

THE ART OF SHIP BUILDING

To get the most out of Battlefleet Gothic you will need some spaceships and a tabletop battlefield to fight over. Collecting your own fleet and modelling celestial phenomena, such as planets, moons and asteroid fields, is a rewarding pursuit in its own right, and surprisingly easy to achieve once you gain a little experience. This section of the book is dedicated to useful tips and advice about modelling and painting, plus some ideas on what colour schemes and special techniques to use.

COLLECTING & PAINTING A FLEET

One of the joys of collecting model spaceships is that they are relatively straightforward to assemble and paint in comparison to most other miniatures. A starting fleet can comprise as few as four or five ships, which will give you enough to start fighting with and provides a 'core' force that can be expanded at your leisure. How big your fleet ultimately grows is up to you, but it's usually best to work gradually and set achievable goals (eg, I'll get another battleship when I've finished these cruisers).

The first thing to do is decide which fleet to collect. Die-hard gamers will want to collect whatever fleet suits their fighting style and will make their decision after exhaustive studies of characteristics, points values and other technicalities. Other collectors will be persuaded by the actual ship designs or colour schemes used by the different races, selecting the one they find most pleasing to the eye. Others still will be drawn to the fleet which matches the armies they have already collected in Warhammer 40,000 or Epic 40,000. However you choose your fleet it's worth pointing out that there is no reason not to collect more than one race, indeed many players prefer to have two opposed forces so that they can use them to introduce new players to the game.



"It was this big I tell you!" Nelson declared to the incredulity of his fellow gamers. **Left to right:** Nelson, Gav Thorpe, Richard Baker, Adrian Wood, Guy Carpenter & Andy Chambers.

PAINTING YOUR MODELS

PREPARATION

Before you start painting a model, you need to do a little preparation. First, check the model for stray pieces of metal (known as flash) as well as tabs that may have been put on the model as a result of the casting process. Then use a modelling knife or file to trim off any fine mould lines. Next, glue the model to its base. Note that if you want a clear base and are using sprays to undercoat your model, you'll have to leave the base off while undercoating.

UNDERCOATING

Once you've assembled and cleaned up your model, it is ready to be undercoated. An undercoat is usually black or white and seals the metal or plastic, giving you a better surface to paint onto.

You don't have to use an undercoat, but we find that you'll get better results if you do.

Undercoating a model is straightforward, just paint on a layer of black or white paint (depending on whether your final ship colour will be dark or light). Spray paints can be used to speed this up and give a more even finish, and the Citadel black and white sprays are designed specifically for this.



When spraying, do so in a well ventilated area, preferably outdoors, as the fumes can be dangerous to inhale. Also, don't hold the can too close to the model, as this will fill in the surface detail. Remember when undercoating that two light coats of undercoat are better than one heavy coat because the detail on a model will show up better if there is less paint on it.

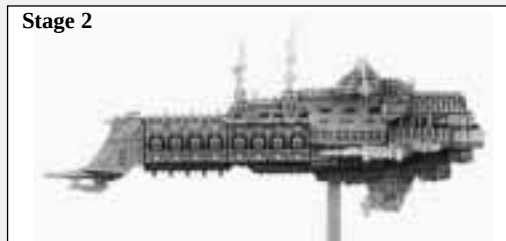
You don't need much equipment to start painting – a couple of brushes, glue, a modelling knife and some paint – available to buy either as individual pots or as part of Citadel paint sets.



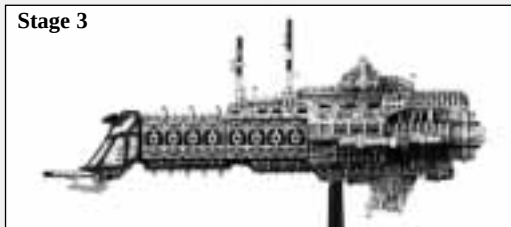
Stage 1



Stage 2



Stage 3



Stage 4



PAINTING IMPERIAL CRUISERS

To paint this Imperial Cruiser, we used several coats of different spray paints. With short, light bursts, the sprays were used to paint the upper edges of the detail, but should not be allowed to settle in the recesses. Alternatively, you could drybrush these highlights on.

