

Botcon 2011 Mega Issue

TFWe 2
June 2011



TFWe

BOTCON 2011

*Exclusive Toys Review
Overall Show Review
Upcoming Product Panel
What Went Wrong
And More*

HEADMASTERS

*We Review the Complete Collection
From Shout! Factory*

A Voyage Of Voyagers

Shin Densetsu Takes A Look At Select Movie Voyagers From 2007 - 2011

Buying, Selling and Trading On TFW2005 - How NOT To Get Ripped Off

TFWe

Welcome back TFW2005 members to TFWe, TFW2005's very own monthly E-Magazine!

The month of June was, without a doubt, TRANSFORMERS MONTH! The month started off with the annual Transformers Collectors Convention, more popularly referred to as BotCon! Fans traveled from across the world to meet up in Pasadena, California to celebrate Transformers Animated, as well as a new Transformers movie (Dark of the Moon), and to see all that Hasbro and their partners (IDW Comics, Jagex Gaming, Paramount) had to offer.

As I write this "pre-issue" note to you all, I'd dare say that 99% of you have made your way to see Transformers - Dark of the Moon in theaters by now, either at a 9pm or 12am showing on Tuesday (June 28th) if not once or twice more on June 29th, the official "release" day. Overall fan reaction is positive, much more positive than Revenge of the Fallen, and early earnings show the movie making slightly less than Revenge of the Fallen's premiere. But estimates from the studio have the movie pulling in, at the end of everything, over \$1 billion dollars worldwide.

We worked our tails off with this issue simply because there was SO MUCH going on this month in Transformers! I want to give a huge thanks to both Silas Zee (shibamura_prime) as well as Shin Densetsu for the work they did on the cover. Watching it progress was very cool. And of course, Joe Moore going above and beyond yet again on the cover as well as inking and coloring ... how this guy doesn't have a job in the comics industry is beyond me!

Check out the end of this issue to see some a couple of layouts that weren't used, as well as an entire image (BotCon Drag Strip) that was left out due to space reasons.

Read on! Enjoy, comment, and leave us feedback! We'd love to hear what you think.

As The Fandom Turns...



Written by Silas Zee and Dan Sheehan, art by Silas Zee

Main Content

BotCon 2011 Coverage

Join Kickback, Sol Fury, Deefuzz, and shibamura_prime as they look back at BotCon 2011! Want even more BotCon 2011 coverage? Scroll down to our "Product Preview" and check out what's coming for the rest of 2011 and 2012!



- BotCon 2011 Toy Exclusives Review by Sol Fury



- BotCon 2011 Panels Over-View by Kickback



- BotCon 2011 Recap by Deefuzz



- BotCon 2011 Recap by shibamura_prime



- BotCon 2011 Recap by Sol Fury



Dark of the Moon Toy Coverage

Join Shin Densetsu as he looks at the Voyager size class toys from all three movies for Optimus Prime, Megatron, and Ironhide! Don't forget to check out Secretcode's Gimmickry, as he explores the joy of MechTech!



- A Voyage with Voyager Optimus Prime by Shin Densetsu



- The Voyage of Voyager Megatron by Shin Densetsu



- Memorendum - Voyager Ironhide by Shin Densetsu



- The Final Word on the Voyager Movie Toys by Shin Densetsu



- Gimmickry by Secretcode

Product Previewst

Check out what was revealed at BotCon 2011!



- Hasbro's Product Preview by Kickback



- IDW Transformers Comics by Kickback

Reviews

Anyone with some green could purchase Shout! Factory's Headmasters Collection at BotCon! And that's exactly what Kickback did!



- Shout! Factory's Headmasters Collection Review by Kickback

Editorials

BotCon Veteran Kickback does the daunting task of looking at BotCon 2011 and pointing out all the bad things, like a true pessimist! A special editorial by TFW2005 Administrator and TFWe Staff Member Joe Moore discussing all the things you can do to NOT get ripped off when doing buying/selling/trading on our Junkion Exchange forum!



- BotCon 2011 - What Went Wrong by Kickback



- How NOT To Get Ripped Off in B/S/T by Joe Moore



- ROBOTS IN DISGUISE Scourge Saved Transformers by Kickback

Wrap-Up



- Sound-Off! - Issue 01 Poll Story Recap by Kickback



- The Last Word (Next Issue, PDF, Behind the Scenes of Issue 02) by Kickback

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The Motormaster's Super Stunt Show

BotCon Toy Reviews

Written by Sol Fury

This year's Botcon boxed set was based around Transformers Animated, giving us an animated rendition of the Stunticons, a group of characters who work well as a box set concept. Along with the Stunticon box set, we got an attendee figure Fisitron, troop builders based on the Autotroopers, Animated Generation 2 Sideswipe and Toxitron, and a pair of non-Animated toys, Shattered Glass Thundercracker and Galvatron. If that sounds like a mish-mash – it's because it is.

We'll kick off first with a look at the main box set. I'm not going to go into too much detail on each mold's virtues and vices, instead I'm focusing purely on the decos, new heads if there are any, and if they work.

So, first of all, the box set itself.

The Motormaster



Kicking off the box set is the leader of the Stunticons himself, "The" Motormaster. I'm not sure why he's got a "The" in front of his name all of a sudden, but it works as in this set he is a kind of carnival ringleader. There was a lot of debate over this mold choice back when it was unveiled, personally, I think with the barrel chest and sharp shoulders, it works for Motormaster. In the black and purple deco and with the new head, it barely looks like Optimus Prime anymore.

The new head is a major part of this design - the box look is consistent with how he appeared in Generation 1, and it recalls the original toy's trailer, but the new head is much more in keeping with the style of Animated and fits the overall flow of the body very well. The hard angles of the head match up with the hard angles of the chest, while the rounded face recalls the more subtle curved elements of the design. The final effect is very striking, and works exceedingly well.

Drag Strip



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The Motormaster's Super Stunt Show

BotCon Toy Reviews

Wildrider



First things first, I never got Blazing Lockdown, so the chainsaw is new to me, and that in my mind helps to make Wildrider his own robot. The deco – gray and silver – works very well and the vehicle mode certainly looks like the Generation 1 Stunticon. The robot mode is very lanky and imposing thanks to the Lockdown mold, something I never particularly pictured Wildrider as being, but it works for him. He's tall, thin, and looks very crazy.

The new head of course contributes to the crazy look of the guy. I like it, it's nothing like how he was in Generation 1, yet it works. The mismatched eyes, and the mouth that feels like the guy is always giggling under his breath really sells the "wild" side of Wildrider. There is no denying that this Wildrider captures the spirit of Transformers Animated in his design. My only complaint was the hands were not corrected. I know it costs more to do the retooling, but the high end nature of the set means that we're already paying a premium for these. Why not pay that little extra for hands that go out all the way?

Breakdown



Breakdown is the fifth and final Stunticon. He uses the Animated Rodimus mold, a mold that is so undeniably Rodimus that any other toy using it should suffer for it. Yet here we are with both Breakdown and Sideswipe, and they both look great using the mold. It's all down to the new head which manages to look enough like both characters to work for them both, and is well painted to give it plenty of personality. I'm glad this was done because really there was no other way to use the Rodimus body.

In terms of the deco, there is no denying this is Breakdown. The original toy was cream in vehicle mode with some red, and mainly blue in robot mode. Here it is done using blue skirting, which works and looks pretty dynamic, but also blue exhaust pipes and engine. The blue engine on the hood looks out of place to me – the leg transformation does not allow for it to be left flipped in though. This in my mind spoils the otherwise excellent deco, much like the lack of remolded hands on Wildrider is the weak point of that toy.

Dead End



Dead End was the first Stunticon we saw, and with him I was convinced that the Fun Publications team could pull off Animated Stunticons. His vehicle mode, while not a match for his Generation 1 car mode, captures the spirit of it perfectly. The shade of red, the yellow stripe, all combined make this very much a revival of the original Dead End. The robot mode deco is great as well, the painted addition of a goatee and the gold face manages to make Dead End look distinct from Jazz, even though they share the same head. The fact the head makes him look slightly depressed helps too, given his morose character. I can't fault this one. He's probably my favorite of the five.

Box Set overall



Overall, the boxed set is the most cohesive set we've had since Beast Wars in 2006. All five Stunticons work well together and look incredible as a group. As a group, they cover for the few shortcomings of the set – which are mostly nitpicking points, I admit. All five in vehicle mode stay remarkable true to their original Generation 1 vehicles – in robot modes, they've got all the personality of Transformers Animated, and enough new details to make them stand apart both from the molds they were redecoed from, and from the Generation 1 versions of the characters.

The Motormaster's Super Stunt Show BotCon Toy Reviews

The Attendee Figure – Fisitron



Fisitron is an unusual one – he's based on the Cybertron mode Ratchet toy, with the new Autotrooper head sculpt. He's based on, and referred to in the comic as, Ironfist, a late Generation 1 early Generation 2 Lightformer who has become somewhat more popular thanks to being featured in Last Stand of the Wreckers and last year's Transformers Collector's Club comic strip. This is Ironfist's first new toy since 1992, and the deco draws as much from the modern interpretation shown in LSoTW as it does the original toy. I am particularly fond of how the Autotrooper head's visor has been repurposed to give him two spots of blue on black in reference to how Ironfist's head was drawn in LSoTW. The head has a lot of character to it and goes well with the body design. The deco is good as well, a mixture of orange on the body and turquoise on the limbs, a striking color scheme that gels well and sets itself apart from the Autotroopers.

That being said, perhaps because the Stunticons were such perfect updates and anything else pales in comparison, Fisitron simply does not do it for me. Maybe it's the fact he doesn't look much like the original or maybe it's just that he is such a minor character. Do not get me wrong I love the concept and the deco, but somewhere, something does not quite fit together.

The Troop Builder Autotrooper



Troop builders have become a staple of Botcon exclusives in recent years. For Transformers Animated, the Autotroopers were the logical choice. They were the Autobot security forces, glimpsed briefly in season 3 of Transformers Animated. These toys are based exactly as they are in the show, using the Cybertron mode Ratchet / Ironhide model, and a variation of the Kiss-players Autotrooper head. The design is well-chosen, with a suitably powerful build, and all three Autotroopers in the set together make an impressive group. The black and white deco is stark but works well to bring out the mold, and the overall effect just works far better in my eyes than Fisitron. To my eyes, the new head and the deco brings out the strengths of the mold in a way that Fisitron does not, and this mold is one that really does seem to benefit from having the arms, legs and body all of matching colors.

The Customising Class Figure Minerva



First off, for those who have never attended Botcon customising classes – go for it. They are a great chance to find out just how complicated these toy robots actually are, and how involved the assembly process is. Those of you who have been year on year, I urge you to step aside and let someone who has not had the chance previously attend one of these classes in 2012. They are seriously well worth doing.

On to Minerva herself. Minerva is from Masterforce, the second of the three "Takara series". In that series she is a Headmaster, a recolor of Nightbeat, but she is drawn quite differently in the show, which is where this version draws its inspiration. She uses the Minerva mold, a perfect fit for the character from her shoulder pads to the overall shape of her body when compared to the Masterforce version. The default deco consists of a white base, with red and gray highlights. The official color layout gives Minerva a look that is very true to Masterforce – like the Stunticons, her deco and mold choice truly captures the feel of the character. It's just a pity that so few will get to own her, because she is an awesome piece.

The Motormaster's Super Stunt Show BotCon Toy Reviews

The Souvenir Figures

G2 Sideswipe



Sideswipe is an interesting choice. Based on his Generation 2 deco, arguably his inclusion in the set is to balance out the use of this character and deco for 2010's customising class. It's a cool gesture and the deco works well here as it does on the original or the Classics version.

Like Breakdown, Sideswipe is a Rodimus recolor and like Breakdown, Sideswipe features the remolded head. The mold choice is pretty good and looks a lot like the original Lamborghini – and the fact the spoiler ends up on the back does not bother me much, since it feels like Animated's stylised take on Sideswipe should have a big wing on his back. It feels natural. What bugs me on Sideswipe is the head. On both Sideswipe and Breakdown, the head is molded with the mouth open. On Breakdown, teeth are drawn in here so Breakdown feels like he is clenching his teeth – a fitting explanation. For Sideswipe, the mouth is just painted black and so Sideswipe is permanently wearing this expression of dull surprise with his mouth slightly agape. It sort of works in the context that he's a hard-boiled cop, but really a neutral expression on both would have served far better.

Toxitron



Toxitron is another odd one. He's a character who was once planned as a Generation 2 Laser Optimus Prime recolor – but his toy got cancelled, and we only first learned of it in a panel by Rik Alvarez in 2005. There's been some demand for the guy to get a release somehow ever since. We finally got something in 2011 – an Animated Optimus Prime redeco. I must say as a character who was always an Optimus recolor the mold choice is something of a no-brainer especially with Motormaster using the same mold. I have to give a shout-out to the excellent bio that makes him a bizarro version of Optimus Prime – it's a very clever way of explaining what effectively does look like a bizarro clone of Optimus Prime. The colors are pretty neat, the purple contrasts nicely with the green, though the overall effect still boils down to a love it or hate it equation.

Still, this is probably my least favourite piece in the set. I was not one of the fans campaigning for a Toxitron toy to be made – I am campaigning for a RiD Scourge from Reveal the Shield Optimus Prime but that is another story. Like Fisitron, I just don't feel the deco, and this is doubled by the fact that I have no real connection with the character.

Shattered Glass Galvatron



The second set of souvenirs returned to the 2008 set theme of Evil Autobots and Heroic Decepticons, and it returns in grand style by giving us a Galvatron. This Galvatron is a straight up recolor of Evac from Transformers Cybertron, something of an odd choice although the mold generally fits the toy. The deco brings out a lot of Galvatron features in the toy, such as the knees and the abs. It's a case of making a clever deco fit a toy that was never intended to be used as that character and in this it succeeds admirably. Still, with no new head the bio card artwork is a total tease, a mocking look at what Galvatron could have been with a new head. Not that I'm broken up over the use of the Evac head – it passes what Archer and Alvarez were calling "the squint test" and the other head molds were far better utilised on the Animated toys.

I like the concept, and I like the toy that was used, although it feels very much like a wasted choice when we could have had another Animated toy. Galvatron as a rescue helicopter is a bizarre enough concept as well, though for a faction reversed character it sort of works.

Action Master Thundercracker



Shattered Glass Thundercracker, aka Generation 2 Thundercracker, is the other Shattered Glass toy from the 2011 set. He is based on the Action Master Thundercracker of the 1990s, a toy due to be homaged last year for the Generation 2 set before Hasbro vetoed the mold choice. Fan demand for the toy evidently was enough that Fun Publications found a way to make it happen for 2011, a fact I am glad for even though it took away from Transformers Animated as a set. The mold choice like with Toxitron is a total no-brainer even if the Classics Seeker mold is noticeably aging now – it is close running between this toy and Sideswipe as to which toy was more exchanged over the weekend.

