed to approximate the colors of the aircraft being built. Thinners, as I recall, were usually lacquer or mineral spirits, with lacquer readily available at hardware stores. Airbrushes didn’t exist, so all painting was done with brushes of various sizes and shapes—most of them not particularly high quality.

We relied on kit decals, which were usually thick and often out of register, leading some modelers to paint markings on instead. One of the biggest challenges we faced was using tube glue to assemble plastic parts. At one of our get-togethers, the NCO brought a bottle of carbon tetrachloride—acquired from who knows where—and demonstrated that it could be brushed on to cement plastic parts together. Amazingly, it worked.

Commercial putties and fillers didn’t exist, so we mixed baby powder with Testors gloss paint to create a filler solution that we applied to wing roots and seams. We smoothed it using a fingertip or a Q-tip moistened with lacquer. It took a while to dry, but it worked.

We also lacked reliable reference materials for determining correct colors, so we relied heavily on color photographs in aviation magazines. I discovered an English magazine in the base library called *Air International*, which included a section devoted to plastic modeling. It featured “how-to” articles and photographs of finished models painted in accurate colors for aircraft of all nations. Finally, we had a reference to help improve our modeling skills.



This is a photo of a brush-painted Revell 1/72-scale Ki-61 “Tony” that I built around 1964 while assigned to Glasgow AFB. The jungle camouflage was applied using a Q-tip dipped in thinned green paint and randomly dabbed onto the surface.

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Plastic Modeling in the “Dark Ages”

By Lee Forbes, IPMS-USA Member # 2297 | Page 3 of 3

Looking back at my time with the two other plastic modelers at Glasgow AFB—and our reliance on the primitive tools and materials available then—it’s a wonder we didn’t give up on the hobby altogether. But we persisted, sharing ideas and techniques during our gatherings at Harry’s house. Just as today, we enjoyed the camaraderie and the opportunity to learn from one another.

There were no contests in those days, and IPMS/USA had not yet been organized, so we contented ourselves with displaying our models in the Base Library. Occasionally, one of us would be featured in the Base newspaper.

Despite that recognition, we never managed to attract anyone else to the hobby during my three-year assignment at Glasgow AFB.

Bummer!



FEBRUARY 2026 Edition

Challenges of Building 1/72 Scale Armor Kits

By Julio A. Caro | Page 1 of 2



Building armor models in 1/72 scale presents a unique set of challenges that are often underestimated—usually right up until one actually opens the box

and starts looking for parts that appear to have been designed for ants.

I am currently working on a **Trumpeter Russian T-55 Medium Tank M1958** (kit # 07282) in 1/72 scale picture below.



While the finished model promises to be a convincing miniature of a Cold War classic, the path to completion has been a test of patience, eyesight, and manual dexterity that I thought I left behind years ago.

The most obvious challenge is the size of the parts—many of which are no bigger than a flea, and possibly lighter. With hands that are no longer as steady as they used to be, simply picking up these tiny components can feel like a competitive sport.

More than once, a part has vanished the moment it left the tweezers, launching itself into what I can only assume is a parallel universe inhabited entirely by missing model parts and unmatched socks.



Seeing these parts clearly is another adventure altogether. Even with good lighting and magnification, some details are so small that I find myself wondering whether they are actual parts or just optimistic suggestions molded into the plastic.

Armor kits in this scale still manage to include tools, grab handles, tow cables, and machine guns—details that are perfectly reasonable in larger scales, but in 1/72 become exercises in faith and fine motor control.

Assembly tolerances are equally unforgiving. A slight misalignment that would go unnoticed on a 1/35 kit becomes painfully obvious in 1/72.