Stages 1 & 2: The ship was undercoated with black spray and highlights were added with light coats of Shadow Grey and then white spray.

Stage 3: Skull White was drybrushed (see next page for details) onto detail. Any areas that were going to be painted metal were then painted with Chaos Black.

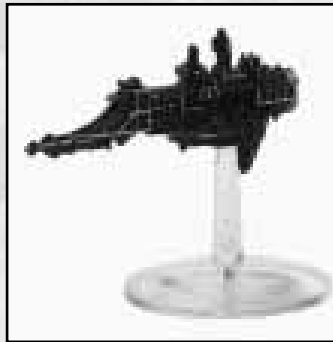
Stage 4: The guns and antennas were painted with Chainmail, while Shining Gold was used on the banding and other details. The prow and other areas (as shown) were painted with Dark Angels Green and given some light Snot Green highlights. Finally the lights were painted Blood Red.

PAINTING

Once the undercoat is dry, you can start to paint the model in the colours you have chosen. Make sure that the colours you are going to use are appropriate for the different areas of the vessel. For example, if you were painting metal, you would use a metallic colour, such as Mithril Silver or Chainmail. Paint each area as neatly as you can, but don't fret if you make a mistake – you can go over any stray brush strokes later.

HIGHLIGHTING

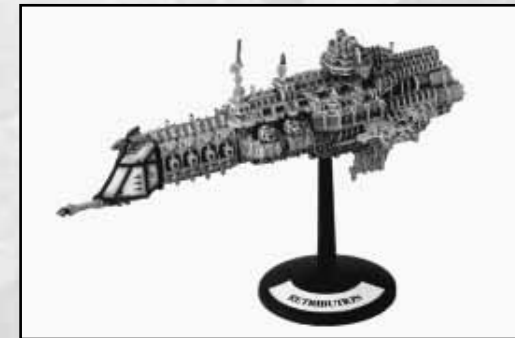
A good way to paint spaceships is by highlighting their detail with a technique known as drybrushing. To drybrush, put some paint on your brush and then using quick strokes across some cloth or paper, wipe almost all of it off again. Then gently stroke the brush back and forth across the model. The paint will adhere to the raised areas, creating areas of light and shadow. Like undercoating, it's better to use several light layers of drybrushing rather than one thick one. It may not look like it is working straight away, but don't be tempted to load too much paint on the brush.



SHIPS' BASES

There are several different ways you can deal with ship bases. Firstly you can simply leave them as clear plastic. Secondly you can paint them black so they will be less noticeable against a black table (if you spray your ships black, the bases will already be painted). Thirdly you can jazz up black bases by dotting stars on them with Skull White paint.

The names of capital ships can be shown by sticking on a name label or painting the ship's name straight onto the base.



PAINTING CHAOS SHIPS

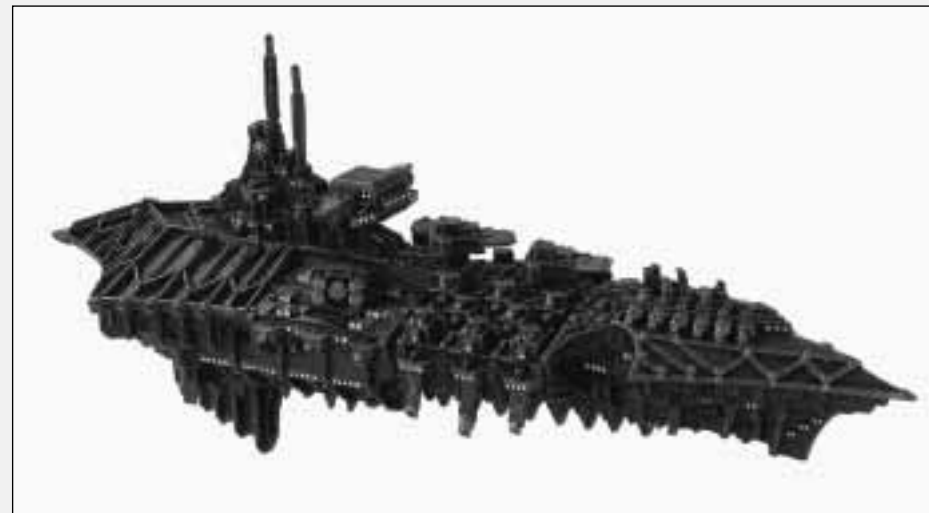
This Chaos cruiser uses similar painting methods to the Imperial ship on the opposite page. Rather than using sprays to achieve the different levels of highlighting, drybrushing has been used for each stage to give a variety of different reds. Like the Imperial cruiser, this Chaos ship has had a Black spray undercoat.

