

PROJECT

STAR WARS RIDES

3 Customs From a Galaxy Far, Far Away

PHOTOS BY JAMES KNIGHT

It's safe to say that as this issue hits your mailbox, computer, or "device," Star Wars mania will be at full Mos-Eisley-on-a-Saturday-night craziness and fans will be lined up at multiplexes around the world waiting for *The Force Awakens* to light up the silver screen. So, what better time to blast off the workbench with a few Star Wars-themed builds? Just like the Industrial Light and Magic effects artists of the pre-CGI era, master modeler James Knight has put his kit-bashing and weathering skills to work to create futuristic and functional models that look right at home in the Star Wars universe. Ready to make the jump to hyperspace? Here's James on how he took these three machines from box-stock to interplanetary awesome.



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Jawa Junk Hauler

The outlandish sandcrawler that collects C-3PO and R2-D2 in *A New Hope* was actually an RC model, so it's only fitting to revisit the theme for an RC project here. RC4WD's Beast II looks sci-fi straight out of the box with its 6WD and military styling. To turn up the Star Wars vibe, I swapped its six wheels for RC4WD's Predator tracks and painted it "Jawa rust." RC4WD makes it easy to add the tracks with optional steering knuckles up front and modified axle casings for the pair of axles at the rear. The rear tracks interfered with each other, so I made new suspension links to space the axles farther apart and installed a longer driveshaft to join them. The vehicle was weathered using light coats of flat black, followed by rusty red, and then a wash of black (one part black, ten parts thinner). The final touches of damage were added by dry-brushing flat aluminum to the main body. The trick to dry brushing is to pick a big soft brush and wipe off almost all of the paint before lightly brushing over the edges of each panel.

To make the vehicle feel more like it was owned by a trash-trading Jawa, I added some junk to the rear bed of the Beast. This was done using the leftover parts of an F-14 Tomcat model kit mixed in with two old Star Wars model kits I had collecting dust on the shelf. Everything was then given a black wash to bring out all the cool detail in the parts and give it that used and abused junkyard look.



Here's the Beast II in stock form, with white plastic "hard" body and six wheels.

- parts list*
- HASBRO**
 Star Wars 3.75" R2-D2 and C-3PO; 21401588, \$15
 hasbro.com
- RC4WD**
 Beast II 6x6 Truck Kit; Z-K0052, \$500
 Predator Track Front Axle Fitting Kit for Yota; Z-S0619, \$28
 Predator Track Rear Axle Case Fitting Kit for Yota II; Z-S0969, \$70
 Predator Tracks (Pair); Z-W0057, \$120
 540 Crawler Brushed Motor 80T; Z-E0001, \$10
 rc4wd.com



The Beast II comes with lots of fine metal parts to add tons of scale detail to the build.