Not much else to say really – the deco is as wild and as loud as fans hoped and it's truly a nice homage to the original. A pity though that it missed the boat on the celebration of that period of Transformers by a year.

Final Thoughts

I am really divided over this year's BotCon exclusives. While I love the concepts, some of the toys simply failed to click with me. I love Transformers Animated, and I love the characters (those I have a connection with anyway), yet for some reason the add-on figures largely did not do anything for me this year. I still enjoy them but considering the incredibly strong boxed set, anything else has a hard time following pace. The add-ons simply seem to lack the cohesion of the boxed set, they don't feel like they complement the set quite like previous year's sets have. Granted, this might be a good thing for non-attendees without access to the rest of the toys.

The inclusion of a pair of Shattered Glass figures among the Animated year of BotCon is also something I'm divided on. It's great that there is a bone for those who are not fans of Animated, but odds are those fans are also not Shattered Glass fans. And I'm left with the feeling that these two toys used up slots that could have given us more cool Animated toys, especially with the comment that Fun Publications does not currently plan on revisiting Animated again.

In conclusion – great boxed set, excellent customising class figure, okay souvenir sets but falling short of the bar set by the boxed set and past year's souvenirs, and a great choice for a troop builder. Overall, a decent set that will probably escalate in price down the road, but perhaps not to the levels as some other sets have done like the 2006 set.

BotCon 2011 Panels - An Overview

Written by Kickback

There are a ton of reasons why people go to BotCon each and every year. Some people go for the toys and the chance to buy even more toys - the dealer room is ALWAYS a pull. Other people go for the extra things that are going on (custom classes, movie previews, random tours), and some go simply to see their friends (guilty as charged). But one thing that everyone can agree that they check out, at least once, are the numerous panels that are held each and every single BotCon. Some are informative (Hasbro, IDW), others are fun (various show panels, movie panels, etc.), and others are just ... well, I'm not sure why they're there (cosplayers panel).

That being said, this is our quick over-view of the panels that were held at this year's Botcon!

Saturday Panels

The majority of the panels that people wanted to attend were held on Saturday, the first "public" day of the convention (also the first "advertised" day of the convention ... just saying). The panels started at 10am and ran for the entire day, the last one ending at 4:50pm. Let's break them down, shall we?

IDW Transformers Panel

This was the yearly panel for IDW Comics and it heavily featured on the upcoming "Chaos" event. It really seemed like IDW was trying to mimic Marvel and DC by creating "super-huge-large-change-your-life-forever" multi-issue stories that change everything you know about your favorite characters that they simply retcon 6 months (and issues) later. From everything they said in the panel, that's exactly what they plan to do. Check out the "Product Preview" version of this panel later in the issue.

Hasbro - 2011 Toys

We should have realized that the fact it didn't say "Product Preview" was a give-away that they really didn't have ANYTHING to show us. To summarize the panel in a sentence - we were shown lots of "CHECK TRANSFORMERS.COM ON _____ FOR THIS REVEAL" and "rough, non-finalized Transformers Prime prototypes". They did reveal the 25th Anniversary Transformers 1986 Movie Unicron toy and where it is exclusive to (Amazon), as well as some more exclusive items and what retailers they would be a part of. Overall, the most disappointing Hasbro panel in the many years that I've attended BotCon.

Transformers Prime Cast Script Reading

At this point I needed a break, so I left (as did my co-panel-attendee Sol Fury), so I don't know how this panel went. I do know that TFW2005's very own podcast man Vangelus was selected to be on the panel and voiced Shockwave. There are no recordings available, as BotCon doesn't allow it, nor do they ever release it to the public (I wonder if there's a legal reason or if they just don't wanna share). Either way, if you're a huge Transformers Prime fan, I apologize for not having more information available on this panel. I assume it was cool!

Activision and Transformers Dark of the Moon

They pretty much show-cased the game you're currently playing right now. There was no information on War For Cybertron 2, though nearly every single person associated with the game basically said "If we ever made it, COUGH COUGH WINK WINK NOD HEAD....."

Transformers Collectors' Club Roundtable

Some interesting tidbits of information released here - the set we got was not their first choice. The inclusion of Animated G2 Sideswipe was to make up for him being a custom class exclusive last year with the G2 set. Shattered Glass Thundercracker (aka Action Master Thundercracker) is to make up for the fact that the mold was unavailable in 2010. They were pleased with Ramjet sales, Cheeter sales were disappointing (he's still available as of the time of this issue's release), and Sideburn would be shipping soon (EDITOR'S NOTE: He's stuck in customs right now in California). We also saw Runabout and Runamuck, the freebie and store-exclusive for next year.

Transformers the Movie 25th Anniversary Panel

Flint Dille, Neil Ross, Gregg Berger, and Jack Angel all shared stories of their work on Transformers, Transformers the Movie, and what they're currently up to. Interesting stories (all you've heard before I'm sure) but it was great to see Neil Ross and Jack Angel, two individuals who have not made the convention circuit much. Shame Paul Eiding wasn't involved, as he attended this year's show as a visitor and not a guest.



TFW2005 At Botcon 2011. We Win At Drinking...Again

BotCon 2011 Panels - An Overview

Sunday's Panels

Sunday was an interesting day for the convention - for starters, it was dead. Absolutely zero walk-in crowd from what I could gather. The entire day felt like it was about to end in 10 minutes, as you could probably do somersaults down the main hallway and not bump in to a single person. That made seat-grabbing easy in the panels (though the door guards might hit you over the head if you dared try to enter an exit only door).

The Making of Transformers Prime

I walked out of this panel. Why would I do such a horrible thing? For starters, their presentation was more or less them talking. They talked about how many Emmy's they were nominated for and won, they talked about how great their crew was, they talked about what they've all done in their life, and then they opened the floor for questions. There was some interesting information that came up, but it was mostly spoiler-free, no firm answers on a lot of things, and well, it was just kind of boring. I expected more out of this panel (maybe some rough cuts of animation, maybe bloopers or things that the CGI models didn't do right and bugged out on, etc.) ... I'm not sure, it was just unentertaining.

Transformers Collectors Club Magazine and Staff

Discussion on the comic storyline. I skipped this panel. I wanted to spend the day with friends.

G1 Voice Actors Panel

Michael McConnohie (Tracks, Cosmos), Neil Ross (Springer), Jack Angel (Astrotrain, Ultra Magnus), Gregg Berger (Grimlock), Morgan Lofting, Arlene Banas. See similar voice actor panels.

Hasbro - Brand Planning, Story Building

Aaron Archer and Rik Alvarez

The two big Intellectual Property (IP) guys had their own panel this year to talk about how they come up with storylines for the Transformers. They discussed how they have a giant 600 page bible with every bit of Transformers information that you can imagine. We were shown some really cool pictures that Rik Alvarez found for un-released Transformers (the GI Joe Omega Supreme repaint, G2 Mirage, un-used concepts for Decepticon Headmasters and Targetmasters), and they went in to more detail on the Thirteen original Transformers. Each one of them has a unique look and feel that future generations of Transformers will look like - example, Nexus Prime is one of the Thirteen (and is a combiner), so therefore all future combiners are descendants of him. Solus Prime (female) is the ancestor of all female-looking Transformers, though it was expressed that they don't see Transformers as having "genders".

The most important thing I took from this - they are just now discovering an entire "conversation" between Hasbro and Takara back in the 1980's that involved more concepts like the G.I. Joe Omega Supreme repaint figure. Whether it was a cross-over line or something more, they're not sure, but they're still going through the archives and looking up more information that they hope to share in future panels.

Transformers Costume Designing

I did not attend this panel. I don't think a single staff member attended this panel. Absolutely no offense meant towards Rosemary Ward, the host of the panel, I just don't think it was anything our group was interested in covering. I can only assume it was a panel to help those of you who do cosplay to create cool and unique costumes and not get stuck in the "Ahh! Crap!" type of moment where you realize everything you've been doing is wrong. (refer to the "As the Fandom Turns" comic at the end of this issue)

Overall, the panels were disappointing this year. They were somewhat informative, but nothing ground-breaking or Earth-shattering. The most disappointing panel this year was Hasbro's Toy panel, where they showed almost nothing that anyone wanted to see (Generations, Finished Prime figures). It is beyond obvious to me that when a movie comes around, Hasbro puts EVERYTHING on hold for the movie. And while I understand that business decision, at the same time ... don't put all your eggs in one basket.

My hope for next year is that if certain folks are scheduled to host a panel, to at least include a presentation of some sort and not just "wing-it" ... it's obvious when that's done and it really disconnects the crowd. If I could have pulled out my phone and started texting and tweeting, I would have. Many conversations started during the less-interesting panels between audience members, and I dare say it was due to the fact that sometimes it felt as if the panel members had the attitude of "We're here because they told us we had to", and the crowd felt it.

Next year I hope for bigger and better.

- Kickback

TFWe Editor-in-Chief

TFW2005.COM Administrator

Follow me on Twitter @rankal and always follow @tfw2005 for the latest in Transformers news!



Photo courtesy of Botcon.com

Woes of a Protoform - Deefuzz's BotCon Recap

Written by Deefuzz

Trying to summarize BotCon is always an arduous task. The event itself is one of the best times to be had by a Transformers fan all year, but how to properly convey all of the good and the bad in a collection of words on a page? When I tell you about the lines will you fully grasp the epic proportion of them? When I mention Taco Santa will your heart fill up with the same amount of glee as mine? Most likely not and there my good readers is the task that is put before me. I am charged with attempting to use wordsmithian ways to capture what it was to be in attendance at this year's BotCon in Pasadena. We laughed, we splurged, we swore, someone even passed out, and here is my pedestrian attempt at recounting these events.

Woes of a Protoform

First let me tell you about how this journey began, because this was a new experience for me. At first I did not think I would be able to attend the convention this year, as such I had written it off completely and when Primus packages sold out it barely registered in my brain. Soon after I saw my opening, secured the time off of work, and registered to attend. The problem with Primus packages being sold out is that leaves subsequent registrants reduced to Protoform (or in some cases Mini-Con) status. What does a Protoform package get you aside from attendance into the convention you ask? The comic. That's it. Protoforms are not even granted access into the famed BotCon Casino Night and Dinner.

The above will grant a little insight into some of my tribulations this year as a lesser attendee, and while it did not lessen my experience overall it did create a few challenges. First of which dealt with the convention exclusives. As a Protoform you obviously do not get the Primus package exclusive set, but you also do not get the free attendee figure. This presented a problem for me as I fell in love with Fisitron the moment I saw it, and with no possible way to obtain it since most others felt the same way. The boxed set I was lukewarm on, but my initial negative opinions on Motormaster definitely subsided after seeing it in person.

My next hurdle was encountered when I was told that Protoforms may not be able to buy the add-on exclusive souvenir sets until possibly Saturday. Another volunteer said Friday, and yet another volunteer told someone else that Protoforms could buy the souvenir sets at anytime. There was obviously a small miscommunication on how to handle people who are stuck in the attendee limbo between Primus and walk-in, and it makes me think that they probably don't get too many Protoform pre-registrants (to be honest I never saw another Protoform badge throughout the entire con besides the one around my neck). I decided to try for the exclusives on Friday, which leads to another unfortunate event that I will get to momentarily.

Hello Pasadena!

This was my first trip to Pasadena, and it was definitely a good looking spot for a convention. There was a large outdoor mall across the street which had several stores, eateries, and a movie theater (where I was able to watch X-Men First Class in good company while the Casino Night was going on), and there was even a grocery store at our disposal. That being said it was probably also the worst location as far as the hotel bar is concerned. The bar itself was incredibly small and cramped, and even with the small space it took the bartenders quite a long time to actually wait on you (it felt like college all over again). Every night, patrons spilled out into the tiny lobby right by the elevators. It was definitely one of the strangest bar/lobby setups I have been in at a BotCon.

Since I wasn't able to get my exclusives (or so I was lead to believe) on Thursday night, I went to my first Parts Party which was a good time with some good deals to be had and many good conversations with Megamus. I left with a pair of G2 Rotoforce figures (and later on left with a G2 Gobot Prime) and went back out into the lobby area to join up with the rest of the crew as we welcomed Debesh for the night. Sometime later it was decided that the nearby Del Taco would be visited and "hella tacos" would be brought back for all to enjoy. SethBizzard laid some bills down and instructed GogDog and Debesh to return with "HELLA TACOS". I went upstairs to drop off my toys, and shortly after coming back down there were several Del Taco bags on a table in the lobby, and just about everyone had a taco in their hand or mouth. Even after eating a couple myself, there were still tacos leftover which prompted SethBizzard to waltz around with the bag declaring himself Taco Santa and handed out tacos to all of the good girls and boys.

Friday, Friday, Gotta Get Down on Friday

Friday while there were panels going on, I was standing in line outside of the convention center, hoping to be in the first group of people to get inside the dealer room for the preview, thusly being one of the first people to hit the club store and try for exclusives. I did just mention the line for this was OUTSIDE right? Not inside the long air conditioned hallway in the building but outside in the sunlight, for hours? As a result of this, one unfortunate fan nearby in line literally collapsed where he was standing. A good friend of mine (TFW's Automaster) went to go get help and shortly after an ambulance arrived and he was taken away on a stretcher. What made this even more unfortunate was the fact that a few others in line took the opportunity to capture the moment with a camera, which I must say was one of the saddest and most heartbreaking things I have ever seen happen at a BotCon. I must stress that people who lack the capacity to function as a human being like this are in a minority, but it was extremely tasteless and disenchanting.

Shortly thereafter the doors opened and the preview began and we filtered into the dealer room. I was able to buy my exclusives with no issues and then began my walk around. I noticed something a little jarring right off the bat and that was the inclusion of several of the vehicles from the movie were in attendance on the floor. What bothered me was their placement. Several times I had to traverse through this area where people were trying to take pictures, and several times I had to stop or dodge cameras when all I wanted to do was to get to the tables on the other side. These cars really should have been on one of the very edges of the dealer room, or in another room altogether (much like they did with Prime in 2007). The only other minor drawback I had to the dealer room setup was the fact that entry was through one door, exit was through a door on the other end of the room, and to use the bathroom you had to leave the dealer room. It was a little inconvenient but I understand why it was setup that way, just a minor gripe.

Prices on items were quite high for the most part, higher than last year for sure. The G1 prices were bordering on astronomical, and while there were some great deals to be had (and I had a few) most things I just had to pass up. I had my list as I always do, and found some great deals on a few items that were not on my list to begin with and also started my dark journey into the world of 3A, but that is a story for later.