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FEBRUARY 2026 Edition

Challenges of Building 1/72 Scale Armor Kits

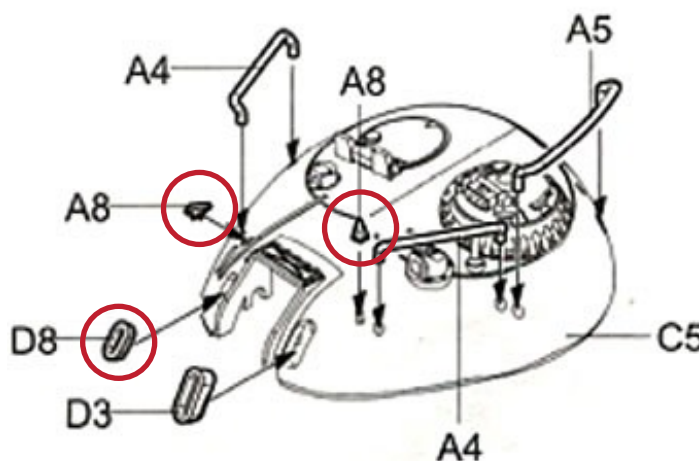
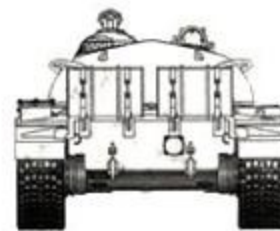
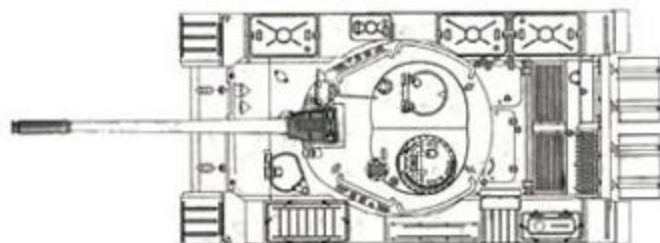
By Julio A. Caro | Page 2 of 2

Road wheels and tracks demand precision, and paint application requires a very restrained hand—too much paint, and the carefully molded detail disappears faster than my dropped parts. Weathering must also be kept subtle, unless one is aiming for a T-55 that appears to have survived several centuries of neglect.

In the end, working on this T-55 has reminded me that 1/72 scale armor modeling may be challenging, occasionally frustrating, and sometimes humbling—but it also keeps us sharp, patient, and humble. And if nothing else, it provides an excellent excuse for buying better lighting, stronger magnifiers, and a larger supply of spare parts.

1/72 Armor Survival Guide (Read Before Opening the Box)

- **Magnifier on.** If you can see it unaided, you're in the wrong scale.
- **Light the bench like an operating room.** Shadows eat small parts.
- **Cut parts inside a bag.** This limits escape velocity.
- **White work surface only.** Black mats are stealth technology.
- **Tweezers are mandatory.** Fingers are optional—and unreliable.
- **Dry-fit everything.** "Close enough" does not exist in 1/72.
- **Less paint.** No—less than that.
- **Subtle weathering.** This is a tank, not a geological event.
- **Expect losses.** The floor demands tribute.
- **Take breaks.** When parts look imaginary, stop.



The parts circled above are great examples of parts that are extremely small and very difficult to work with. **Patience and care are critical when working with these parts.**

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FEBRUARY 2026 Edition

1923 FIAT Mefistofele *Model of the Year for 2025*

By Keith Rule | Page 1 of 4

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1923 Fiat Mefistofeles Race Car, source image: media.stellantis.com



The Fiat Mefistofele is a one-off racing car created by Ernest A. D. Eldridge in 1923 by combining the racing chassis of the 1908 Fiat SB4 with a 6-cylinder, 21.7-liter (21,706 cc or 1,324 ci) Fiat A.12

aeroplane engine producing 316 horsepower. Eldridge broke the World Land Speed Record on July 12 by driving 146 mph on a public dirt road in Arpajon, France—the last car to set a land speed record on a public road. The car had no front brakes or seat belt. The name Mefistofele (or Mephistopheles) comes from a demon featured in German folklore, originating as the devil in the Faust legend, and alludes to the infernal noise emitted from the unmuffled engine.