Stage 1: The whole ship was drybrushed with Red Gore.

Stage 2: Blood Red was then drybrushed over the Red Gore.

Stage 3: Next, Blazing Orange was used to highlight the most raised areas, using a very light drybrush coat. The guns and banding were painted Chaos Black, as this gives a better base colour for metallic paints.

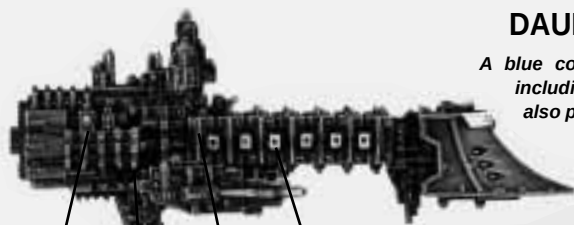
Stage 4: Details on the ship were painted using Boltgun Metal for its guns, a mix of Tin Bitz and Shining Gold for the banding and Bad Moon Yellow to represent windows and lights.



IMPERIAL COLOUR SCHEMES

DAUNTLESS CLASS LIGHT CRUISER

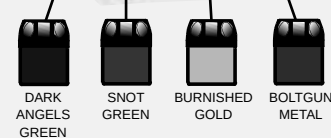
A blue colour scheme has been used all over this vessel, including on the armoured banding and engines. You could also pick out details in Mithril Silver, such as the guns, as an alternative.



For this scheme, you can vary the secondary colours on the banding. Pick a bold colour that contrasts strongly with the white, such as a dark blue, or purple. The bridge and gun decks could be detailed in a different colour as well.

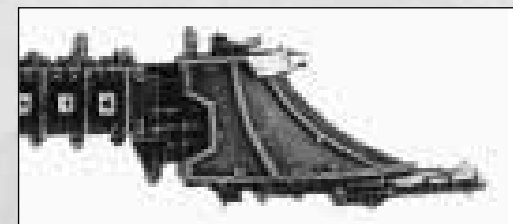


To add individuality to the ships in a fleet painted this colour, you could always swap the colouring of the banding and weapons, so that the banding is silver and the weapons batteries and ram are painted a gold colour.



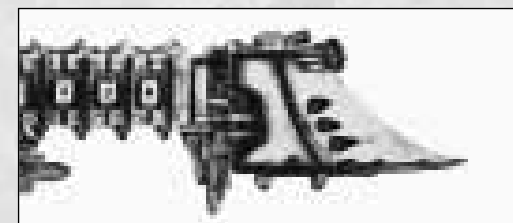
Most ships in a battlefleet will be painted in a mixture of different colour schemes because they have been collected together from different parts of the sector or galaxy. However, this may mean your fleet looks a bit cobbled together and eclectic. An alternative is to choose only one colour scheme for your fleet, which will give it a more coherent, uniform appearance on the tabletop.

When choosing a colour scheme for a fleet it is important to consider the overall look. For example, you could choose to paint all your ships just in blue. But if you paint all the ships only in blue then the fleet may start to get a bit boring, not only to look at but also for you to paint. A good way to add some individuality to the fleet is by emphasising certain parts, such as painting the banding on all your battleships in white. This way you can make each ship look individual, without the fleet looking cobbled together.



Above: Prow lance variant.