As stated earlier, I wasn't a real person at this convention therefore I was not permitted to attend the Casino Night that was taking place on Friday night. Instead Boardwise, Crasis, empir3, and myself went to go see X-Men First class across the street, and afterwards took part in the TFW meet up which took place in and right outside the Sheraton hotel bar. Many drinks were had, and I met a lot of awesome people I know from online at TFW and from Twitter, and a few of us started what we are calling our new tradition of the BotCon stogie club as we sat around outside enjoying some fine cigars and conversation like gentlemen. There was an odd duck coming around asking about Asian strippers, no one knew how to respond, but bless him he tried. After drinking entirely too much, I ran upstairs to bed so I could hurry up and get to my hangover as soon as possible.

Woes of a Protoform - Deefuzz's BotCon Recap

Saturday Night's Alright (For Fighting)

Saturday for me is typically a panel day with small bursts of dealer room scouring mixed in. The important thing was to be up and ready for the Hasbro panel taking place at 11am. Somehow I didn't feel as bad as I should have in the morning so after hitting the dealer room and a small breakfast I actually made it to the Transformers Comics panel taking place right before the Hasbro Toys panel. I haven't been reading much of the comics as of late, but it's good to see they are doing new things like killing Optimus Pri- on second thought, nevermind...

So the Hasbro Toys panel was a little bit underwhelming I suppose. I think most people were expecting fireworks like last year, and it just wasn't in the cards. There was a strong focus on DOTM stuff which is to be expected, and some great looks at some really good looking Prime stuff coming out. Heard a lot of disappointment and negative feedback from this one, but I thought it was just fine. With the panel ending at noon, and the next panel I wanted to go to not happening until 3, it gave me a long block of time for lunch and dealer room shopping. A large group of about 10 of us decided to make the 17,000 mile walk to Del Taco to have our own little round 2 of "Hella Tacos" and it was absolutely worth it. If there was nothing else to take out of this year's BotCon experience it was at least that I was now a converted Del Taco fan (which I know makes Razerwire happy).

Upon returning to the dealer room I bought my first 3A figure from the one guy who had 3A stuff there. I am now a converted 3A fan as well. Several of us visited the guy's booth so often during the weekend that he brought more stuff on Sunday for us to buy. After a little more shopping around and conversing with fellow fans it was time to call it a day and prepare for the evening's festivities: the \$45 Hall of Fame event.

Many of us dressed in our convention best and went to have dinner on our own prior to the big event. I was in a group of delightful people who went across the street to the Japanese restaurant to consume noodles, sushi, and sake. We were told there were going to be movie snacks in our goodie bags at the event, but I didn't want to take any chances so I filled up and I am glad I did. Upon arriving to the theater we were given our goodie bags which contained a bottle of Hasbro branded water (humorous), a small bag of popcorn (cold and extra chewy!), and a small bag a peanut M&M's (which Shibamura_Prime was allergic to), as well as a Transformers themed cinemask. We sat in the theater and prepared for the magic to happen.

The event started off much like the previous Hall of Fame night. We saw some humorous videos honoring the robot inductees, and then heartfelt seriously toned videos honoring the human inductees. Since Michael Bay was actually in attendance at the event he was there to accept his award and introduce a special surprise he had in store for us: 16 minutes of mixed and edited footage from Dark of the Moon. When the gorgeous 3D imagery was done dancing across the screen the fan's choice began, and the highlight was definitely when we got to the Erector video. How do you best handle a situation like this, when one of the inductees is a small Micromaster with no screen time to splice footage from for a montage? You create a mini documentary tribute to Erector. Hasbro handled this beautifully, and it got a great response from the audience. Aaron Archer ended with commenting about how much fun they had with it, but they don't want to have to do it again. At the conclusion of the event there were two more tribute videos honoring Greg Lombardo and Eric Siebenaler as they were leaving the Transformers team.

Back at the hotel we were all attempting to sort out what we just paid \$45 for and I got a call from my roomies that there was pizza on the way, and I go where the food is so I concluded my night with my awesome roomies and a few other friends as we ate pizza and discussed comics and high-end toys.

Easy Like Sunday Morning

Sunday morning meant that everyone goes in at the same time. Saturday pre-registrants were able to enter the dealer room well before walk-ins but on Sunday we are all in the same line. I was able to get myself a decent spot in line so I could make it to the guy bringing in the 3A figures for us early on. We went straight to their booth and bought some WWRp's and then our day could begin. Sunday is generally the time when you scrounge around for those last minute deals or wait till the last minute before you decide that you really do want something. I ended up making 3 purchases in my last 30 minutes at the show.

There was a Hasbro Branding and Story Building panel that took place on Sunday which I thought was pretty interesting. Dealt with the fiction and a lot of the mythos they are using to build their stories going forward. I think there were several people in the audience that for some reason thought that this panel would be like last year's Sunday panel where they just drop a whole lot of Universe toy reveals on us, but it really all was focused on the brand history and story building and I thought it was easily one of the better panels I had attended all weekend.

Farewell BroCon, It's Been Fun

After the show closed, my roomies and I rushed off to Disneyland to finish up the weekend, and the next morning I was off. As I sat in the small terminal at the Burbank airport enjoying a fantastic coffee I thought back on my 7th BotCon which had just ended and felt satisfied. It wasn't the best con I had been to, there wasn't any Earth shattering news that was dropped, the facilities weren't exactly the best, but it was a pretty solid con nonetheless. More often than not I go to BotCon these days for the people, and to see my friends that I only get to see once a year. That being said, it is a collector's convention, so toys do play an aspect while AT the show, but is not my driving force to actually ATTEND the show.

One eye opening thing about this BotCon is just how awesome fellow fans and friends can be to help you out. This con became nicknamed BroCon by just the sheer number of times someone was "a total bro" by helping me out in one way or another. Shibamura_Prime tracked down an Omega Spreem for me at an amazing price, Kickback gave me his Fisitron, Boardwise and Shibamura_Prime both sold me one of their Autotroopers so now we all have two, Pyro hooked me up with some anime I needed to see, Shibamura_Prime drew me an awesome picture for the hell of it that now hangs in a frame on a wall in my daughter's bedroom...I could just go on.

For me, the good most always outweighs the bad, and I won't let a few (very few) bad apples spoil an amazing time for me. Sometimes I get asked if BotCon is worth going to and I always say unequivocally yes. BotCon has helped provide me with several lifelong friendships that I am most thankful for, and those numbers continue to grow with each year I attend. No amount of exclusives, good deals in the dealer room, or toy reveals will ever compare to the time spent in good company with likeminded friends.



Grimlock And Devastator Cosplayers Greet Those In Line

Picture This - Silas Zee's BotCon Recap

Written and illustrated by shibamura_prime/Silas Zee

SHIBAMURA PRIME'S BOTCON 2011 ADVENTURE

[Drawn because Kickback asked for a report and Silas can't write.]

I like Pasadena.

It tastes like Rich People.

Standing in Line...

If it's not Scottish...
It's CRAP!

Where's your
kill?

Standing in Line...

In the Dealer Room

Why is
one-armed
Wheelie
\$300...?

A guy who
met Peter
Cullen
sneezed
on it.

Seeing and meeting
international Friends

Standing in Line...

I'm drunk!
I love Bumblejumper!

Drink
more!

Okay!

Taco
Santa!

TFW Meetups

Standing in Line...

You're not Jack Angel...

YES I AM!

Meeting
Celebrities

JACK ANGEL
VANGLUS

Standing in Line...

At my art table with
Super_Megatron

Hello Ladies...

At least he's
wearing pants
this time.

Standing in Line...

Seeing New Toys

Look at all
the Robits!

I want
that Optimus
Prime Nerf gun!
Pew Pew!

Standing in Line...

Dammit.

California Dreamin' - Sol Fury's BotCon Recap

Written by Sol Fury

So this year's Botcon took us back to Pasadena. This year I was in the Hilton, which overall I preferred as a hotel to the Sheraton, and the short walk to and from the convention center did not bother me, so all good there. The one downside of the return to Pasadena I felt was the fact that I'd already done a lot of the touristy bits last time I was over - though that gave me a chance to repeat some of the best moments (Simpsons: The Ride)

Panels Recap

Botcon this year I felt was maybe not as strong for panels as previous years. I'll get on to the toy reveals in a moment, but one thing that sort of felt like a missed chance was a lack of a movie creator's panel, which we'd had in previous years. The Making of Transformers Prime was very insightful from a technical standpoint, although light on the juicy plot details I had hoped to be teased on. Appreciate they want to keep things as a surprise for us, though I'd have hoped at least to see a couple of new characters. IDW was good, if you are following the comics, and High Moon Studios was very interesting. I'm told they repeated a lot of what has previously been said on interviews, though I personally don't follow the gaming side of things so I'm taking our reader's word on that one. The IP and World Building panel was excellent, a real highlight of the weekend and a great high note to end on.

Toy Previews

The toy previews this year were weird. We did not get to see all that much on the Hasbro panel, instead told that it would be revealed after the movie launches - given this is the official fan convention I feel some are justified in feeling let down over this. We did get stood up on Movie toys. Transformers Prime was another matter, and it was a real delight to see some toys that are a year away from hitting and looking extremely awesome. I'm also extremely happy that Cyberverse is continuing. Best thing to happen to pocket sized Transformers in years. The display in the Dealer Room was excellent with many pleasing new toys including Guzzle and Human Alliance Reverb.

FYI, fans of the work of Eric S, his final work on Transformers is the Vehicon in Prime Deluxe Wave 3. Many thanks to Motor_Master of the 2005 boards for the info on the Sunday afternoon.

Parts Party and Dealer Room

The dealer room this year was nice and open, and altogether pleasant to wander around. Perhaps thanks to the CA taxes, prices were a bit higher than in other years which made it harder to snag a bargain, though bargains were there to be had if you looked around and negotiated a bit. Plus the dealers were all very friendly and good to talk to. I did not spend as much time at the Parts Party as previous years (sorry about that Megamus!) but got some great bargains when I did swing by. Skids is now chilling with my completed RiD show cast.

Things That Went Wrong

I don't want to sound overly negative because I did have a great time, and reading my comments on the panels I'm already sounding far more negative than I really want to, so I'm editing this down a lot from my original writeup. My general gripes are the lines, particularly the Friday one where someone collapsed and the convention staff did not seem to do anything or know anything when I asked if the guy was alright out of concern.

Timing was another gripe, since panels and door openings ran later than advertised, and not slightly late either but usually 15 - 20 minutes late.

The souvenir line debacle you have probably heard about. Cutting off the line because it was getting late was bad enough and hopefully will be looked at with due scrutiny to improve next year, but the way people were allowed to get back in line - with paper wristbands which they had to sleep in and presumably shouldn't get wet i.e. by having a shower was a bit of a stupid move. It didn't seem to make a lot of sense to me, but the real kicker was the lack of communication. Word went out by email, which was fine - but what about those without email? I know a lot of people were confused about the schedule change. Overall, that whole situation - and the lines as a whole - could have been managed better.

After Hours Recap / Funny Moments

Getting back to the better side of any convention - and please don't think by that criticism the event was bad, because it was just a few bad moments spoiling an otherwise great weekend. As always, after hours is where the real fun is at with any convention. Never mind the panels or the toys, this is the time to hang out with friends and make new friends! So many classic moments from the after hours will remain among my happiest memories forevermore including:

- Introducing one of Hi-Q and Draven's friends to Easterling Capt. Who I bought a Bumblebee voice changer helmet the night before. He was wearing it. Hilarity, and possibly scarring the poor girl for life, ensued.
- Locustreign's reaction to Easterling Capt. when we walked out of the Convention center and he was wearing the Bumblebee mask.
- Easterling Capt. then walked back to the hotel wearing the mask, scaring more than a couple of passers by.
- Tony Bacala. Fresh Balls. Nothing else needs to be said.
- Our entry to the Hall of Fame event, complete with Erector banners.

But the main one -

- Catching up with all my good friends, and putting some faces to names. There's far too many people I met over the week to list, but it was good seeing each and every one of you again. I wish it was easier for us to get together and catch up - but the fact we don't see each other that often makes Botcon that much more special.

That, and Hella Tacos.

The Voyage of Voyager Optimus Prime

Written by Shin Densetsu



Most kids and collectors who bought toys from the 1st movie line probably bought voyager Optimus Prime. This figure was a source of debate once the resin prototype was revealed in early 07 or late 06. On one hand, it was a newer mold than the leader, substantially more slender, and arguably more accurate. On another hand, it used cheats for transformation (faux chest windows in robot mode). Since it was about \$20 cheaper than the leader, it provided an affordable alternative for parents and fans on a budget...that is if you could even find him at the time!

I was hooked on the design the minute I saw the prototype. So once I found out that Target would be selling it 1st, in the form of their Robovision exclusive on launch day, I jumped at the chance to buy it. It was a euphoric experience seeing so many on an endcap (and not at all a sign of things to come, as damn near everything for the line would be scarce a month later, after the movie premiered).

I only have the Robovision version so that's what we'll be taking a look at here. The metallic deco gives this the best look over other repaints of this, and it rivaled the leader version up until the Premium Prime was released. However, we're going to focus primarily on the mold itself as opposed to deco.

The truck mode was compact, and featured a neat surprise, a driver figure! This figure had a cowboy hat, showing that this could be none other than G1 and movie Optimus Prime voice actor, PETER CULLEN! Lots of fans were pleasantly surprised once this was revealed.

During transformation, the driver and seat disappears by automorphing out of the way, initiated by opening the door. This was cool, and gave the illusion that the driver might be a holo-driver, as shown in the 1st movie. Transformation wasn't hard, an experienced fan may not have to use the instructions the 1st time around to transform it. The automorph on the ankles/lower legs was confusing. At 1st I thought mine might be broken. Why?

It doesn't seem very "connected". For example, most automorphing gimmicks worked by having parts move in unison. On Prime, some of the leg panels can automorph while parts are disconnected. For it to work, you have to have the parts close together, it won't always work smoothly.

That snag aside, we end up with a substantially different looking robot mode when compared to the leader version. It's noticeably slimmer, with a more athletic silhouette. In addition, it's smokestacks become rifles. The leader version only had 1 blaster (which automorphed over the hand). The smokestacks can be left on the backpack and configured to face forwards.

The smokestack rifles also double as missile launchers, and what's cool is that the missiles blend in very well. They don't look like obtrusive nubs or anything, they look like caps. The bad thing is that the springs are rather strong. Good for firing the missiles, bad for those of you who like to keep everything secured. This is why 1 missile is not shown in the images here, as I did not know where the other one was!