This model was built from Italeri's 1/12 scale kit. It was originally released by Protar with a metal body. Italeri retooled it several years ago in plastic. I bought the kit on eBay. Sprue attachment points are massive, even on small parts, requiring care and cleanup. Many parts are assembled with small screws. Jeweler's screwdrivers are required, and I found that drilling out the kit screw

holes with the correct bit was necessary to ease assembly. The instructions weren't great, but an experienced modeler should be able to figure it out. This is not a kit for a beginner. Here is a photo of the source kit:



Body Work:

The kit provided five body parts—the main body, left and right hood parts, and three belly parts.

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1923 FIAT Mefistofele *Model of the Year for 2025*

By Keith Rule | Page 2 of 4

After sanding and prepping these parts, I realized that the molded-in rivets were small and unacceptable. I replaced them by drilling and installing .040 Tichy Train rivets. Each rivet received a small drop of CA on the backside. I wanted to achieve the red patina that I saw in photos and that would be typical of a vintage race car. I experimented airbrushing red over various shades of gray and black and found that Tamiya Pure Red acrylic lacquer, airbrushed carefully over a combination of Tamiya Gray Primer with some areas of Tamiya Flat Black, gave the desired results. Rivets and hood grilles were lightly weathered with Tamiya Panel Line Accent and silver paint. The kit provided masks that were used to airbrush the FIAT lettering with Tamiya Gloss White over Tamiya White Primer. The kit provided the Mefistofele decal.

Wood:

Wood played a big part in the construction of this car. The cabin floor, rear bulkhead, firewall, and interface between the chassis and the hood halves are all wood. These parts are molded in tan plastic (except for the rear bulkhead, which was missing altogether). I could have attempted to paint these parts to resemble wood, but nothing looks more like wood than real wood.

I used 1/16 basswood for the planks and a paint stir stick for the long pieces between the hood halves and the chassis. For the planked floor and firewall, I glued the basswood over the kit plastic. I cut a rear bulkhead from .030 sheet styrene and glued the planks to that piece. I stained all the wood with Valspar Golden Pecan from my garage and left it that way.

Here's a photo of the wood work done on the model:



Engine:

The detail on the engine parts was quite nice, but the wire and tubing provided in the kit for detailing were, for the most part, unacceptable. Much of the wire and tubing was way out of scale or very difficult to work with. Fortunately, I have collected a stock of wire and tubing over the years and was able to substitute for the poor kit supplies. I did use the kit-supplied copper wire, large cooling system tubing, and fittings. I used wrapping wire for the ignition system. Critical to the engine detailing was Albion Alloys Brass Tube Slide Fit (1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.7), purchased from Burbank House of Hobbies in California. This tubing was used extensively to detail the ignition and cooling system. The hose clamps are photo-etch.

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1923 FIAT Mefistofele *Model of the Year for 2025*

By Keith Rule | Page 3 of 4

The engine was finished and lightly weathered with Tamiya and Alclad paints and washes. Reference the following photo of this work:



The most difficult part of the assembly was the two chain drives. Each chain drive came as four “layers” on a sprue. Each “layer” must be assembled in the exact order and as precisely instructed. Then you “lock” the entire assembly with a soldering iron, precisely melting an end at each link—**PAIN IN THE ASS!** And no mistakes allowed. Installing the chain assemblies on the sprockets and making the final connection is also a challenge. However, the process does produce a very realistic chain.

I painted the chains Tamiya Gunmetal. Online photos showed the leaf springs wrapped in cord, as was common in those days.

I replicated this with heavy tan nylon thread from my stock. Reference the photo below.