Below: Torpedo tubes



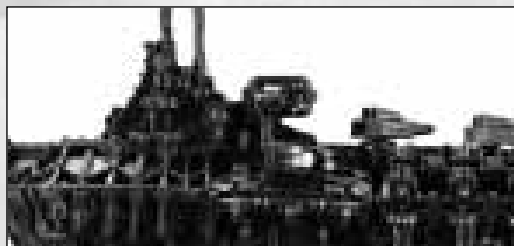
CHAOS COLOUR SCHEMES

The more menacing and brooding a Chaos fleet is, the better it looks on the tabletop. Intense, bloody reds such as Blood Red, as well as black, are great for this – try not to use too much black or you might not be able to see your ships on the table!

Gold, bronze and brass contrast well with red and black, and can be used on engines, ribbing, probes and the weapons instead of silver.

Other ideas include painting totally metallic ships using colours such as Brazen Brass and Beaten Copper. The trick here is not to make them look too shiny.

Top Tip: Chaos ships are generally even older than their Imperial adversaries, and poorly kept. You can reflect this with areas where paint has been stripped away by centuries of battle damage to show the metal underneath.



Above & Below: Close up shots of the bridge and gun batteries.



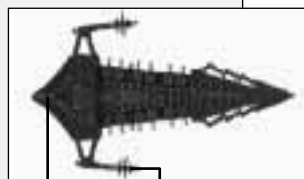
BLOOD
RED



BAD MOON
YELLOW



Above: Bad Moon Yellow has been used on this heavy cruiser to give the impression of lights, or massive windows.



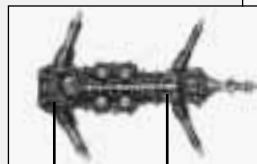
BOLTGUN
METAL



MITHRIL
SILVER



Above: Silver has been used to pick out this battleship's sensor arrays and weapons.

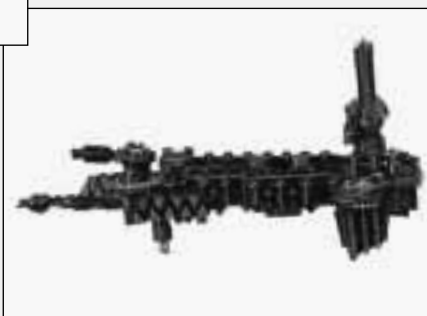


SCAB
RED



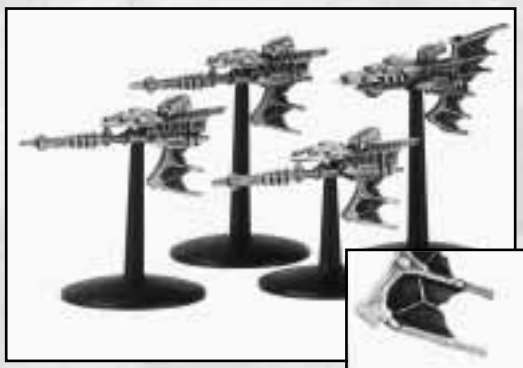
LICHE
PURPLE

Right: These escorts show that a bold contrast colour can be used to enhance the look of a ship.



PAINTING SQUADRONS

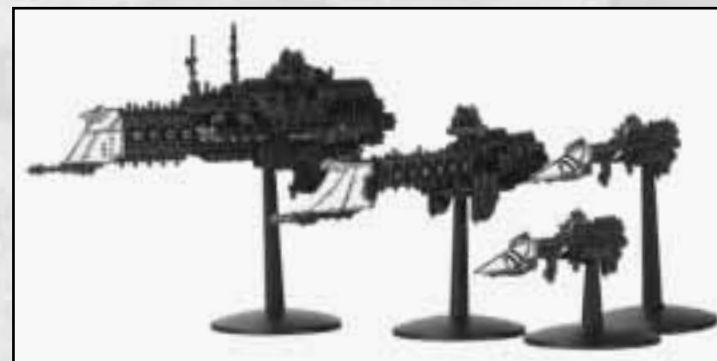
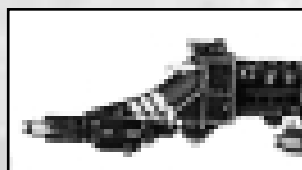
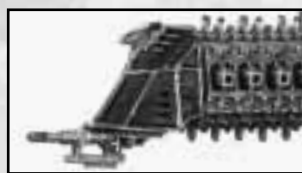
In *Battlefleet Gothic* most ships are often used in squadrons. By adding squadron markings to your ships, you can vary the colour scheme of your fleet, giving each squadron a character and identity of its own, just like with the larger ships. Painting your ships in squadrons also helps to speed up your painting, so it doesn't take as much time to ready your fleet for battle. On this page you'll find some ideas for different squadron markings you can use.