Articulation was good. Thigh swivels, hinged shoulders, elbows, knees, and thighs. The shoulders and knees were universal joints. This figure basically had the same exact articulation as voyager Classics Prime from the year before.

The light piping worked very well. This was one of the 1st figures I noticed with detailed light piping, utilizing intricate sculpted details on the eyes. For the time this was impressive, coming off of Classics and Cybertron. In fact, of the 3 unique voyager movie Prime molds, this one has the best light piping of all, the eyes shine the brightest on this mold.

Overall I think this figure has aged well. It was a great mold then, and still is now. It was a good, more affordable alternative for parents/kids who could not find the leader version. The thing is, though it was more affordable, it wasn't of lower quality, it was unique in good ways. I loved how it had different weapons than the leader, and how it had greater range of motion for the knees. The thigh swivels were a neat touch too, as thigh swivels were not prevalent in the 1st movie line. I may even pick up the First Strike version, which was a repaint released in the 2008 Allspark Battles line. That version reminds me a lot of Optimus in the Transformers PRIME cartoon, in alt mode.

For the time, this was a great take on movie Prime based on concept art. In 2010, we would see one based on finished renders/CGI models, which would result in a very dramatic difference...

2010 Battle Blades Optimus Prime



During 2009, we did indeed get a voyager Optimus Prime for Revenge Of The Fallen, but it was a mere repaint of the 2007 version, but with glyphs printed on. Most folks who already had the 2007 voyager passed on this one. The color scheme didn't stick out, and at this point, nearly everyone was blown away by the new leader figure.

By late 2009 we had yet another repaint of the voyager, named Defender Optimus Prime. This repaint was the most bland of any incarnation of this mold, and as such, most folks passed on it. For some, it was only a good sight to see since it usually meant Mindwipe wasn't too far away.

By Toy Fair 2010, we got the heads up that an all new voyager Optimus Prime was on the way. The initial images showed this to be more accurate than the 2007 version, and that it had swords.

At Toy Fair, it was revealed that this new voyager, Battle Blades Optimus Prime, would not only have swords, but guns too. This was neat because the leader version (aside from the Japanese exclusive Buster Optimus Prime), did not have guns at all. Buster Prime at that, only had 1 gun. Later we would find out that the guns would be substantially bigger than initially thought (I initially heard he would come with pistols, imagine my surprise when it turned out they weren't pistols, but much larger blasters!).

What resulted was a voyager Optimus Prime that was vastly improved over the 2007 voyager, with regards to accuracy and gimmicks. It even had more gimmicks than the leader figure. To date, this is the only movie Optimus Prime figure with an opening matrix chamber, and removable matrix. It is the only mold to feature 2 guns as well.

The 1st release had swords, the Japanese release featured the unmasked head sculpt and hook swords, harkening back to the battle in the woods from Revenge Of The Fallen. In May 2011, Walmart released an exclusive repaint of the Japanese version and this arguably has the best color scheme (moon deco aside), of the 3.

Battle Blades Prime featured a much simpler transformation than the leader figure. It was also smaller than some of the other ROTF/HFTD voyager figures. Articulation was somewhat hindered due to the placement of the blades, when retracted. Articulation was also somewhat better than the leader, since the thigh swivels were no longer hindered/limited.

When compared to the leader, Battle Blades Prime had a slimmer silhouette for the legs. This issue aside, it was quite obvious that the bar had definitely been raised for voyager movie Prime figures, as this one was a huge step up from the 2007 voyager Optimus.



The Voyage of Voyager Optimus Prime

2011 Voyager Optimus Prime



In what may be the last Transformers movie for Michael Bay, fans expected a line of Transformers toys that blew away both the 2007 line, and ROTF. With a gradual progression from 2007 to HFTD, it seemed that things were getting better and better.

The Dark Of The Moon line came as a shock. The primary gimmick is Mech Tech which features swappable, spring-activated weapons. Weapons which basically utilize the automorph gimmick from the 2007 line.

It wasn't just the weapons that were surprising, but the figures themselves. Most of the deluxes and voyagers are smaller than before, and the styling for some was very different.

While Battle Blades Prime was for the most part, pretty accurate to the CGI model (especially when compared to the 2007 figure), the DOTM voyager Optimus took a different direction entirely. The torso is disproportionately small, making the head look too big. The legs are also progressively bigger towards the bottom, and the transformation is completely different compared to previous figures.

This newer, stylistic interpretation of Optimus Prime has resonated with some fans, and alienated the others. On one hand, some dig the exaggerated styling, which arguably makes Prime look more heroic. I don't mind the bigger legs, I think they look cool that way. In some ways the figure reminds me of Hajime Katoki's mecha designs: slim torso, longer legs, getting larger towards the bottom with the lower leg being bigger/longer than the upper leg. However the head, due to the chest, looks too big for the mold (in fact the head for the deluxe Optimus isn't that much smaller at all). Others think this figure looks too kiddified and dumbed down, especially compared to Battle Blades Prime.

For a while, I was with the latter, convinced that this figure had to be a Fast Action Battler (FAB). It wasn't until seeing some reviews that I realized this wasn't a FAB, but legitimately the voyager for DOTM. Disappointment set in, but I continued to check out more video reviews and galleries nonetheless.

The figure is different for sure. Surprisingly, it ended up growing on me, especially once I started seeing more high res shots. This culminated in me buying it once I found it on shelves.

What we got 1st in the US, is essentially what is known as "Space Optimus Prime" in Japan. I didn't mind at all since I dig armor, and that's what the solar panels give it. With the panels, Prime looks armored up. Transformation is very easy compared to the previous voyager Primes. I transformed it rather quickly with no instructions.

The automorph gun looks cool in either mode. What I found is that this Optimus Prime, while lacking in accuracy, makes up for it in versatility/expandability. For example, it became much more fun to tinker with once I added Human Alliance Tailpipe and Pinpointer in weapon modes. Adding the Human Alliance basic figures in weapon modes unlock the full potential with this figure. In that respect, this Prime is like Classics voyager Prime in the respect that it can be used as a good base for add ons.

Ultimately, the 2011 voyager Optimus is not for everybody. If you want an accurate voyager figure, go with 1 of the 3 versions of Battle Blades Prime. This version of Prime seems more catered towards playability and expandability. Normally the saying "third time's a charm" rings true, but with this one, it doesn't. I think it's a fun figure but not one that wins over fans at 1st sight. If accuracy isn't worth a damn to you, and you pride playability over all else, then you'll probably enjoy this figure. The versatility due to Mechtech increases this figure's playability.



The DOTM voyager Optimus is the smallest of the 3 Primes compared here, in both alt mode and robot mode.

Sure the 1st voyager Prime may have the most inaccurate alt mode, but I like it the most. It reminds me of Laser Rod Prime, my favorite incarnation of G1 Prime. The DOTM Prime looks cool with the solar panels, while the Battle Blades Prime alt mode just looks okay. Of the 3 figures, the 1st movie voyager is the biggest of the 3. Despite their inaccuracies, I think the TF1 and DOTM voyager Primes have more personality than Battle Blades Prime. The TF1 voyager especially, seemed so refined at time of release. I loved how the designers turned his smokestacks into rifles. Battle Blades is by far the most accurate of the 3. If accuracy is of upmost importance to you and you want a voyager, **Battle Blades** is the way to go, especially at the bargain price that the current Walmart exclusive one is going for (it's basically a steal for that set). What sticks out about DOTM voyager Prime is that how much fun you have with it, really depends on if you plan on integrating Mechtech weaponry with it. Do you like the Human Alliance Basic figures in weapon mode? I do, and thus voyager Prime's playability shot up substantially once I plugged in Tailpipe and Pinpointer. Meanwhile, on its own, I think the figure is beat by the TF1 and Battle Blades Prime figures.

The Voyage of Voyager Megatron

Written by Shin Densetsu

The 2007 leader Megatron received a lot of criticism. In fact, most movie Megatron figures aside from the DOTM voyager have received much criticism. The common theme has been "Movie Megatron got the shaft in EACH movie line...". The voyager had 5 things over the larger leader counterpart:

- Fusion cannon for 1 arm
- Neck articulation
- Clever use of translucent parts
- Way better light piping
- MUCH easier transformation

The colors were more consistent. The 1st release of this figure was based on the flashback sequence where Archibald Witwicky discovers Megatron on Earth.

Hasbro took creative liberties and cranked out a blue mold, with some metallic paint washes. There is some silver sprayed over the translucent wing pieces which looks pretty cool. The face is black and makes the light piping for the eyes stick out way more under light. It's a cool effect.

The wings can open up and a lever can make them move forward, as if they were claws. Weird. At first I thought, "maybe it's to simulate wing flapping?", but that would be more of an up and down motion...

Transformation is incredibly easy, the automorph basically does most of the job for you. It's almost on par with the Activators toys which came a few years later.

We're left with a decent looking robot mode. You can fold in the "wing tips", or leave them out, it's up to you. Articulation is good all around, except for the lack of thigh swivels. Instead we get swivels below the knee joint, which I am not a big fan of. I dig that the arm cannon is made to be posed with one arm. Makes aiming poses much easier to pull off, and less awkward than the leader (whose cannon was designed to be used in unison with both arms).

It sounds all good aside from the knees, but there's more that I did not like. This part annoyed me even more. This figure has spring loaded toes/feet halves. To be honest, I have no idea what this adds to play value. I'm not even sure why they were implemented. It only served to irritate me, I don't want parts moving when I don't want them to. Perhaps they were designed to simulate Megatron's feet stepping on stuff, but who the hell plays like that? It's not like the feet could grab Jazz, the springs wouldn't be able to handle the weight/grip. It killed stability. This annoyed me years later on Skystalker and The Fallen.

I can't really recommend the 2007 voyager. For movie Megatron figures, there are much better you can buy. Surprisingly enough, I actually like the 2007 leader version better.

Enter **Revenge of The Fallen**....

Revenge Of The Fallen Voyager Megatron



For ROTF, we got another leader Megatron that wasn't too warmly received (for me it was the lack of paint and what the hell, no right elbow joint?!), followed by an all new voyager Megatron. Since Megatron was revived underwater in the movie, Hasbro took the opportunity to mold the guy in sea green with some metallic silver accents. Not bad, though I think most fans wanted a silver version, like the canceled Autobots Unite for the cause or something (I forgot the name of the Japanese subline he was supposed to be in).

Anyways, this voyager Megatron sticks out. First off, it blows away the 1st movie voyager. Secondly, this is the only movie Megatron to date with a flying tank mode. In the movie it was revealed that Megatron could transform not only into an alien jet, but a tank, a flying one at that. The articulation on this figure far surpassed its leader counterpart.

Even in firepower this figure surpassed the leader version. It has 2 arm cannons, one a missile launcher, and the other, part of an arm with an automorphing sword that mortally wounded Prime. This sword looked way better than the one on the leader version.

This figure has a ton of personality. It just looks sinister, happily sinister. The silver accents were applied well and this is still the most fun movie Megatron to pose. Arguably it can pull off more dynamic poses than the DOTM version. Sadly, I think this figure was mainly overlooked because it was predominantly green. It's definitely one of the most underrated molds in the ROTF line. For as much praise as the DOTM version gets, I still think the ROTF voyager kicks a lot of ass.

Dark Of The Moon Voyager Megatron



The 1st images of voyager Megatron from the DOTM line leaked last November. My 1st reaction? "Wow that looks so bland!". I dug the fact that Megatron finally had an Earth alt mode, would transform into a truck, and had a huge fusion cannon mounted on his arm. The hood reminded me of the Gundam Exia Repair Version and it added a lot of personality to the figure.

I was determined to pass on it and wait for the inevitable repaint. However, seeing more galleries, with the figure posed, changed my mind and I bought it the minute I saw it at Wal-mart. Was it worth it? Yes, however it wasn't perfect.

First off, quality control was not consistent. The fusion cannon dragged down the arms on mine, to the point where the arm simply could not hold up the gun, it would just flop down. I remedied this by way of Krazy glue, making a thin layer/cushion of glue that would provide the tension needed to keep the arms up. However, this is something that should not need to be done, and for those of you who didn't have to do this, cool. Good for you, I wasn't so lucky and apparently I wasn't the only one.

Transformation to bot mode is easy, for alt mode it's confusing. I've got a picture below and if it looks horribly mistransformed, well, it probably is. Maybe I missed a few steps. It is the smallest of the 3 movie voyager Megatron molds in both alt and robot modes.

In any case this figure is very fun to pose, and lends itself well to dynamic posing. It's awesome to see Megatron adopt a more mechanical alt mode, as it pays off visually in robot mode. I can see why this is the favorite movie Megatron for some fans. This figure has had the most praise of any movie Megatron figure.

However the joints are not as tight as on the ROTF voyager, so maintaining poses can be an act of balancing. Mold-wise, it's excellent but noticeably on the small side.

Ultimately if you like earth alt modes and chunkier robots, DOTM voyager Megatron is for you. If posing is your thing and you want a completely evil and wicked Decepticon, the ROTF voyager is the way to go. Both smoke the TF1 voyager.

The Voyage of Voyager Ironhide

Written by Shin Densetsu

Editor's Note: The "Revenge of the Fallen" figure shown is "Recon Ironhide", as the original release of the figure was skipped by the author of this article. His reasons are because it "sucked" and the "Recon version was tons better". Point taken!

Ironhide has been a popular mainstay of the movies since he is the most war-hungry of the Autobots. As such, he's usually the one decked out with the most artillery and he's a figure that I eagerly sought after during the summer of 2007.

The 2007 voyager figure featured an easy transformation that only gets a little confusing in some areas. Most of it is straight forward, and actually the transformation seemed pretty clever to me. I do wish that the doors were not made entirely out of clear plastic, I'm always worried that the paint will scratch off. One aspect commonly mentioned is that the cannons are obvious from underneath the truck but honestly, it never bothered me.

Robot mode featured automorphing lower legs, which worked in a neat way. Just make sure to use the feet to initiate the automorph, not the heel or anything else.

The automorph unfortunately didn't seem to make the feet that stable. Yes they stay in place but they feel like they could dislodge easily, it would be pleasing to hear a loud click.

Articulation was great, it was pretty much standard.

There are 2 things that I did not like:

- No real way to secure the doors in robot mode
- Light piping was ineffective

The light piping feature did not work at all on my figure. I was convinced that the factory workers accidentally painted over them. Then I read that the plastic is just too dark to begin with.

In any case, I don't know what exactly went down but there is no light coming through. Aside from that, Ironhide is a great figure, and one of the best voyagers from the 1st movie line. Now greatness can be built upon right? Well...

Recon of The Fallen...



Recon Ironhide

Recon Ironhide was a heavily retooled 2007 voyager Ironhide with new door, window, and bumper parts and all new weapons. This was also one of the very 1st figures to utilize the c-clip hardpoint system, able to swap and mount c-clip weapons with other compatible figures. This expanded playability, as the knives this figure came with can attach to the hardpoints on his rifles, thus becoming bayonets.