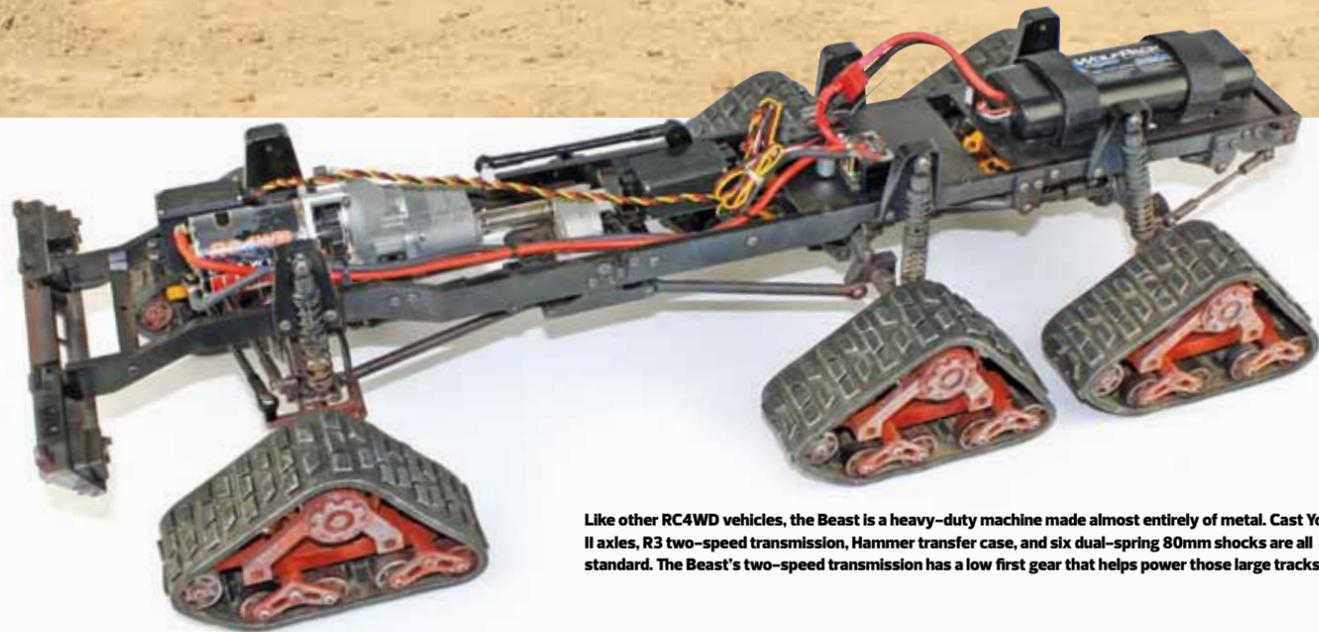


Above: Fitting the Predator tracks required only slight modification. Shortening the rear links 43mm provides enough space for both rear tracks.

Below: A combination of Star Wars model kits and parts from a 1/48 scale F-14 Tomcat model kit were used to fill the bed with simulated scrap.



"Over here! Over here!" Pipe down Threepio, those Jawas just want you for their yard sale. While not accurate to scale of the vehicle, the 3.75-inch figures look great posed next to this massive truck.



Like other RC4WD vehicles, the Beast is a heavy-duty machine made almost entirely of metal. Cast Yota II axles, R3 two-speed transmission, Hammer transfer case, and six dual-spring 80mm shocks are all standard. The Beast's two-speed transmission has a low first gear that helps power those large tracks.

The detail RC4WD packs into the hard plastic body is amazing. Painting and weathering the hard body with Tamiya acrylic paints goes a long way to make it look more realistic.



Ready for duty. Good luck finding those droids you're looking for.



Imperial Patrol Buggy

The Imperial troops always had more polished-looking rides than what the Rebels had to make do with, so this blacked-out buggy is inspired by the sinister look of TIE pilots and, of course, Darth Vader. It's built on a Tamiya Mad Fighter, a great kit for beginners that features a simple and tough chassis with an injection-molded body that makes it a perfect choice for adding sci-fi details. I added side pods made from the intakes of a 1/48 scale F-14 Tomcat model, and the extra detail behind the pods are actually Pro-Line scale batteries painted gunmetal grey. The rear winglets are more Tomcat parts and were easy to fit to the existing rear cage using instant glue.

The weapons on the top of the rear cage came from a Star Wars toy that also provided the Imperial pilot figure that drives it. "Aren't you a little short for a Stormtrooper?" Not this guy—the figure is a larger seven-inch version from Hasbro's Hero Mashers line, the perfect size for a 1/10 scale build. To fit the driver inside the body, he needed to be cut at the waist using a rotary tool and then glued with a hot gun to the chassis.

To give the suspension a different look and proportions more befitting a full-scale vehicle, I replaced the stock friction shocks with Pro-Line PowerStroke Scaler shocks. I modified the front shocks by removing the larger of the dual springs to expose much more of the threaded shock bodies. Tamiya TS satin black spray paint on the body and wheels pulls everything together to give the car a mean attitude, perfect for intimidating Rebel scum.

PARTS LIST

HASBRO
hasbro.com
Star Wars Hero Mashers Imperial Pilot; \$8

PRO-LINE
prolineracing.com
Scale Accessory Assortment #6; 6074-00, \$23
Micron 2.2" MC (Clay) Off-Road Buggy Rear Tires; 8249-17, \$25
Micron 2.2" MC (Clay) Off-Road Buggy Front Tires; 8239-17, \$22
Velocity VTR 2.2" 2WD Hex Front White Wheels; 2735-04, \$7
Velocity VTR 2.2" 2WD Hex Rear White Wheels; 2736-04, \$7
PowerStroke Scaler Shocks (90mm-95mm); 6060-00, \$52

REVELL
revell.com
1/48 F-14A Tomcat Plastic Model Kit; 85-5803, \$15

TAMIYA
tamiyausa.com
Mad Fighter 2WD Buggy Kit; 58275, \$105

Tamiya's Mad Fighter beginner buggy looked a lot different before the build began.



Above: The Mad Fighter's large front bumper was shaved off, and the Pro-Line Scaler shocks' long springs were removed to reveal more of the threaded bodies.