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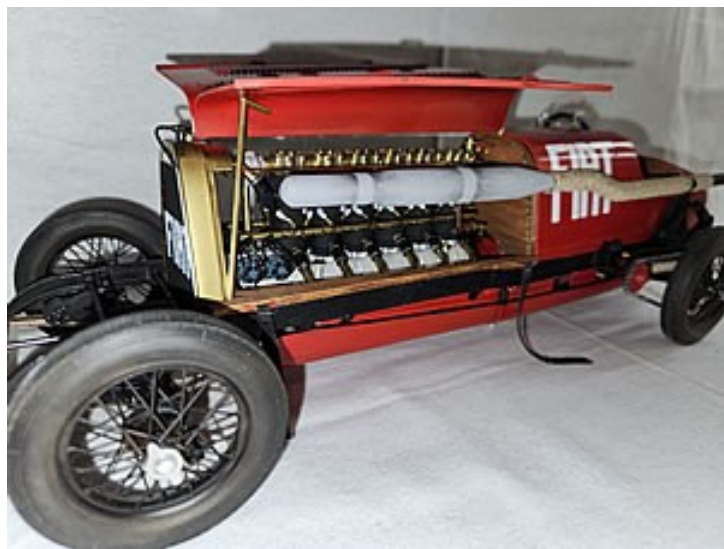
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1923 FIAT Mefistofele *Model of the Year for 2025*

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The radiator was finished with Model Master Brass Metalizer (no longer available, but I had some), Tamiya Semi-Gloss Black, and a black wash.

The kit wheels and tires assembled nicely after painting the wheels Tamiya Semi-Gloss Black. I weathered all four with chalk shavings. The kit provided unrealistic hood straps, so I made my own with thin black leather that I have in stock and used the kit buckles. Here's a photo showing the work done on the wheels:



In Conclusion

The Fiat Mefistofele was a challenging build, but I do enjoy overcoming problems and bringing a project to a successful completion. I am honored to have been awarded the coveted **Alamo Squadron's Model of the Year for 2025**.

Here are some additional photos:



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Building the Pagani Zonda C12S

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Photo Source: Hobby Search, Japan



The Pagani Zonda is a mid-engine sports car produced by Italian sports car manufacturer Pagani. It debuted at the 1999 Geneva Motor Show and was produced on commission in limited units; as of 2019, a total of 140 cars

had been built. Variants include a two-door coupe and a roadster. Construction is mainly carbon fiber. The Zonda was originally named the “Fangio F1” after Formula One champion Juan Manuel Fangio, but following his death in 1995, it was renamed for the Zonda wind, a term for a hot air current above Argentina. Research shows that Pagani Zondas typically sell for around \$10 million each. Research also shows that no two are alike—custom interiors, custom paint, and engine options make each Zonda unique.

The kit doors were separate parts, but the instructions showed them simply glued in place after painting. The rear hatch and front nose component were also separate parts. The kit instructions gave two options: leave them loose to display the engine and front suspension, or glue them in place and hide everything.

I always do a mock-up of the basic kit parts to check for fit, alignment, and any warped parts. During the mock-up, I could see that there was potential to mount the doors to the nose component in an open gull-wing style and mount the rear hatch open to the rear component. Hinging to allow closing would be an insurmountable challenge, but I would always display the model with the doors and rear hatch open.

This was accomplished during final assembly by using 5-minute epoxy to glue a bent wire to both the nose piece and both doors, and to the rear end and rear hatch. Holding these components in place while the epoxy was applied and cured was difficult, but accomplished in the end.

Paint is typically the most important part of an automotive build, and I usually anguish over this decision. However, I had three bottles of ready-to-spray paint from Tropical Glitz that I had ordered for another project and decided not to use. The colors were Black Onyx (black), Winter Blackberry (a shade of burgundy), and Pinkalicious (a metallic pink). It cracks me up how paint companies try to sell colors with fancy names! As

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1923 FIAT Mefistofele *Model of the Year for 2025*

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always, I airbrushed test spoons to check the colors and found that all three would work together for a design. Following the dramatic contours of the body, I laid out a center area on the front and rear of the car that would be Black Onyx, with the remainder of the body painted Winter Blackberry. A 1 mm trim strip in Pinkalicious would separate the two. Pinkalicious would also be used here and there on other parts of the model.