Not only was this a heavily retooled figure from the 1st line, it's also the most heavily armed movie Ironhide figure ever made. The crossbow missile launcher can have the bow removed and the launcher itself switched around to look like a blaster. Both rifles can combine. There's lots of options just with the weapons alone. All weapons can be mounted/stored in alt mode too.

The only things I didn't like were the lack of translucent plastic for windows in truck mode and the gaudy silver lightning deco. Other than that, for a movie voyager Ironhide, this figure has yet to be beat.

Ironhide goes Dark Of The Moon..



Dark Of The Moon Voyager Ironhide

DOTM voyager Ironhide is an all new mold, and goes in a much different direction than his previous counterparts. This Ironhide is substantially slimmer, and lacks the 2 arm cannons that all of the other ones have. Instead, we get a huge Mechtech cannon, which some have said looks like one of his arm cannons.

Most fans do not like the slimmer silhouette, some say Ironhide looks younger like this. I do prefer a chunkier Ironhide. Check out how much bigger the 2007 voyager is (see image to right)...

So smaller overall, and a different look. Anything good about this figure? Actually, yes. This figure has the best articulation, by far, of any movie Ironhide figure. Double jointed knees, thigh swivels, and ball-hinge ankles make it easy for this figure to balance in dynamic poses. The leg articulation impressed me the most.

While the legs excel, the arms do not. The arms are mounted at what looks to be 45 degree angles away from the body. They can move forward at the "shoulder", and the elbows are a combination of hinge and ball, with a bicep swivel on top, and what looks to be ball jointed hands. With this awkward style of arm configuration, I still managed to get DOTM Ironhide in cool poses using the arms. However I can see this being a dealbreaker for some fans, as it is disappointing that the arms are like this.

Like the DOTM Optimus mentioned earlier, what increases this figure's playability is expandability with Mechtech. Here, I show him using Laserbeak as a jetpack and Laserbeak's cannons under-handed, somewhat mimicking Prime in the Superbowl trailer towards the end.

On its own, I find the DOTM voyager Ironhide not as appealing as its previous movie counterparts. The TF1 and Recon versions are substantially bigger with more conventional arm articulation. The Recon one has tons of playability with the weapons alone. The DOTM version has more noticeable gaps in vehicle mold. I still like the DOTM version a lot and recommend it, but the Recon one still takes the cake.



Movie Voyagers - The Final Word

Written by Shin Densetsu

Through the course of 3 movie lines (and their associated sublines), we've seen the evolution of 3 characters in the voyager size class:

- Optimus Prime
- Megatron
- Ironhide

This journey started in 2007. Four years later and interestingly enough, I think the best figures are found at the halfway point. No one was expecting Battle Blades Prime and Recon Ironhide. To see Hasbro and TakaraTomy crank those 2 out was very impressive. Megatron proves that sometimes the 3rd time really is a charm, as he has the best voyager figure of the 3 in DOTM. Meanwhile, I don't recommend his 2007 voyager figure but do like the 2007 Ironhide and voyager Prime a great deal.

With Bay bidding farewell to the movies, and no new movie plans announced after DOTM, perhaps, like with previous movie lines, we'll see another subtitle going into 2012. Or perhaps not. Who knows. If anything this voyage of the voyager figures has been fun for me, as a fan. Optimus, Megatron and Ironhide share one thing in common in the lines: in each line, each one got a voyager figure. If there is no new movie after DOTM, or if the movieverse gets rebooted, it was fun seeing these 3 characters through this trilogy of movie lines.



Transformers Word Search

H R A S T R O T R A I N A X E G O W O F
E E S G X B G J R R G R S C G V K K G Q
N K L D E D T Y M R C R I B A J H Z D S
B A Y N K J X S I E E G D W V Q B L P T
R E I H O M E M E T B J E L A P R I M E
A R M W A G L C S Q Q R B F R O U R Y K
W B M M E O R A T W L Y U J B Y J H U J
N L Q E C G M E V P A E R Z R J L P V H
Y I R K G D I W N F A C N L C R G R M S
C A W E A A Z B N E L Q J I E F L A Z Q
V R T E Y C T N X D B E N X A S T U A K
Z T H J P W L R U Y E K I P S B L C C X
Y P Y P L T U I O M A B M K J R V C J U
L S L W M A O V X N O O Y Y A M G X V K
V M J K J M N R P Q K Z R Q B I U W S O
U Z G N M O O U L J E J T N T A A P E Y
A M A D C J S T D D K X Y U M X K J B P
R B X M X U O C L G J N X Z X C X Y M U
N G I G P Z K M W M Z R O U H J A J I O
U Y Z O R E P P A R C S A X P P S P I A

ARCEE
ASTROTRAIN
BRAWN
CONVOY
EJECT
ENERGON
GRIMLOCK
HEADMASTERS
MEGATRON
PRIME
RAVAGE
SCRAPPER
SIDEBURN
SPIKE
TRAILBREAKER

GIMMICKRY

Written by Secretcode

Dawn of the MechTech

We're back, dear readers! This month we'll be looking at MechTech, the newest gimmick introduced in the Dark of the Moon toyline. I'll be ungeniunely honest here: I haven't exactly been paying any attention for the last few months. Apparently there's a third movie coming with a plot that's kinda basic: Moon finds some "Dark", Optimus Prime has evolved into a Butterfree, the Twins aren't actually maybe sorta kinda not actually by any chance in the movie kinda sorta, and if the toys are to be believed Bumblebee is now the bigger than a firetruck and has a giant electronic brick ducttaped to the roof of his car. Also, it appears everyone has been given a giant plastic brick weapon that I guess could be the gimmick I'll be covering.

Just a hunch, really.

I'll just throw it all out right here and now: I love MechTech. Sure, I guess one could complain that the parts and gimmick itself subtract from the complexity of the toys themselves and yeah they look pretty doofy being stored on the vehicle mode for most toys. But frankly? I don't actually care about either of those complaints. The movie toys have been leaning on borderline masocism and lowering the complexity of the toys themselves seem to have found the sweet spot for transformation and poseability. There's something people forget about with this hobby: The toys are meant for children for the most part, and without the fun what's the future of the line going to be like if children are turned off by how hard the toys are to work with? It's all about fun, and when it comes to that, MechTech certainly delivers.

At the moment of writing (2nd of June, 2011), there are currently three types of MechTech available to experience. There's the Deluxe class, Voyager Class, and the Leader "Whatever money that we have left from designing the toy itself we'll just throw into the gimmicks, what's the worst that could happen" class. I mention at the time of writing because A) BotCon is actually in progress as I'm writing this up, and B) Last time I wrote an article about gimmicks, I had to scrap the last six paragraphs because Stolen Chinese Toys started leaking of the Human Alliance basics and the weapon alt modes that most of them have. I do think I'll be fine though, but if not expect a giant red paragraph to emerge after this one.



The Deluxe Class

To begin with, I suppose we should start simple. And it doesn't get any simpler than the deluxe class's assortment of MechTech weaponry. The main thing about the Deluxe Class is that the guns are simple lever-activated spring-loaded gimmicks. That doesn't mean the gimmick is horrible on the cheaper price-point. In fact, it's quite the opposite. Some of the best MechTech ideas that are in the line so far are in the Deluxe class, namely Ratchet's Saw Gun and Sideswipe's gunblade. There are some minor flaws with the Deluxe class. There is an issue that is very intentional with this size class, and that is the lack of locking mechanisms on the MechTech weaponry and the way the weapons store on the vehicle mode. The locking mechanism flaw is especially apparent on the Melee-based weaponry like with Roadbuster's chainsaw and Barricade's Death Rake. That being said, fixes have been posted all over in our Radi-cons section. The Deluxe class weapons are definitely going to be the main bread and butter of this toyline, however they are far and away from being my favorite. What is my favorite class so far, that I'll inevitably gush about for a good two paragraphs before moving on to the last part?

The Voyager Class

And onward we go to the Voyager Class, where every negative thing I've mentioned about the MechTech in the Deluxe class so far has been kicked out onto the curb. With the increase in price point comes the inevitable increase in pricepoint comes the increase in parts and complexity as well, and boy does it show in the terms of functionality that this line-up has over the Deluxes. The big improvement being the fact that the MechTech in this size class can be locked into either of it's gun modes, and boy oh boy does it make a difference. The big one for this is clearly Megatron, as with a push of his ladder-button and a slight turn to the right on his small tanker-gun turns the puny-sized death dealer into an elephant-face frying weapon of mass destruction and it can stay in it's deployed mode. Oh and just the warning with this one in particular: Watch where your thumbs are in regards to mold flash or springs. Wrong place + Wrong Time + An apparently sharp piece of mold flash = Secretcode wondering why his thumb is bleeding. Seriously, I was wondering for a good day on how that happened... A key advantage to the whole Mechtech Voyager stuff: STORAGE. Hasbro/TakaraTomy pulled a smart decision when it came to placing these on the vehicle modes (at least on the ones I have, Megatron and Shockwave. I will continue to have no idea about the Voyager Optimus Prime... It would have been the same for Ironhide if it wasn't for that upcoming Red repaint.) with the guns being stored as part of the truck's trailer and the tank's massive cannon. Skyhammer has storage as well, but I still don't quite like the idea of a giant gun being placed on the wing of a helicopter. Granted, aside from putting it under the cockpit, I don't see how they could possibly blend in a knife-gun flawlessly into the design of Nether Gundam's little brother.

GIMMICKRY

Leader Class Sentinel Prime and Ironhide

Onward now to the giant electronic elephant in the figurative room: Leader Class MechTech. I am VERY torn on the MechTech that has been shown off for this class so far, and when I get to a certain yellow mascot you'll understand why I feel like there is a point where the designers just threw their hands in the air and abandoned any similarities to the rest of the line to help out the figure itself.

We start off with Leader Sentinel Prime, who is slightly inconsistent with the rest of MechTech other than being "Giant Weapon" and "Must transform". Luckily though, it is that lack that pays off with the most original weapon in the line so far. Now, I've been quietly saying to myself for years that I'd love more shields in the toyline, and seeing this guy with one made my day. Now imagine my surprise when the rare shield weapon can flip and spread open into an even rarer weapon, that being the Jaws of Life. I really dig that.

What else do I dig? Leader Ironhide. While his arm/roof weapon follows the same basic guidelines as the Voyager Class MechTech weaponry, something else does NOT. Something that I really hope is in the movie, despite most signs pointing to "No." This something is an example of how electronics in MechTech can work really well, and frankly I enjoy seeing it. By pressing a hidden button on his chest (Hey! More gimmicks in disguise!), two panels shift around and out emerges a giant spinning chest cannon. But wait, there's more! His eyes light up and the gun lights up around it, as it spins around and around emitting firing noises from itself. Ironhide also has a more traditional MechTech gimmick in both of his arms, pull a lever (in this case being the smoke-stacks) revealing two pop-out cannons that spring out and can be easily closed. I expected no less from the combination of a giant Ironhide and the MechTech concept, and I must say he is easily the biggest benefactor in the line so far.

Leader Bumblebee

And then comes the thing I DON'T dig. And this is surprising, coming from someone whose love of the yellow guy goes a bit too far. I'm talking of Leader Bumblebee. Well, not Bumblebee himself. I'm more talking about his little friend, the Bumblebrick. I'm willing to admit, there were many areas about the actual toy I didn't like from the start. Lack of actual right hand? Was it the series mascot being given a size class I'd rather see Megatron or Shockwave in? No! Again, my love goes a bit too far. I loved the toy being given the size class, mainly because of the reaction from those still pushing Leader Blackout. (C'mon guys. The character has been dead for four years.) And besides, I still want to make a Bumblebee evolution chart with the various size classes. And I'm still cool with it.


I like the idea for the Bumblebrick. Giant weapon that resembles the Stealth Force concept (somewhat) in Vehicle mode, giant jetpack for robot mode. Thing is, aside from that I'm not sure what it's actually supposed to BE. Again, I haven't seen the movie, nor have I played any of the movie tie-in games just yet. But hey, I've read the movie adaptation novel and comic, and I've seen all the film and game trailers. Lo and behold there were no actual instances of Bumblebee spontaneously taking a giant slab of weaponry and jetpack that Wheelja- Oh right- Que whipped up for Bumblebee so that he could help out Optimus Prime in the skies. Or maybe this is all just one giant misinformation campaign. It's not like they'd do that or anything. The brightest spot for the Bumblebrick itself, other than basically being a playset for the MechTech idea as a whole, is the fact that the gimmick ACTUALLY benefits the figure itself.

Hear me out on this one. The main complaint I have heard over the years when it comes down to the Leader Class is that there has to be a major sacrifice in the figure itself accommodating the electronics. With some toys such as ROTF Leader Prime and Cybertron Optimus Prime, they are either very creative of the placement of electronics or the electronics brick has minimal hampering to the toy itself. Other toys, such as Cybertron Megatron or ROTF Leader Jetfire, are not so lucky and end up having a good chunk of the toy bricked due to the implementation. This Bumblebee toy itself may end up being the most poseable Leader Class toy in ages, mainly due to the fact all the electronics have gone straight to the MechTech. And honestly I think that is the best decision they could have done with the toy. Is it a wise one? Yes. Can it be seen as lazy design work? Maybe so, but I cannot blame them for going this route.

Final Thoughts

Regardless, I can't stress it enough. I love MechTech. It's what saved the Dark of the Moon line from being just another Movie Tie-In toyline for me. It has to be one of the most fun and unintrusive gimmicks in years, and for the most part is an enriching and original experience. And I suppose that's what gets me the most about Bumblebee. Of course in a line that has just come out, it's inevitable that with so many different and original concepts out there for the gimmick that there's bound to be at least one or two duds. I want to come back to this gimmick down the road. The line still has so much potential and like how the Power Core Line ended up, I want to see progression from the line. And seeing as it is apparently carrying over into the future, it looks like I'm going to get my wish.

Transformers: Dark Of The Moon At The TFW2005 Resources Section

Transformers 3 Main Line Toys			
			
<u>Autobot Jazz</u>	<u>Autobot Ratchet (Deluxe)</u>	<u>Autobot Ratchet (Scan Series)</u>	<u>Autobot Ratchet (Specialist)</u>
TF3 DOTM Autobots	TF3 DOTM Autobots	TF3 DOTM Autobots	TF3 DOTM Autobots

Product Preview - Hasbro BotCon 2011

Written by Kickback

The norm at BotCon over the years has been that the most anticipated panel of the show is the Hasbro Product Preview, where Hasbro takes a risk and shows the fans all the new and upcoming product for the remaining year and beginning of the next year. As to be expected, the fans packed the panel room and eagerly sat in anticipation for all the things that would be shown!