The best way to deal with squadrons is to paint them all together. This will ensure that the squadron's colours come out pretty much the same on all the ships and give them a unified feel. As well as getting the colours the same, it is usually a good idea to use some sort of special markings to show that the ships belong to a particular squadron.

There are various different squadron markings you can use, some of which are shown above and to the right. You can vary the number of stripes on a ship's prow to show its squadron, or use different colours to distinguish between your various squadrons.

You can also use other markings such as coloured spots, crosses, diamonds, etc, depending on how steady your hand is. Different areas of the ship could be painted in a squadron colour, such as on the frigates shown to the far right.



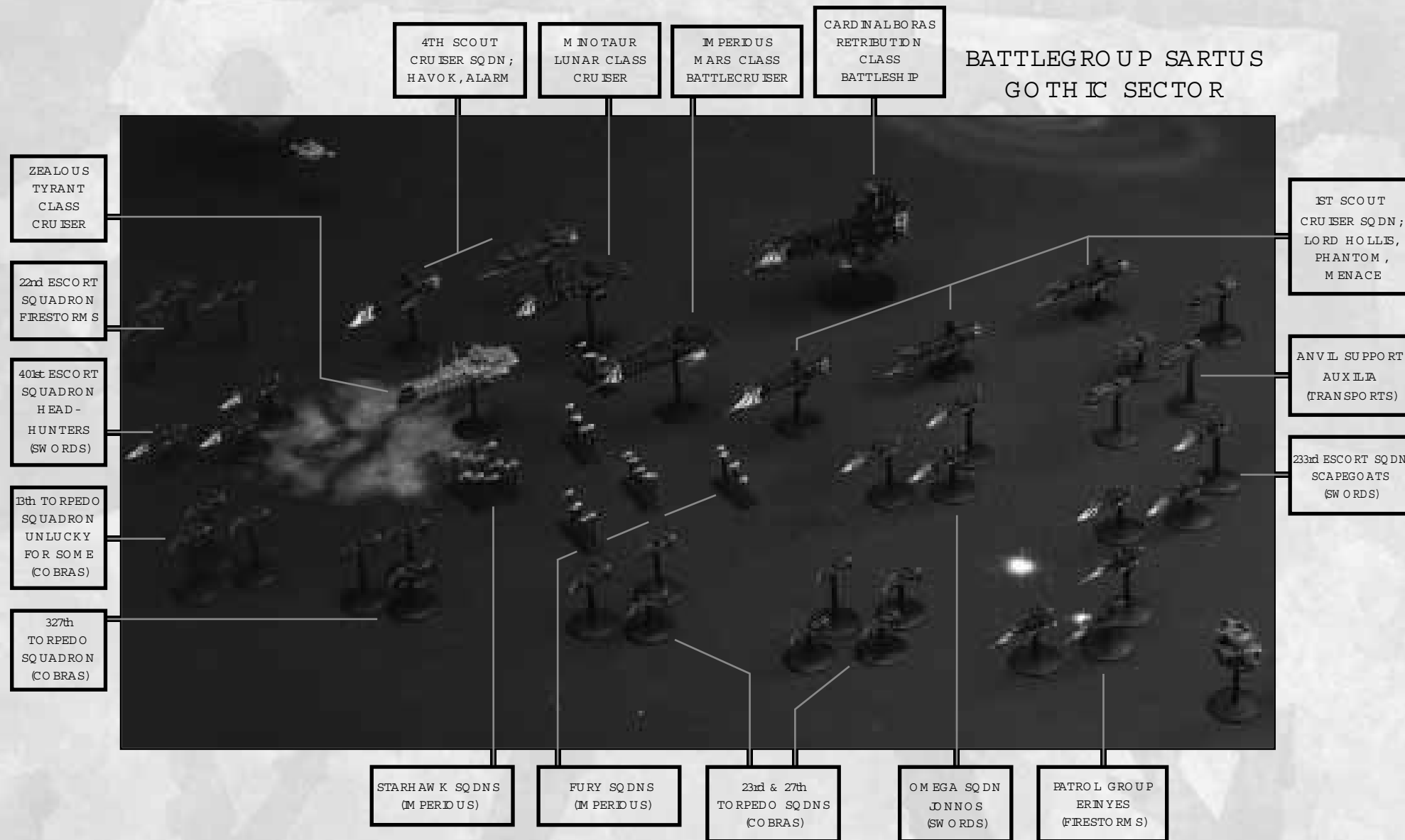
In this case the whole prow on the two capital ships has been painted white to signify them being part of the same squadron. The two escorting Sword class Frigates also have white prows to show they are from the same battlegroup, but with green stripes to show they are from another squadron.