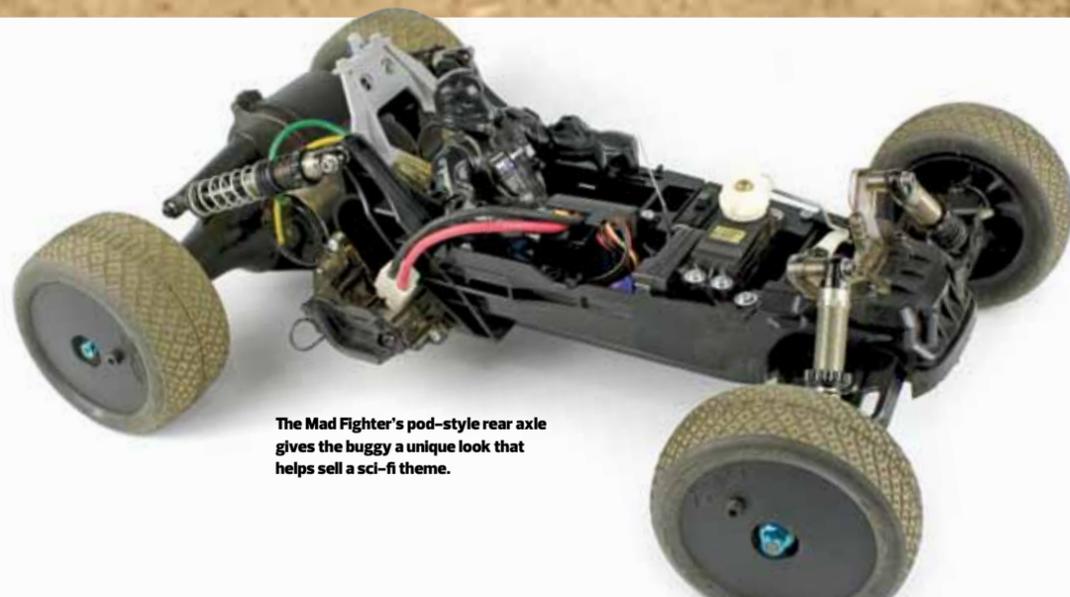
Below: The Mad Fighter's hard plastic body makes it easy to glue on detail parts. Intakes from an F14 Tomcat, toy parts, and Pro-Line scale accessories transform the car.



Above: Pro-Line's PowerStroke Scaler shocks look killer.

Below: Pro-Line's Electron tires have a futuristic look. A hex bolt was added to break up the smooth face of the Velocity dish wheels.

Left: The pilot is a Star Wars toy cut at the waist (just like Darth Maul!) and hot-glued into place.



The Mad Fighter's pod-style rear axle gives the buggy a unique look that helps sell a sci-fi theme.



Too bad Dak got laser-blasted and stepped on by an AT-AT. He would have loved driving the Snow Runner.



Rebel Snow Runner

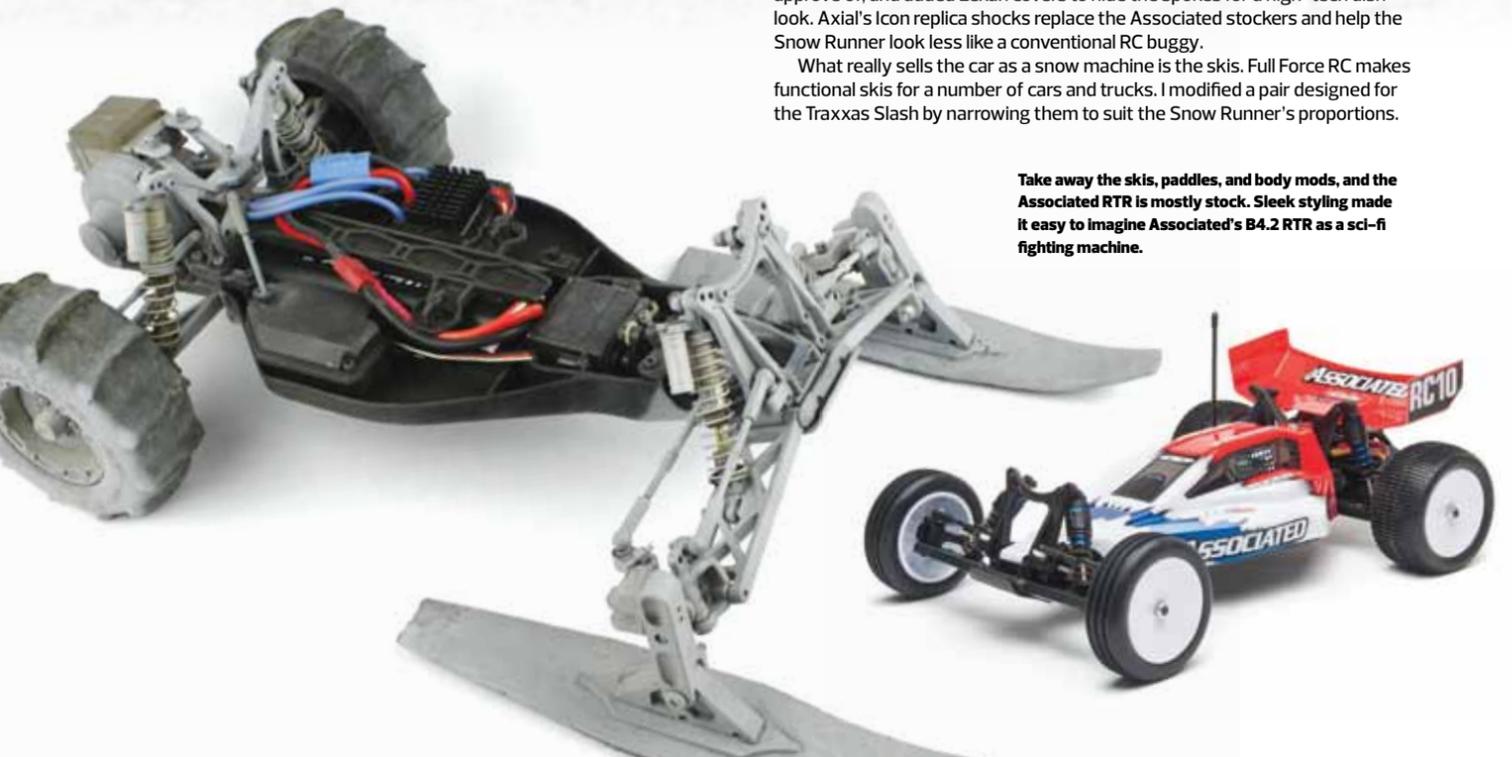
The *Empire Strikes Back* brought us some of the Star Wars universe's most iconic vehicles. The Rebel snowspeeder features prominently in the crowd-pleasing battle of Hoth, and inspired this Team Associated B4-based build. Using the B4.2 RTR buggy as my starting point, I began by removing the stock stickers and cutting out the windows so I could put a Rebel pilot figure in the cockpit. I painted the body