Unfortunately, the panel was, to be short, a total disappointment.

Most of the movie product that was shown were store exclusives that most people were already aware of. Everything that people wanted to see (ie: Human Alliance Soundwave) were little blurbs that show-cased the wave the toy would be released, and a "CHECK TRANSFORMERS.COM ON ____ TO SEE THIS NEW PRODUCT!". It is important to note that Hasbro has missed the promised dates of the product reveal on their website and we are still in the dark as to what these "wait for it!!" toys are. But we'll go through some of the bigger toys that were revealed (officially) with release dates, etc.



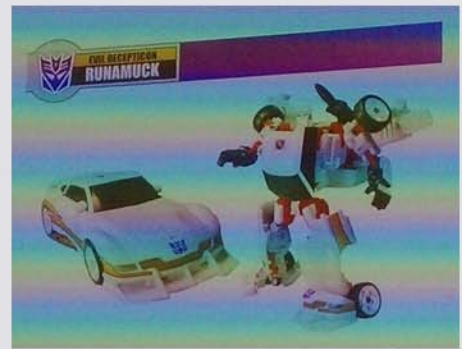
Unicron - 25th Anniversary Transformers the Movie Release

Coming to Amazon.com this October, Unicron gets a re-release in colors that are accurate to his original appearance in the original Transformers the Movie. The color scheme is close to the release that TakaraTomy did, but Hasbro states it will have a new head. The suggested retail price is \$59.99 and will, again, be an online Amazon.com exclusive.



Human Alliance Leadfoot with Steeljaw

This anticipated Wrecker figure from Dark of the Moon will be exclusive to Target (who would have guessed!?) and should be available soon if not already. Interesting fact - Steeljaw was originally intended to be the engine, but in the end had to be re-tooled to be a MechTech type of accessory.



Runabout & Runamuck

The two twin Decepticons are returning next year (one as a freebie, one as a store exclusive) and are based on the Tracks/Wheeljack mold from the Generations line. The crowd was quite pleased with the reveal of these figures. They are discussing increasing production numbers so that fans can get a chance to buy him, unlike G2 Ramjet. Enjoy some grainy images below!



Shattered Glass Drift

Drift is IDW Comics make-believe character that they desperately hope catches on as the Wolverine of the Transformers mythos. Whether or not that is working is up to the fans and collectors to decide, but he's getting an "evil" version for the Shattered Glass universe. Said to be quite the talker, he sports a color scheme that looks a lot like Deadpool from the Marvel Universe. The comparison was noted as intentional by Fun Publications. He will be available as a club exclusive in 2012.

Transformers Prime Product Reveals

Because Hasbro couldn't really show anything too awesome from Dark of the Moon, they did take the time to show the finished versions of the upcoming Transformers Prime figures, including smaller "Cyberverse" scale figures. But there were two figures (that there are no images for at the time being) that got the crowd's attention the most.

Wheeljack (deluxe)

Although it was stated that it was simply a prototype and the final version may be quite different, the crowd cheered and applauded at this visually stunning representation of the Transformers Prime character. Nearly identical to the animation model, Wheeljack is sexy ... that's all there is to say about him. He puts the Generations release to shame.

Ironhide (deluxe)

Sporting his classic Generation One look but with some movie styling, Ironhide returns in Transformers Prime. No information was given about the character other than to show off his toy. The crowd was still very excited to see this character return, especially after that incident in Dark of the Moon.

Bulkhead (voyager)

Bulkhead's look and feel as a Voyager sized toy was well received. The bummer part about this was that the figure was supposedly in attendance at BotCon, but was never put on display. Guess we'll have to wait for San Diego Comic Con to get a better look at the new and popular Autobot.

That was all that was really worth writing home about from Hasbro. However, our friends at Fun Publications had a few things that they showed off and the crowd was very excited about them.

That was all that there really was to talk about that was "product preview" related. Should have guessed when the panel was named "Hasbro 2011 Toys" ... but kudos to Fun Publications for stealing the show with some amazing product reveals. I don't think pictures were supposed to be taken ... oh well!

Let's hope next year's Botcon, or this year's San Diego Comic Con, have something bigger and better to show us.

Product Preview - IDW's CHAOS

Written by Kickback

It seems like just yesterday when I stole the laptop from Sol Fury while sitting in the IDW Transformers Comics panel to type the play-by-play of the panel. There was, and wasn't, a lot of information from this panel and I'm going to try and review it as a preview here in TFWWe so our readers have a brief understanding in exactly what is to come in the next 6 months or so of Transformers comics.

Obviously, there's some big event coming up called CHAOS in which the lives of the Transformers, Cybertron, and Earth will change forever. IDW has a lot of story that they want to tell, so Transformers is going bi-weekly to make sure the two stories they want to tell – the one on Earth which is titled "The Last Story on Earth" and the one on Cybertron entitled "Chaos" – are told in full and not forced in to a smaller format. Basically, with Transformers going bi-weekly, you will have one "Chaos" story a month and one "Earth" story a month. It was stated that these events will tie up a lot of loose ends from the days of Simon Furman ... or at least progress those stories along to a new setting.

In the "Last Story on Earth" storyline, the story will focus a lot on Prowl and Spike's relationship as events unfold that cause the Autobots to distrust Spike and the other humans on Earth. Prowl's character will develop and shine as well as Spike's character, and the two will have their personalities clash throughout the story. This story is simple a backdrop to the story that IDW is really promoting...

...CHAOS.

Galvatron is back (as seen in "Hearts of Darkness") and he's got something big happening on Cybertron, but no one is really saying what. Not even the solicitations for these comics really explain exactly what is happening. But we're told that things are going to happen that change the lives of Transformers forever and will change Cybertron forever as well. Apparently the return of "splash pages" will occur and that we're going to be treated to more action than we've had in quite awhile. How this translates is anyone's guess, but with the lackluster feel that Transformers comics have had over the last couple of years, any change from the norm is welcome and necessary.

Finally, the teaser of post-Chaos ... "Transformers 125", which has the title of "The Death of Optimus Prime", will release after "The Last Story on Earth" and "Chaos" conclude. This will mark the 4,356th time that Optimus Prime has been killed off. The creators were quick to joke that it isn't for good. They tried to egg the crowd on to try and guess why they're calling it "Transformers 125" but the crowd wasn't playing along, and thus the panel didn't give any answer or indication as to why the numbering has changed to 125.

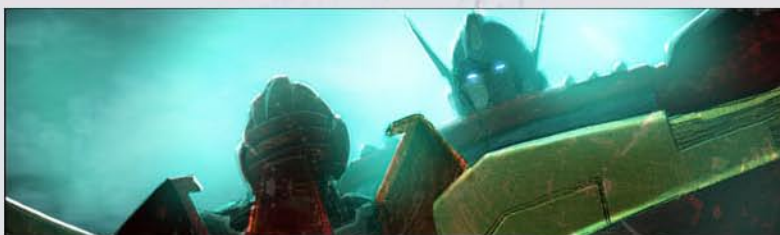
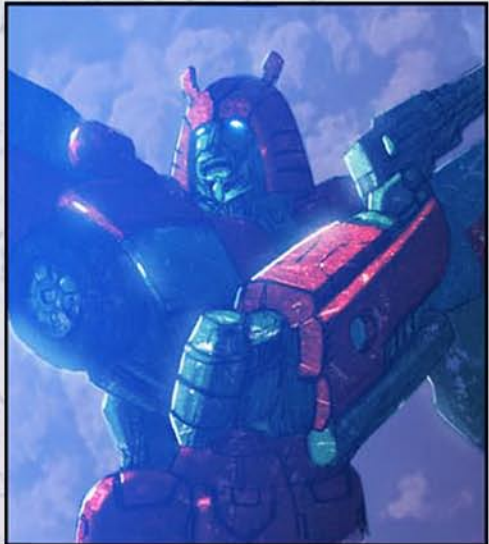
In a somewhat shocking move, Chris Ryall of IDW Comics asked the crowd what they'd rather have – Transformers #81 with Simon Furman (a continuation of the Marvel G1 continuity), or Transformers Animated continue in comic form – and the crowd was easily more demanding for Transformers Animated, which makes this writer believe that every single Animated fan in existence had made it to BotCon 2011, as the popularity for a Transformers #81 has always felt stronger than a continuation of Animated comics (not even the mini-series they produced sold that well).

The only other parts of information that some may care about – Drift apparently plays a big role in CHAOS, if you hate humans in Transformers comics and the alliance they formed with the Autobots, you'll enjoy "Last Story on Earth", CHAOS runs about 12 issues (or 6 months with the bi-weekly format), the Dinobots will return but not in CHAOS or LSoE, Hunter is in the story "Legacy of Rust" which is a Punch-Counterpunch Spotlight that is on hold, but WILL release post-movie, and that are discussions for Transformers #81 and Transformers Animated, but no firm plans as of yet, but when they have something (or anything) they'll announce it.

The last bit of information I saved for this panel is the one thing people are over-looking. If you remember in our last issue, I did a review of the "IDW Transformers Comics App" for the iPhone. Pretty solid little app (I gave it a 4 out of 5 rating), but it is getting a major facelift and some love from IDW and Hasbro in the start of 2012.

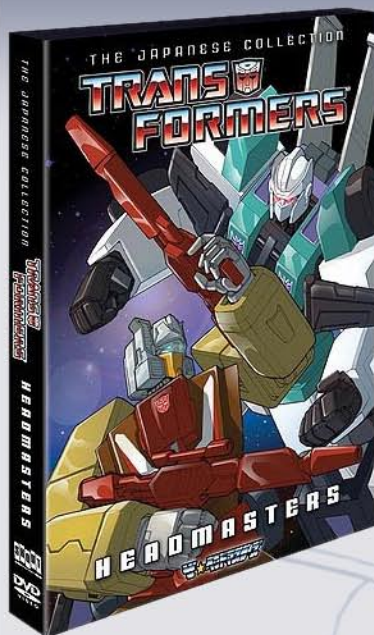
Chris Metson (of the novels of World of Warcraft) and Flint Dille (a fan-favorite writer for the G1 Transformers animated series) helm the job of writing while Livio Ramondelli (the artist for the CHAOS event) are creating a digital-only Transformers comic (which will be available via the IDW Transformers Comics App) titled "Autocracy". The storyline is going to be set post Megatron Origin, but feature in the timeline of the fall of Sentinel Prime and the end of the Autobot civilization on Cybertron. It will heavily focus on Optimus Prime (I'm thinking this is IDW's take on "War Within" but that's just me). This is supposed to launch in January of 2012, and of course, we'll cover every update given on the situation.

Overall, the IDW Transformers Comics panel was not very revealing. We were shown some art (but not much), given little to no story information on Chaos, no information on what the fans really want (Furman and #81, Animated), and instead were given what excludes to a sales pitch for upcoming stuff (it felt like one big comic solicitation and not a "We're doing something cool for the fans!" like in previous years). What I lost in forty-five minutes of panel time I could have easily made up in less than 5 minutes of reading time. I understand the desire to not reveal or expose anything, but in the era of the Internet and news breaking at the speed of light, I would have hoped for something worthwhile for attending the panel (like being the first to hear that #81 is a go, or that Chaos is going to include THIS random character!). Maybe next year...



Head On! Shout! Factory's Headmasters Review

Written by Kickback



Shout! Factory's first release of the Japanese Transformers series from the 1980's, Transformers Japanese Collection: Headmasters, will be released to the masses on July 5th, 2011. This will mark the first time in the United States that the series will be available to purchase and watch without having to download any previous version released on the Internet. Sporting a brand new translation, this DVD set is a must-have for anyone who doesn't own any previous version or who hasn't seen The Headmasters before. Having only seen a few episodes of a previously dubbed version, I purchased this set at BotCon in Pasadena, California, and promptly sat down to give it a whirl and see just what all the hoopla about this series was.

Right off the bat I found myself cringing in disappointment – the font chosen in this sub-titled version is incredibly bland – the best way I can describe it is an old, thin font used in the early 1990's to broadcast storm warnings on your television. The font is very thin and at times can be hard to read depending on what is happening on the screen at that time. Determined not to let a simple font get the better of me, I chose to watch through over half of the first DVD.

Let me focus on the things I enjoy about this sub-titled version before I get in to the negatives. For starters, a decision was made to make sure all the characters are named after their United States versions – Fortress is Cerebros, Char is Kup, Skull is Skullcruncher, Convoy is Optimus Prime, and so forth. The English translations for Soundblaster and Twincast also remain unchanged. It was nice to be able to identify the characters by their English names rather than their Japanese names. Kudos to the translation and those who made the decision to keep those names intact, while bummer to those who were hoping for a direct, un-changed translation.

Now to the negatives on this DVD release.

I understand how burdensome it can be to translate an entire series from one language to another. I understand that at times, things won't make sense and you have to take creative freedom to express what the text you have is trying to say or show. That being said, simple spelling errors (like "acknoeldege") are just unacceptable in this day and age. When your entire understanding of what is happening is based upon what you're reading, seeing blatant spelling errors detracts from the enjoyment. Now, this could have just been me and my background in college in English, but I found it distracting enough to have to rewind a bit to watch the scene and try to ignore the spelling error as my eyes and mind focused directly on it.

Next to the spelling, it seemed as if every episode suffered from some sort of grammatical error that caused just the same amount of frustration. Whether complete words are left out of sentences or the sentences themselves just make no sense, it caused the same level of distraction as the spelling errors. Even little things like the missing period or comma caused me to lose my pacing in reading the sub-titles. I found myself watching every episode looking for errors rather than enjoying the episode because I kept finding so many mistakes as I paid attention. It really took away from what I am sure is an enjoyable show.

There are a few other minor nitpicks about this set – sometimes a sub-title will stay "frozen" on the screen. One in particular stayed through a "scene-swipe" and was present until another character spoke. How that one got through quality-assurance I'll never know. When more than one character speaks it is shown at the same time and is separated by being on another "line" with a dash to indicate it's from another character. Which character that may be is up to you to decipher as if it is an interruption to when someone is speaking, the text will disappear just as fast as it went on the screen. Lastly, there are no real bonus features included in this DVD collection much to the dismay of many – if you remember, Shout! Factory had been asking via Twitter for fans with good-quality commercials and so forth to get in touch with them. Either no one did, or they just chose not to go with adding any special features to this set.

Should you go out and pre-order this set or pick it up when it is released? If you've never seen it and would like to own a copy for yourself to watch whenever you want – for sure! For the price it is entirely reasonable and doesn't feel like a rip-off, despite the flaws stated in this review. If you already own another version of the translation, it really comes down to how much you want to see English names used as opposed to Japanese names. If you are on the fence and already own a version or two of this, it is an easy pass as you've already seen it and this is just another version on the market.