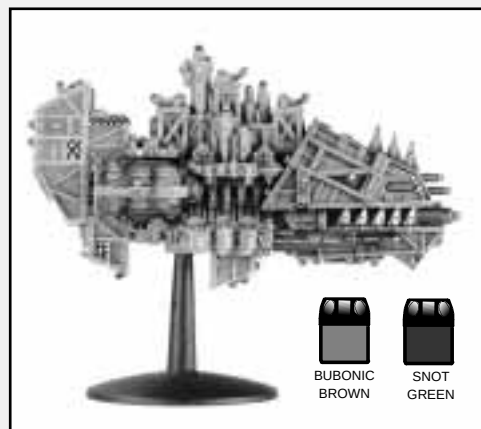
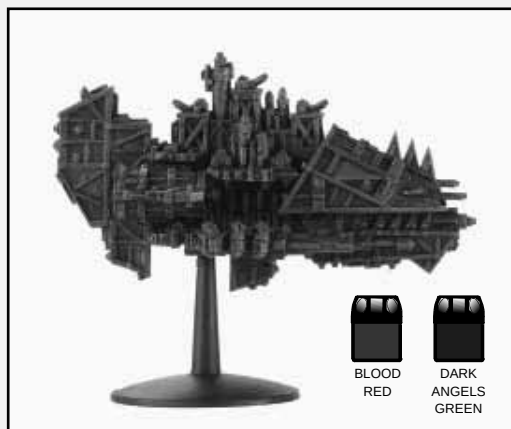
Using different coloured prows or fins is a good way of adding extra colours to your fleet colour scheme.



BATTLEGROUP SARTUS GOTHIC SECTOR

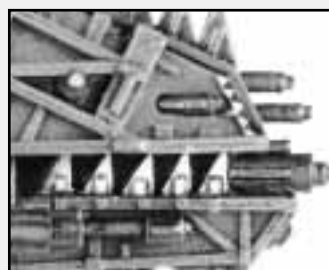
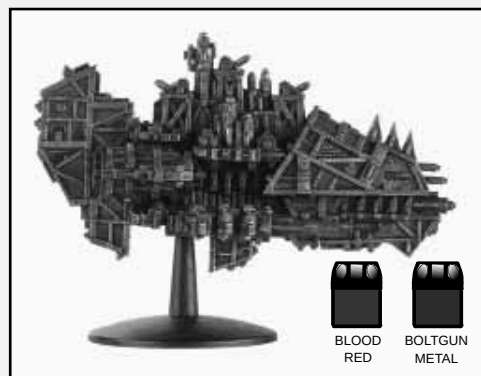


ORK SHIPS AND COLOUR SCHEMES



Above: Close-up of checked markings.