The body and additional components consisted of 20 parts. Of these, the roof frame, rear panel, front valance, two rocker components, two mirrors, and two of the six rear wing components would be finished with carbon fiber decals. That left 11 components to be

painted. After sanding and prepping, I airbrushed Zero 2K Gray Primer, which I had bought because someone in a magazine article claimed it was a superior primer. Although the Zero primer gave satisfactory results, I do not see where it is superior to the Tamiya primer that I typically use, especially for scale model work. Because primer does not always reveal all small imperfections in body preparation, I typically airbrush a coat of silver (House of Kolor Orion Silver here) and inspect for any problems. I then repair, sand, prime, and reapply silver as needed.



With a flawless base, I airbrushed TG Pinkalicious in the areas of future trim striping and then laid out the trim with Tamiya 1 mm yellow tape. Masking the Black Onyx center areas, I airbrushed three coats of Winter Blackberry, finding that three coats gave sufficient coverage. After curing overnight, I masked the Winter Blackberry and airbrushed three coats of Black Onyx.

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Building the Pagni Zonda C12S

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In addition to the nine body components finished with carbon fiber decals, several chassis, engine, and interior components were also finished with carbon fiber decals. I ordered two sheets of 1/24-scale carbon fiber weave from Scale Motorsport and used half of the second sheet. Applying carbon fiber decals to large flat parts is relatively easy, but applying them to small, complex parts is a skill unto itself. The Scalemodeling Channel has an excellent YouTube video explaining this process. Basically, you apply yellow tape to the area you want to decal, outline the shape with a fine-tip marker, transfer the pattern to the decal sheet, and cut out the decal. The fact that carbon fiber has a pattern complicates the process. Apply the decal with decal solution and decal solvent as needed. Complex shapes may require several pieces of carbon fiber decal and multiple applications of decal solvent. I used Microsol, Microset, and Solvaset (a little stronger than Microsol) for this project. I spent a good 20 hours applying carbon fiber decals.



House of Kolor 2K Urethane Clear Coat (Show Clear) was used on both the body and carbon fiber components. Adequate bright lighting is an absolute requirement when airbrushing clear coat so that you can see the clear as it builds up on the model. With adequate

lighting, you can see the orange peel disappear and the gloss build up.

Another requirement is a box or container to cover the parts between coats; I use a simple cardboard box.

For the body components, the process was as follows: mix the clear coat, activator, and reducer in a 3-1-1 ratio (air temperature must be 70°F or higher). Airbrush a mist coat—especially if you have decals, and there were a few small decals on the Zonda—and wait five minutes. Airbrush a heavier coat and wait ten minutes. Then airbrush two full wet coats, allowing ten minutes between coats. After curing for a few hours, you can remove the cover and inspect the finish.

You may see a few nibs or some slight orange peel. For the Zonda, I noticed two nibs and some very slight orange peel on the black area of the rear hatch. I polished these out with 3000-, 5000-, and 7000-grit sandpaper, followed by Meguiar's Scratch X using a polishing attachment on a Dremel motor tool. The remainder of the components looked good.



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Building the Pagni Zonda C12S

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To be honest, clear coating in a garage—as opposed to a climate-controlled professional spray booth—doesn't always produce the great results I achieved on the Zonda. You may be happy with the model as it is, and that is perfectly fine. Quite often, however, I proceed to the next step. After 48 hours of curing, I sand the model nearly flat with 2000-grit sandpaper. Even with four coats of clear, you can still sand through the clear coat, especially at the edges. Sanding through the clear coat is disastrous and requires starting over with a new body, so be careful. After sanding with 2000 grit, I airbrush one or two additional coats of clear, hoping for a perfect finish. Quite often, however, I will still find a few nibs and some waviness in the clear coat that I find unacceptable. At this point, I now have five or six coats of clear to work with. After another 48 hours, I sand starting with 2000 grit to flatten the clear coat, then remove the scratches progressively with 3000, 5000, and finally 7000 grit. Then the magic happens—I take the Dremel with a new polishing ball and Meguiar's Scratch X and polish the clear coat to a glass-smooth, perfect finish—every time.