THREE OUT OF FIVE RATING

This was a missed opportunity for Shout! Factory. It feels as if the subtitles were thrown in with little to no double-checking, and that once the product was pieced together, a brief watch of episode 1 to see if things lined up correctly, and then off to print the discs. I understand this was a risk to take and that Hasbro didn't necessarily support this project much, but it is a good thing to have this released and available for the casual fan to purchase. I only hope that with the release of "Masterforce" and "Victory" the quality improves. The font needs to change ... when fan subtitles can look so impressive, to see a company put out a below-standard type of subtitling is saddening and helps give weight to those individuals who practice in fan subtitling.

Shout! Factory, if you need someone to double-check for spelling and grammar inconsistencies, I am available and I work for free.

How Not To Get Ripped Off On TFW2005's Junkion Exchange

Written by Joe Moore

When TFW2005 and the 2005 Boards were just starting to grow in popularity, buying, trading and selling was a pretty harmless affair. Our fandom was fairly contained, with the age skewing to the mid-to-late twenties. Incidents of people getting ripped off in trades were very few and far between. That all changed when the Transformers Movie was gearing up for release.

Even during the Unicron Trilogy days, we could easily see our members starting to skew younger. This led to a lot of members making some really bad decisions when it comes to trading. Cases of people backing out of agreed upon deals, even after goods had exchanged hands, was on the rise. And since TFW2005's sales and trades rely on the "honor system", scam artists and opportunists came out of the woodwork. They would provide deals that seemed too good to be true, or had some of the hardest to find items at prices that were hard to pass up on. We quickly went from a fandom that could rely on members to come through, to one where you need to be skeptical, regardless of whom you are dealing with.

So how do you not get ripped off? It's not always easy. It requires some effort on the part of the members and patience on the part of the sellers. If you follow some of these simple steps, your buying and trading experience will almost always be positive.

Look For Feedback

At TFW2005, we provide a [Junkion Exchange Feedback](#) area for members to post about their buying, trading and selling experiences with other members or even some online retailers. The very first thing you should do before committing on any deal, is check this forum. See what experiences people have had here with the seller. If you're the seller, you should be prepared to provide feedback. If no feedback exists for the member, don't hesitate to ask them for feedback. They may have an Ebay account, or may be a member at another forum where they have amassed positive feedback that you can base your decision on. If they don't have any feedback anywhere, it might be wise to pass up on that deal or take some extra precautions.

Request Pictures

Descriptions are great, but one person's idea of "good condition" is not necessarily going to be the same as another person's. You should always request pictures of the items you're looking to acquire. In this day and age, there's no excuse to not have access to a digital camera of some kind. If someone is unwilling or supposedly unable to provide pictures, then you may end up with something vastly different than you were expecting.

Paypal

If you have access to it, Paypal is one of the best options to cover yourself in case something goes wrong. Paying by checks, cash or even money orders can leave you defenseless if you get ripped off. There will be almost no way to get that money back. When paying with Paypal, beware the "Gift" payment option. If a deal goes sour, you will NOT be protected. Your money will be gone, and there will be little you can do. If you have money in your Paypal account, sending money is free. If you're sending money from a bank account or credit card, there will be a fee. Paypal lets the sender dictate who is paying those fees. Negotiate who will pay those fees before sending the money.

Shipping

Always, always, always get a tracking number and/or delivery confirmation. It doesn't cost that much to add it to shipping, and can give you some extra peace of mind in your transaction. If the seller isn't offering a tracking number, offer to pay for it yourself. Again, the fee is nominal, and the end result means you can follow your package from shipping to delivery.

If you're the seller, or it's a trade of products instead of a sale, pack your stuff with care. Newspaper is an excellent and inexpensive packing material that can offer great protection of your shipment. Packing your items well will nearly eliminate any complaints and minimize that chances for problems after the transaction has been completed. Regardless of how you choose to pay or receive payments, make the effort to take any precautions available.

Communication and Patience

This is a two-way street. This is one of the biggest problems that members run into. Sellers and buyers have to be open to communication. If a problem arises, it's best to let the other party know as soon as you can. Most members will be understanding. On the flip side, impatience is another key problem. I have personally seen complaints filed less than 24 hours after a transaction has been agreed upon, and the moment that happens, the chances of a positive outcome for either party is nearly impossible. Give the transaction a little time to happen. Many sellers may not live directly near a post office or shipping center, and it can take a few days to get the packages shipped out. An open line of dialogue and a bit of patience can go a long way to smoothing out any problems when dealing on the forums.

Common Sense

If it looks too good to be true, then it probably is. Someone who just signed up claiming to have 50 Classics Ultra Magnus' and City Commander Armor sets, and selling them for rock bottom prices, is likely going to rip you off. Also, someone refusing to post photos or posting pictures that all look like they're from different sources probably didn't take those pictures themselves.

Bottom Line

Take some time, do some research and protect yourself in every way possible. If you take care and precaution, you will likely never have a problem dealing on the forums. And remember, if you do get ripped off, there's not much that TFW Staff can do, other than banning the scammer. So keep that in mind and never jump into a deal blindly, lest you risk getting burned.

Bocon 2011 - What Went Wrong

Written by Kickback

Someone had to be the negative-nancy, right?

I attended this year's BotCon in Pasadena, California, and expected there to be a few headaches. No convention ever runs 100% smoothly and any organizer who tells you that their convention did is flat-out lying to you. There are always hiccups, there are always unforeseen circumstances that pop-up, and there's always one or two people who find a way to circumvent every safeguard you put in to place.

It's called life, and it happens.

That being said, with Fun Publications now having done BotCon for 6 years, there are a few things that I wish they could finally figure out. When the DMV moves faster than they do, you know there's a problem.

Pre-Registration Toy Pick-Up

I can hear, yes, HEAR Pete Sinclair rolling his eyes right now.

I understand that when you have a couple thousand attendees all rushing the tables at once to get their pre-registration toys it's going to cause lines to form. But this year it just seemed to get worse as the fact that Fun Publications uses volunteers to get you through the line. Volunteers lack the one thing that paid employees have - accountability.

Maybe the guy in charge of my line wouldn't have excused himself from helping a paid customer and club member to answer his cell phone if he was on the clock versus volunteering.

Employers also usually issue out material and common-sense rules about physical contact, fire-code, line formation, etc.

Maybe a paid employee wouldn't have been pushing and pulling people (literally) in to or out of lines.

The overall organization of the toy pick-up was great six years ago, but after three huge box-office movies and record-breaking attendance numbers, maybe it's time to re-visit exactly how it is organized and what can be done to expediate the process (or modernize it) so those sweet and lovely older ladies don't have to squint at a xerox'd three-ring binder of names.

I won't even bother getting to the point of forcing those who waited in line for hours TWICE, once to get their toys and the second time to get the attending exclusives, to wear a wristband overnight and to come back in the morning because "the staff didn't want to be there all night".

Here's my suggestion -

1) Volunteers help set up tables and tear down tables. They are not line control, they are not toy pick-up individuals. At most, they guard doors that are not entrances in to the dealer rooms and/or show rooms.

2) If you're insistant on keeping things run the way they have been run for years with toy pick-up, add another volunteer to each line who can assist in grabbing the items for that individual instead of having one guy floating (and usually crushing empty boxes) and letting the table clerk do all the work.

3) Paid employees - whether it's hourly or by toys (lame I know) - will always get you better results. If they know that their performance is judged by something they want (ie: toys), remind them of such a thing so that they work hard.

Moving on.

The Hall of Fame was pretty bland. It was more of a Hasbro shareholder meeting, and we were all shareholders. We had a lot of "Hasbro rocks! Hasbro rules! We're awesome! Yeah!" type of rally-cries, a lot of self-pat-on-the-backs, the Michael Bay stuff (which was probably the second best thing) ... and the most amazing Erector video ever. They told us never to do that again ... but how can you not? Now everyone wants their favorite "joke" character to get some Hasbro love at the Hall of Fame.

Maybe it's something you should consider, Hasbro. You're out of movies to preview for a couple of years...

The panels are always hit and miss, and you can check that out in the main TFWe Issue 02 thread. Overall, not as great as years past, but not nearly as bad as some I can remember from long ago.

The one thing that sticks out most in my memory from BotCon that I felt was just horrible and even disgusting...

A man passed out from the heat because we were forced to stand outside, in a line, in direct sunlight, with no water, no shade, no explanation (except for FIRE CODE ... even though there was no lines forming inside for anything). An ambulance eventually came and took him to the hospital ... he was, for the most part, unresponsive. It looked bad ...

Guess how many people from Fun Publications bothered to walk outside and check on the man or his friends and/or family? Guess how many Hasbro associates made it a point to walk outside and check it out, to talk to the ambulance, to get a NAME, to get SOMETHING ANYTHING ...

If you guessed zero, you're correct.

(NOTE: The word around the show was that someone informed Brian Savage after-the-fact, who was surprised that the incident happened, leading us to believe that he, and others, never knew what happened. We do not know if they eventually reached out to him or not, and whether they did or not we may never know due to POSSIBLE legal reasons behind it, such as liability, etc.)

I don't know who that man was. I don't know what happened to him. If he, or anyone who knows him is reading this, please let us know that he's okay. The group of us from TFW2005 that were standing in that line (myself, Deefuzz, some regular members) were really unhappy about how that entire situation was handled. And I really hope that someone from BotCon or Hasbro sent him some sort of care-package or at least covered the cost of SOMETHING related to the accident.

I hope.

Every BotCon has things that go wrong. Every BotCon has problems that seem bigger than they really are. 99% of this article is exactly that - pointing out things that are simply convenience annoyances. At the same time, improving those annoyances could also improve the overall feel and satisfaction for those attending the show. I'd love to be able to spend Thursday night with my friends instead of standing in line for three hours to get toys I purchased months ago.

How was your BotCon experience? Share your good, and bad, stories!

- Kickback

TFWe Editor-in-Chief

TFW2005.COM Administrator

Follow me on Twitter @rankal and always follow @tfw2005 for the latest in Transformers news!





SCOURGE
NOT NEMESIS PRIME

ROBOTS IN DISGUISE Scourge Saved Transformers

Written by Kickback

I know what you're thinking just from clicking the title:

"Really? "

Yes. Really.

Bear with me now as I go in to detail in this TFWe Special Board-Only-Not-In-The-Magazine-Cuz-I-Don't-Wanna-Wait-Two-More-Weeks special on exactly how and why **RID Scourge saved Transformers**.



After peaking in the mid 1990's with the sleeper success of the Beast Wars Transformers series, Hasbro chose to take the brand in a new and different direction utilizing those same popular Beast Wars characters with a futuristic, non-realistic setting with the series "Beast Machines". This was a drastic change from the beasts that transformed in to robots, as you had sorta-beasts "morphing" in to robots, drastic character changes (Rattrap anyone?), and an overall theme that didn't resonate with kids or collectors, leaving a sour taste in the mouths of all those who purchased Transformers toys.

In short, Transformers was getting ready to fall down the abysmal hole of cancellation and isolation once again. Beast Machines was such a failure that the planned follow-up series, "TransTech", was cancelled entirely.

Taking a cue from their predecessors, the Hasbro team decided that Transformers was still too popular to just let drop away for a couple of years while they worked on something new - something had to be put on the air that didn't involve morphing beast-people or a cybernetic space-cube, and if they could get toys with it, even better. The answer, as it was in 1984, was staring at them in the face - Takara's own Transformers line titled "CAR ROBOTS", a series that featured beasts and classic vehicle Transformers battling it out. The line used a ton of older toy molds that would be cheap to pump out than making new toys, and the new toys were already molded and available thanks to Takara.

In that regard, "ROBOTS IN DISGUISE" was actually the first version of "TRANSFORMERS UNIVERSE" - a line that consisted of a ton of repaints, and one or two new molds here and there.

Optimus Prime and Ultra Magnus made their triumphant return in toy form as well as animation form, Autobot symbols became common-place in toy aisles again, and the toys took off in popularity, quickly surpassing everything Beast Machines wished it could have done. Transformers were popular again, but they'd been popular during Beast Wars as well.

There had to be a push to make "Transformers" big enough that collectors wanted in as well as the much-hated scalpers. Because as much as scalpers suck, they are a visible sign of demand of an item, and rather than a few short-packed toys in the beginning, there was only one toy that was on the mind of every single Transformers fan at this moment.

They wanted ROBOTS IN DISGUISE Scourge. And not the Spychanger version we were given, but the actual "G2 Laser Optimus Prime" toy.

But there was a problem. The toy was too big to package in an assortment with Ultra Magnus and Optimus Prime. The toy was either going to have to be its own assortment (negative!), or it would have to be an exclusive. And after sitting on Primal Prime repaints at Toys'R'Us, retailers were scared to carry a higher-cost toy as an exclusive after seeing dismal returns with Beast Machines.

But the fans cried out. They had a dream. So did Scourge.

Finally, after what seemed like forever, Hasbro was able to convince Toys'R'Us to carry the full chromed out trailer version of Scourge. The questions started soon afterwards - would he retain his upside-down G2 Autobot symbol? What changes, color-wise, would Hasbro make to the figure to differentiate the Japanese and Korean releases of this figure? Would they "nerf" the missiles and rockets?

The answers given made fans squeal with absolute joy (well, most of them anyways).

Instead of "Combatron" or "Combaticon" (as people predicted), Hasbro went all old-school on us ... **and brought back the DECEPTICONS**. Scourge was given Deception symbols, as well as a darker red plastic instead of the more pink version with the CAR ROBOTS Japanese and Korean releases. The animated show also referred to Scourge and his Commandos as "Decepticons", meaning for the first time in close to 10 years, the **ORIGINAL** Decepticons had returned (even if the G2 Decepticon symbol was awesome).

So, uh, Kickback, how does this mean anything close to Scourge saving Transformers?

I'm glad you stuck around and asked me that question, newbie-Transformers-fan-from-movie-1-forward! I'll be happy to answer that question for you.

Robots in Disguise Scourge was the **first real sought-after Transformers toy since G1's Fortress Maximus**. No matter how you spin it, the demand was high for this figure, and people were buying all that they could find. Collectors were hiding the toy for their friends, scalpers were buying entire cases, and people were offering their MISB version for double the price. A Japanese Car Robots Black Convoy was going for \$200 at online retailers.

This was the first toy that fans and collectors demanded get released, and the folks at Hasbro who cared about the resurgence in the fandom, pushed hard to get this toy released as an exclusive figure.