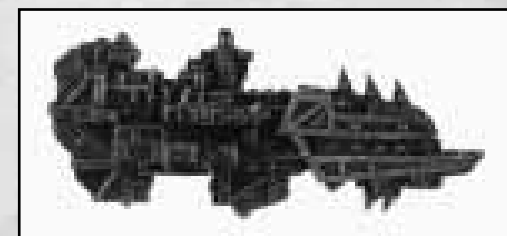
Below: It's worth paying a bit of extra time and attention to the vicious, face-like prow of the Ork Kill Kroozer.



There are two main approaches to painting an Ork fleet. The first is to paint them in corroded metal colours, with only the odd band of patterning or detail of bright colour. The type of patterning that Orks use includes dags, checks and other similar markings, some of which are shown on this page.

The alternative is to paint your Ork ships in the brash, defiant colours that Orks love so much – greens, reds and yellows. Again, you can use contrasting patterns and splashes of colour to add variety to your fleet and your painting routine.

Whichever look you prefer, remember that Orks are brutal, no-nonsense warriors, and a subtle mix of blended colours just wouldn't fit. Your spaceships should be like the Orks themselves – loud and proud!



Above: The fearsome profile of a Savage Gunship.

Below: You can use checks and triangles (often called 'dags') or single colour stripes to brighten up your Ork ships. Although the patterns shown here are black & white, you can use other colours, such as green & yellow, red & yellow, or red & white instead.



ELDAR SHIPS AND COLOUR SCHEMES

Eldar ships are almost the total opposite of Orks and are exactly the things to use a mixture of subtly blended colours on. As you can see from the different schemes here, they don't need rigid 'uniform' colours like other races as the Eldar fleet is a collection of adventurers, pirates and corsairs from across the galaxy. This doesn't mean that you can't paint squadrons of ships using the same colour or even use a single colour to unify the whole fleet though. However, even with several ships of the same colour you can introduce subtle variations of tone or detail that set them apart from each other.

Using Inks

Using inks over a white undercoat is a quick way of attaining an effective, subtle paint scheme which suits Eldar ships well.

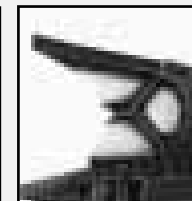
An ink wash is easy to apply – simply paint the ink over the ship, allowing it to run off the raised areas and settle in the detail, creating instant shading. You can use paint thinned down with a little water instead of inks if you wish. The most important thing to remember with inks is to give them plenty of time to dry, longer than paint, otherwise your next colour will mix with the ink and create a mess. This is probably all you need in the way of shading, or you might like to create more contrasting highlights using drybrushing.



These Eldar ships show a wide range of colour schemes for an Eldar fleet – everything from Midnight Blue to Bleached Bone. The organic design of the ships is shown to best effect with some drybrushing with paint mixed from the original base colour and some Skull White.



Top Tip: It's best to avoid using too much metallic paint on Eldar ships. Guns, probes etc, look better painted a contrasting colour, or painted white and then painted with inks to give them an opalescent finish like the sails shown below.

LICHE
PURPLESCORPION
GREENBUBONIC
BROWNSCALY
GREEN

THE TABLETOP

TYPES OF GAMING SURFACE

You can play Battlefleet Gothic on any flat, horizontal surface – a table, the floor, etc. But to get the best out of your battles you can create your own gaming surface in a number of different ways.

First, and most definitely the simplest method of all, is to get hold of a black cloth or several sheets of art paper (ie, cheap, coloured paper) to cover your playing surface.

If you've already got a gaming board for Warhammer 40,000 or another game another quick way of creating a playing surface for Battlefleet Gothic is to paint the reverse side of the board black so that you can flip it over whenever you need it!

For consummate professionals, the ideal playing surface is a fully painted black board including airbrush painted nebulas and stars!



Above: Painting a gaming board black (less boring if you use a big brush).

STELLAR ENGINEERING

Once you have a black playing surface the next step you can take is to liven it up with a few stars (space isn't completely empty, after all). This is easy to achieve with an old toothbrush and some Skull White paint. Dip the toothbrush in the paint and drag a thumb, pencil or paint brush handle across the bristles so that they spatter paint onto your black surface (note: be very careful not to get paint on yourself, the carpet, household pets etc – I'm not being held responsible for your clumsy mess!).