The carbon fiber parts were also clear coated with House of Kolor. However, they only require a mist coat and one or two additional coats to look beautiful.

With a clear roof and open doors, the interior became an important part of the project. I airbrushed all the interior parts Tamiya Semi-Gloss Black. Much of the interior is carbon fiber. I used MCW Pink Panther lacquer over the semi-gloss black on the seat and dash inserts.



The pink floor mats and rear trim pieces were made from 1 mm thick foam. The diamond pattern was created using a paper cutter to impress the pattern into the foam. Then .035 Tichy Train rivets were used for the center buttons of the pattern. You can also use clay tools—or any tool that will impress the foam without cutting it—to create the pattern. This technique is often used on scale model lowrider interiors, and there are several YouTube videos that explain it in detail.



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Building the Pagani Zonda C12S

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I purchased Aoshima's photo-etch and metal detail kit and added most of those pieces to the model. The engine lettering, rear emblem, four exhaust pipes, license plate, door handles, Pagani doorway emblem, mirror inserts, metal nose emblem, and wheel centers all came from this kit.

Like a custom '32 Ford, an Enzo Ferrari, or a Shelby Cobra, I now have a Pagani Zonda in my garage.



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ModelFiesta Judging Process: Next Steps

By Dana Mathes



Our ModelFiesta 44 Open System Judging process was generally well-received at our recent contest. Many positive comments were received related to our approach to dealing with the presentation and scope of work aspects, our detailed standards, and the provision of feedback to the contestant. However, we found that our checklist format this year was too labor intensive, requiring about 7 minutes to evaluate and score an entry. This is not sustainable as our contest grows back to its pre-Covid size. In addition, in spite of considerable efforts to train our judges, we have an opportunity to be more consistent in the application of the evaluation tool.

All of the MF44 judges were asked to provide feedback in the week after the contest. That feedback was compiled and studied. A subset of our head class judges have helped me to simplify the evaluation tool based on those comments. We set a goal of reducing the evaluation time to no more than 4 minutes/entry while preserving the philosophy of our judging approach and feedback to the contestant. This new tool will be tested in parallel with the MF44 tool in our club meetings from February to April, with special attention given to speed and consistency of scoring. Once we have agreed on the revisions, we will begin training our judging corps on the revised tool in preparation for ModelFiesta 45 (February, 2027).

Dana Mathes
Chief Judge, ModelFiesta

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Upcoming IPMS Shows and Events

Mark your calendars and get ready to be inspired by the creativity and craftsmanship on display at these upcoming IPMS Region 06 model shows.



EVENT DATE	NAME	LOCATION	ADDRESS
2/28/2026	Winterblitz 2026	College Station, TX	19124 Hwy 6, College Station, TX 77845
03/14/2026	Rivercon XV - 2026	Shreveport, LA	One University Place, Shreveport, LA 71115
3/28/2026	Showdown 2026	Plano, TX	Willowcreek Fellowship Church 1804 P Ave , Plano , TX 75074
4/18/2026	Route 66 Model Expo	Tulsa, OK	The Park Church of Christ 10600 E 96th ST S, Tulsa, OK 74133
05/2/2026	ModelMania 2026	Stafford, TX	The Stafford Center 10505 Cash Rd, Stafford, TX 77477
05/16/2026	CALMEX 2026	Sulphur, LA	West-Cal Arena & Events Center 401 Arena Road Sulphur, LA 70665
August 5-8, 2026	2026 IPMS Nationals	Fort Wayne, IN	Grand Wayne Convention Center 120 W. Jefferson Blvd. Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802

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Monthly Club Meeting Information

Alamo Squadron monthly club meetings are the perfect place to connect with fellow modelers to exchange ideas and learn new techniques to enhance your craft. Come share your latest projects, gain valuable insights, and enjoy the company of like-minded individuals who share your love for scale modeling.