gray on the outside, then applied Kyosho Micron line tape to simulate panel lines. More plastic parts from the F14 Tomcat used on the other builds were screwed and glued to the body, and I added a little color to some of the panel areas. The Tomcat's wings were put to work to create snowspeeder-like sides for the stock Lexan shell.

Paddle tires were the obvious choice for a snow machine, so I mounted Pro-Line Sling Shot SC treads on JConcepts Tense 2.2 rims. I chose these rims because their hub and rim detailing look like something Luke Skywalker would approve of, and added Lexan covers to hide the spokes for a high-tech dish look. Axial's Icon replica shocks replace the Associated stockers and help the Snow Runner look less like a conventional RC buggy.

What really sells the car as a snow machine is the skis. Full Force RC makes functional skis for a number of cars and trucks. I modified a pair designed for the Traxxas Slash by narrowing them to suit the Snow Runner's proportions.

Take away the skis, paddles, and body mods, and the Associated RTR is mostly stock. Sleek styling made it easy to imagine Associated's B4.2 RTR as a sci-fi fighting machine.



PARTS LIST

AXIAL RACING
axialracing.com
Icon 61-90mm Aluminum Shock Set - 7mm piston (2pcs); AX30103, \$47

FULL FORCE RC
fullforcerc.com
2WD Ski Kit; RS090, \$55

HASBRO
hasbro.com
Star Wars Hero Mashers Rebel Pilot; \$8

JCONCEPTS
jconcepts.net
Tense wheel for Slash 2.2"/3.0" wheel; 3324, \$11

KYOSHO
kyoshoamerica.com
Micron tape 1mm x 5m; 1841BK; 44

PRO-LINE
prolineracing.com
Scale Accessory Assortment #5; PRO 6073-00, \$23
Scale Accessory Assortment #6; 6074-00, \$23
Sling Shot SC 2.2"/3.0" Tires; 1158-00, \$25

REVELL
revell.com
1/48 F-14A Tomcat™ Plastic Model Kit; 85-5803, \$15

TEAM ASSOCIATED
teamassociated.com
RC10B4.2RS 1/10 Electric Buggy RTR; ASC9042, \$250



Panel lines, model kit parts, and a matte Rebel-style paint scheme transform the B4 body. With a bit of paint, Pro-Line's scale power inverter becomes extra "tech stuff" for the Snow Runner's body.



Above: The Full Force snow skis needed to be cut down to better match the proportions of the B4 body.

Left: Axial's replica Icon shocks include non-functional reservoirs for an extra level of detail.



Hasbro came through again with a great Rebel Pilot. I hit him with flat clear Tamiya TS spray and a wash of black to bring out the detail.



Pro-Line's Sling Shots work great on sand and snow. Tamiya grey primer gives them a weathered look.