In the animation, Scourge was the first "black repaint Optimus Prime" figure to be not only in animation, but an entirely new and original character (NOTE: Not 100% sure as I didn't read the rare and not-sought-after G1 Manga, or if "Nucleon Convoy" was somehow "firsties!" with this or not, and I don't consider the black/yellow repaints of G1 Prime as Japanese reissue exclusives to count). Scourge was the leader of the Decepticons, he "had all the strongest traits of Optimus Prime, but with the tainted spark of Megatron".

Since Scourge, nearly every single Optimus Prime toy has been repainted in black, teal, gray, and red colors. Sadly, Hasbro chose to go a new direction with "evil Optimus Prime" toys, and has named them all "Nemesis Prime". This is done, obviously, because they do not want to do injustice to the original black Optimus Prime repaint (via Hasbro), Scourge. No toy has come close to matching the pure ecstasy that is Scourge, recolored from one of the most articulated and amazing figures from the 1990's.

Scourge may not be the savior of the Transformers in your eyes, but in my eyes and in my world, he helped bring me back not to just enjoying Transformers, but **COLLECTING** Transformers, and really falling back in love with the fiction and mythos surrounding the characters that this franchise creates.

Every generation of Transformers fans needs to have their "Scourge", their favorite villain. Take the cunningness and treachery of G1 Starscream, take away all the whining and cowardice, give him a sword, paint him black, make him look like Optimus Prime, and you have Scourge.

With the recent release of the "Reveal the Shield Optimus Prime" figure, a homage to the G2 Laser Optimus Prime mold, a sizable amount of collectors believe that this toy needs to be repainted black, teal, gray, and red. But more importantly, the name that they put on the tag in front needs to say something it hasn't said since 2002.

"SCOURGE".

I thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope that some of you will join in our plight to hammer the thought in to the Hasbro eyes that browse these boards that it's time for a proper ROBOTS IN DISGUISE homage, and that Scourge is the perfect opportunity. "Bruticus" in Universe 2.0 was weak, and "Side Burn" from the Transformers Collectors Club is a step in the right direction, but they're totally missing the character that deserves the most love from this series.



Sound Off! - DOTM Toys Poll Recap!

Written by Kickback

Last month, we asked you what you thought of the (then just released) **Dark of the Moon** toys! We were given an onslaught of toys to pick from on the shelves, and fans and collectors need to know what's the best and why! Here are the results!

- Yes, Dark of the Moon toys are great! - **35.44% (28)**
- Undecided, it's too early to tell - **32.91% (26)**
- No, Dark of the Moon toys are not my thing - **21.52% (17)**
- I didn't buy any Dark of the Moon toys - **10.13% (8)**

As for fan reaction - it was pretty split across the board. People either love movie toys or they hate movie toys. Many people wanted to see what else was coming down the pipes in Human Alliance figures, how many repaints we're going to have shoved down our throats, and many wanted to see advanced reviews before making the decision to drop money in these troubling economic times.

Either way, we thank you all for participating in the poll for May! Don't forget to check out this month's poll ... it's all about Dark of the Moon!

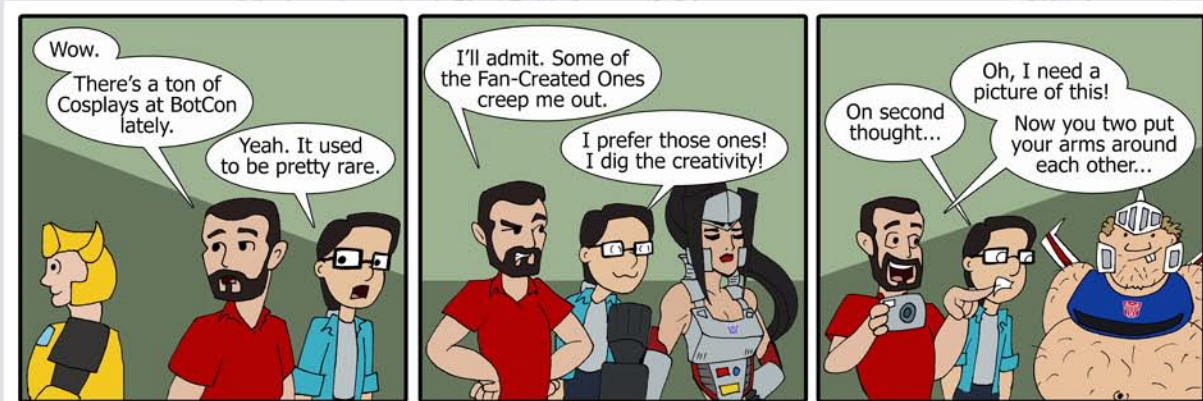
The Last Word - Next Issue, PDF, and more!

Written by Kickback

Are we done already!?

Let's do another As the Fandom Turns, just for laughs!

"As the Fandom Turns..."



Feels like we just started this issue! (Staff Laughter) There's some inside humor from the TFWe staff for you. This issue was a lot of fun (but a lot of work) and we hope you enjoyed it. Some of you may wonder where the .PDF version is. Well, as we do this issue, we literally work until the exact HOUR it is released. Meaning that I (as Editor-in-Chief) am tweaking, correcting, and trying new things out in every post every single hour up to the decision to go ahead and release. Because of that, Joe Moore pulls out his hair waiting for me to finish it. The only thing more annoying than trying to work what is written on a message board in to an amazing .PDF file is doing it and finding out that half of what you just ported has been changed. Give it a couple of weeks, this .PDF is going to blow your mind!

**EDIT* Be sure to let me know what you think of the PDF - Joe Moore*

Here's a couple of working layouts we had for the issue. See if you can guess which one is mine.



The Last Word - Next Issue, PDF, and more!

Evolution Of Optimus Prime Cover Art

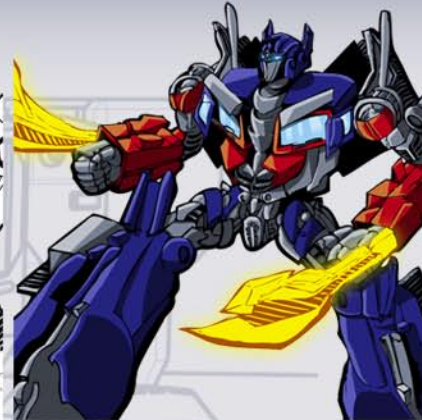
Original Color Sketch



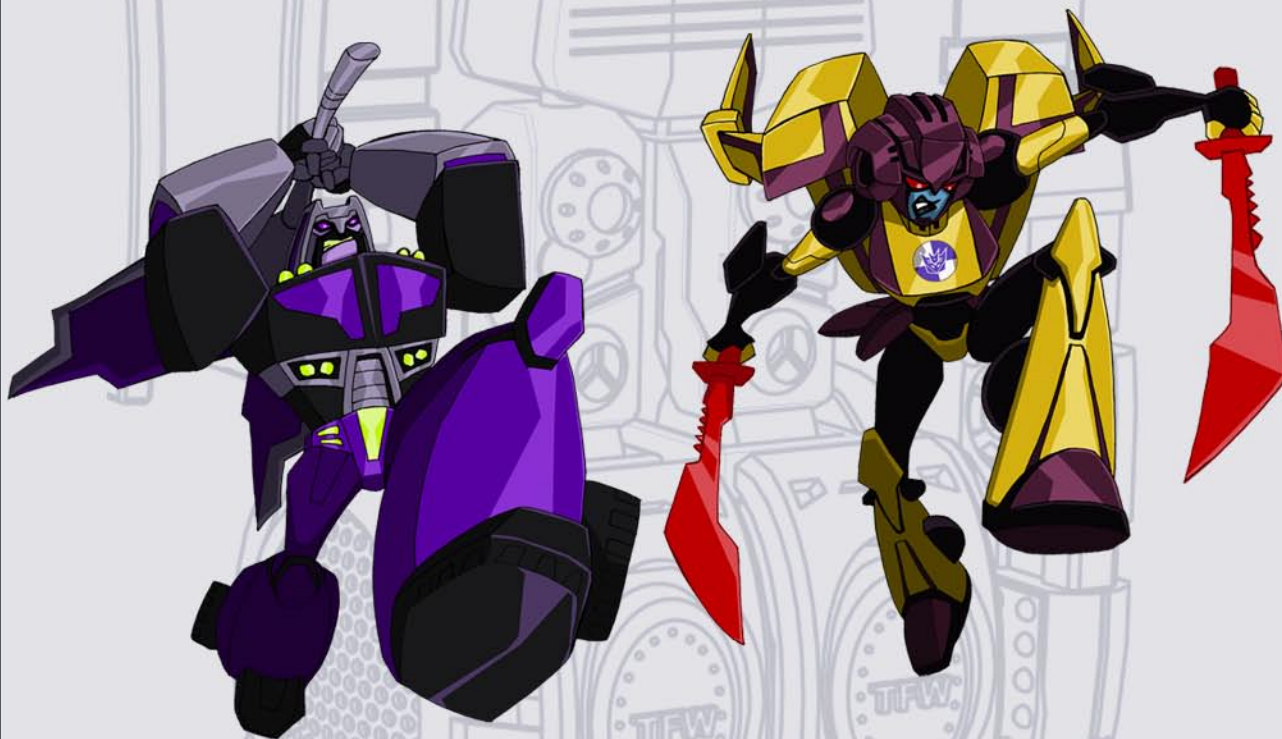
Inked Line Art



Finished Colors



And because I know there's some diehard Animated fans, here's the un-edited images of Motormaster and the un-used Dragstrip, thanks to **Silas "shibamura_prime" Zee!**



We're already working on Issue 03 (for the month of July), and it will be Dark of the Moon extravaganza!

On another note - Sol Fury will be taking the helm of Editor-in-Chief responsibilities for Issue 03 (July, Dark of the Moon). I'll be hard at work, at work, as a recent promotion has me going through some training and some really odd hours for the first couple of weeks. However it just gives me more time to work on what we have in store for you for August ... just wait, you won't want to miss it! Do you want a hint? Well, you don't get one. Are you upset? Geesh, I thought you were made of sterner stuff...

See you in 30ish!

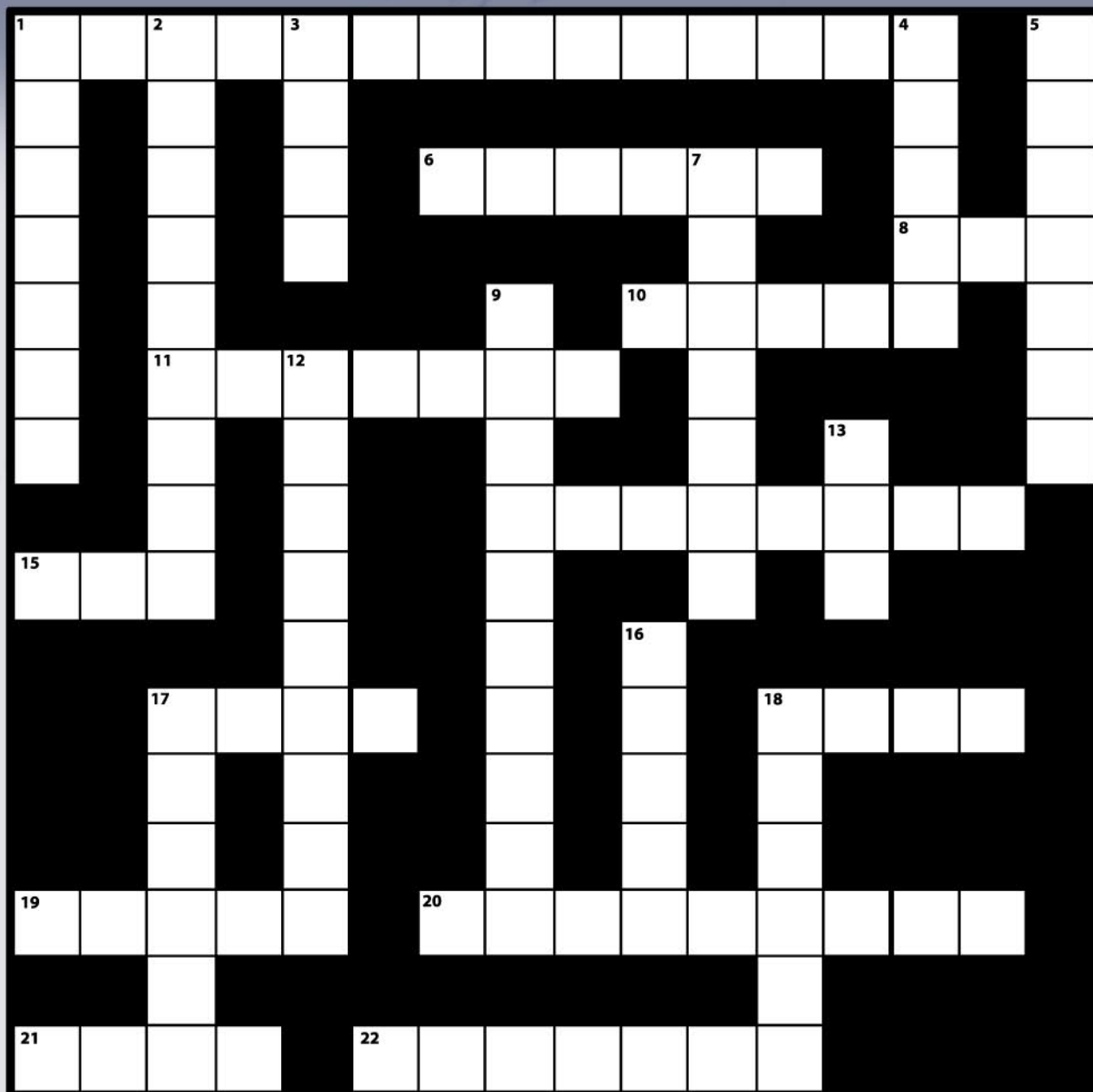
- Kickback

TFWe Editor-in-Chief

TFW2005.COM Administrator

Follow me on Twitter @rankal and always follow @tfw2005 for the latest in Transformers news!

Fun With Transformers



ACROSS

1. Created Megatron...Maybe
6. Human Energon finder
8. Autobot Actionmaster
10. Blue minibot
11. He became Billy
14. Not the Decepticons
15. Car Robots in USA
17. Friend of Orion Pax
18. Green female Autobot
19. Optimus or Sentinel
20. First ever Botcon exclusive
21. Hot Shot's little buddy
22. Liege Centuro

DOWN

1. X-Ray cat from Botcon
2. Female roboto ninja
3. Beast Wars rat
4. Mail order G1 playset
5. Maroon Stunticon
7. Powers the Transformers
9. First combiner
12. G2 Hero Megatron in Europe
13. Short for Autobot
16. Prime or Supreme
17. He's in Arcee's head
18. Protectobot copter

Rotate For Answers