Our monthly meetings are held on the **first Thursday** of the month starting at **6:30 PM** at

ABIDING PRESENCE LUTHERAN CHURCH

14700 San Pedro Ave.
San Antonio, TX 78232



*Our next meeting will take place on **February 5, 2026.***

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IPMS Membership Information

Joining IPMS/USA is a great idea because it connects you with a dedicated community of scale modelers who share your passion. The society offers valuable resources, including detailed magazines, access to national and regional events, and opportunities for learning and improvement through workshops and contests. Membership also provides a platform to share your work, receive constructive feedback, and stay updated with the latest trends and techniques in scale modeling.



International Plastic Modelers' Society/USA Membership Application / Renewal Form

New ☐ Renewal ☐ IPMS#: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Chapter Affiliation, if any: _____

Junior (17 years or younger)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$17.00	Date of Birth _____
Adult One year	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30.00	
Two years	<input type="checkbox"/> \$58.00	
Three years	<input type="checkbox"/> \$86.00	
Canada & Mexico	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35.00	
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Family	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult fee + \$5.00	
	# of cards? _____	

Your Signature: _____

If recommended by an IPMS member, please provide his/her:

Name: _____ IPMS #: _____

PAYMENT OPTIONS:

Cash ☐ Amount: _____
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Where did you hear about IPMS/USA? Please check all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/> Local model club	<input type="checkbox"/> Internet search
<input type="checkbox"/> Friend	<input type="checkbox"/> IPMS web site
<input type="checkbox"/> Ad in IPMS Journal	<input type="checkbox"/> I'm a former member rejoining
<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Ad in other magazine	

Applications should be printed and mailed to:

IPMS/USA
P. O. Box 452350
Omaha, Nebraska 68145-0235

Interested in joining IPMS?

Here is a copy of an IPMS Membership Application/Renewal Form. You can download the actual form from the IPMS/USA website at:

https://ipmsusa.org/sites/default/files/membership_application_0.pdf



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Hobby Stores and Other Links

Support hobby stores that support our club!

DIBBLES HOBBIES

1029 Donaldson Ave, San Antonio, TX 78228

(210) 735-7221

<http://dibbleshobbies.com>

OPEN: Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00 am to 6:00 PM

CLOSED: Sundays and Mondays

HOBBY TOWN

1309 N. Loop 1604 W.,

Vineyard Shopping Center, Suite 101

San Antonio, TX 78259-4769

(210) 236-5527

<https://www.hobbytown.com/sanantonio-tx/l196>

OPEN: Monday-Saturday, 10:00 am to 8:00 PM

OPEN: Sunday, 12:00 PM to 5:00 PM

HILL COUNTRY HOBBY

9355 Bandera Road, Suite 118

San Antonio, TX 78250

(210) 681-2007

<http://www.hillcountryhobby.com>

OPEN: Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00 am to 6:00 PM

CLOSED: Sundays and Mondays

HOBBY LOBBY

Visit the Hobby Lobby website to find the nearest store to your location.

<http://www.hobbylobby.com>

LIONHEART HOBBY

5500 FM 2770, Suite 103,

Kyle, TX 78640

(512) 504-3404

<https://lionhearthobby.com>

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

Monday - Thursday, 10:00 AM - 9:00 PM

Friday 10:00 AM - 10:00 PM

Saturday 10:00 AM - 10:00 PM

Sunday 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM

KING'S HOBBY

7801 N. Lamar Blvd., Unit E188

Austin, TX 78752

(512) 836-7388

<http://kingshobby.com>

OPEN: Monday to Friday, 10:00 am - 6:00 PM

CLOSED: Saturday and Sunday

THE MODEL BOX

1022 N. Main St.

Boerne, TX 78006

Office: (830)-331-9144

Cell: (714) 323-4710

<https://themodelbox.co/>

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