



Keith Pruitt

# Model Kit Report

## Zorro Rides Again

**Atlantis Models' Zorro brings a classic model kit back to life.**

From the darkness of the Colonial California night, a masked man, dressed all in black and riding a jet black stallion, bursts on the scene. The rider dismounts in a flash, moonlight glinting off his sword, ready to engage the villainous oppressors of the people. With deftness, precision and incredible speed, he dispatches his foes with ease. He then turns and whips his sword back and forth, marking the nearby wall with his characteristic signature—Z. The great defender, Zorro, has once again saved the day.

Atlantis Models ([www.atlantis-models.com](http://www.atlantis-models.com)) is a relatively new manufacturer of plastic model kits, including Science Fiction, Wildlife Subjects, Historical Figures and Limited Edition Kits. Atlantis Models' most recent release is a reissue of the famous Zorro model kit. This kit was originally produced by Aurora Models in 1965, and collectors, seeking a rare original kit in mint condition, can expect to pay as much as \$500. It appears that the parts in this model kit, including the box art, are based on the 1959 Walt Disney series, which starred Guy Williams as Zorro.

For those baby boomers who grew up during the height of an adventure series such as Zorro, building a kit of the masked crusader could be a treasured memory from their youth. These are the same aspiring scale modelers who gladly saved their allowances for weeks to buy many of the Aurora figure model kits, including Zorro. At the time there wasn't much concern about the seams between the parts or the absolutely correct paint colors, as the only thing that was important was the finished hero, astride his gallant rearing steed, brandishing the all-important sword.

Most kits from the 1960's suffered from less-than-perfect parts fit, leaving seams and gaps that would detract



from the realism of the finished model. Atlantis Models' Zorro is really little different in that respect. The figure of Zorro actually has good fit, requiring only a bit of filling and sanding on a few of the seams. The horse is not quite as fortunate. Basically, it consists of right and left body halves, the four inside parts forming the legs, chest piece, belly piece and the two halves of the tail.

Most, if not all, of these seams need some work. Considering the head of the horse is likely to gain the most



Stretched sprue adhered by fast-setting Tenax-7R was used to fill the gaps in the seams around the horse's chest and legs. For photographic clarity, white was used but normally black sprue would be used instead.



attention and has some delicately molded detail, careful fitting there is the best choice, leaving the seams on the back and stomach area to be filled with putty, such as Squadron White or Green Putty, sanded to smooth to blend the surface.

The gaps around the chest and belly pieces present bigger challenges. Stretched sprue from the kit would likely be the best choice to fill these gaps, followed by putty and sanding. Black sprue on black parts would be hard to see, so for the purpose of photographic clarity, white sprue was used on the review model to fill the major gaps. Since these particular joints are curved, the chosen method was to use a fast-set-



*Filling seams is not the most glamorous part of building any kit, but it is a vitally important step for a properly finished piece.*

ting plastic welder like Tenax-7R by Hebcoc, moving along the seam while bending the sprue to match the curvature and gluing a short section at a time. The seam between the haunches, underneath the horse's tail, was a bit too wide even for stretched sprue, so some .020 sheet plastic from JMD Plastics was cut to shape and fitted into the gap.

Both Gunze-Sangyo Mr. Surfacer 500 Spray Primer and Tamiya Gray Fine Surface Spray Primer were used for the primer coats. Filling seams is not the most glamorous part of building any model, as it is nothing more than fill-sand-prime-repeat as necessary, but it is a vitally important step for a properly finished piece. While this process was going on, the base was finished by painting with earthtone colors,



*The saddle was first sprayed with Model Master Leather. The silver trim is self-adhesive Bare-Metal Chrome metal foil.*

using a wash of thinned dark brown acrylic paint and finally drybrushing the raised detail with lightened base colors. The Zorro nameplate can be painted in any variety of contrasting or complimentary colors, but this sample was painted flat black and then drybrushed with brass color to create the appearance of a metallic plaque. The nameplate can be attached anywhere on the base or placed in front of the finished model.

When finishing a model with only one basic color, black in particular, there are a number of ways to break up the monotone color scheme. Using Testors Model Master Flat Black and Semigloss Black enamels for different sections and some other selected colors for painting details will pro-

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vide enough difference in shade to make the model more realistic in appearance.

Highlights are another challenge. Usually the base color, lightened with white, is airbrushed or drybrushed on the high points of the molded detail to bring them out. With flat black, lightening the base color with white and drybrushing is more likely to make it appear that Zorro rode a zebra instead of an Andalusian horse. By mixing Gunship Gray with Flat Black, at an 18 to 82% ratio, a slightly better choice for subtle highlights is provided when airbrushed on the horse.

For the Zorro figure, Model Master Euro I Gray was used at the same ratio to drybrush highlights on the clothing. For variety, the cape, hat, boots, gloves, sash, and scabbard were all painted semigloss black. The face was painted tan and drybrushed with progressively lighter shades to bring out the details from the shadow areas. The saddle and bridle were painted with Model Master Leather, again for color variety. The silver trim of the saddle, bridle, reins, and scabbard were done with self-adhesive Bare-Metal Chrome metal foil. The blade of the sword was painted with Alclad Chrome, which gives a wonderful gleam to the business end of Zorro's weapon. Final assembly is accomplished by gluing all the subassemblies together.

Atlantis Models Zorro is a wonderful model kit, and one that's been missing from hobby shops for too many years. With the outstanding details and the potential for any scale modeler to create a nice display piece, this one surely will not last long on your shelf. **HM**



The base was finished using a variety of earth tones. The Zorro nameplate was first sprayed flatblack and then dry-brushed with brass to create the appearance of a metallic plaque.