If any big blobs of paint drop onto the surface don't panic – just use a paint brush or cocktail stick to drag the blob out into a cross shape. This gives you some especially bright looking stars which can be further enhanced by dragging some more of the blob into a thin halo around the centre. If you're feeling particularly arty, you can add in reds and pale blues to give your starfield a little more depth and variety.



Above: Flicking paint from a toothbrush to produce a spattering of white dots to represent a starfield.

BLACK CLOTH WITH PAINTED STARS

Practical, portable and cheap. Black cloth is a good starting point, especially since it turns almost any table into an instant battlefield. On the down side it gets creases which can be a bit annoying during play – and can lead to the surreal sight of you ironing your battlefield before a game!



BLACK BOARD (PLAIN)

Next step up is to procure some chipboard approximately the right size and then paint it with either spray cans or emulsion paint. Painting a large piece of wood a different colour is pretty unrewarding in itself, but necessary. Wood simply isn't the same colour as outer space.



FULLY PAINTED BOARD, WITH STARS, NEBULAS... and other things!

This is a solution available only to people with airbrushes and the ability to use them, or the denizens of a design studio who can badger other people to do the hard work for them. To be honest, most of the effects can be done with light applications from spray cans.



QUICK N EASY CELESTIAL PHENOMENA

Celestial phenomena play an important part in Battlefleet Gothic. First of all, they help to make the tabletop look more interesting (a flat, black expanse looks incredibly dull). Secondly, they make for a more tactical game, affecting the movement and shooting of each fleet. Making celestial phenomena for your games can be as straightforward or complex as you want it to be. On this page are a number of ways to represent phenomena and other tabletop features with the minimum of money and effort.

TYPES OF CELESTIAL PHENOMENA

You can find the rules for different types of celestial phenomena on pages 41-48. The most common phenomena are asteroid fields and gas & dust clouds. Below are a number of easy ways to represent these types of celestial phenomena.

SIMPLE MATERIALS

Great looking celestial phenomena can be made from the simplest of resources, for example, a handful of gravel can be turned into an asteroid belt that you or your opponent can hide your ships in. Everything on this page is easily available from either a supermarket or a hobby shop (in fact, Games Workshop stores and Mail Order can provide you with modelling flock for gas and dust clouds).

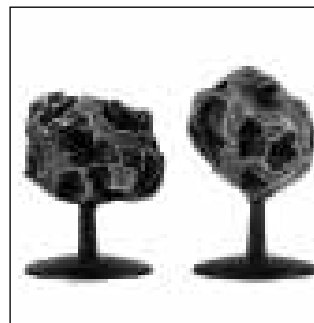
You may also find that there are other useful bits and pieces lying around the house which can be turned to good use as asteroids, moons and so on, so keep your eyes open!



Above: Asteroid fields are easy to make with a handful of pebbles, gravel, or even cat litter. Simply scatter some wherever you need it.



Above – Left: Dust clouds can be represented using a sprinkling of sand or flock. **Middle:** Cotton wool spray painted makes very authentic (and cheap!) gas clouds. **Right:** Asteroid fields can easily be created with a handful of gravel and small stones.



Left: Easy asteroids: One way that you can create larger asteroids is to stick a lump of polystyrene onto a base, carve it up a bit (asteroids are not normally a completely round shape) and then paint it using either Bestial or Bubonic Brown and drybrush with Bleached Bone to bring out the surface detail.

Right: Moons can be made by attaching a ping pong ball to a Citadel flying base and painting it with Fortress Grey.



CELESTIAL PHENOMENA WITH A BIT OF TIME & PATIENCE

If you're going to spend some time painting up your fleet, it's also worth making that little bit of extra effort when making the celestial phenomena it'll fight around. A nicely painted fleet fighting over a good-looking tabletop is one of the highlights of Battlefleet Gothic (along with crushing your enemy's fleet entirely!).

ASTEROIDS AND PLANETS

Although it may seem quite daunting to try and make terrain like the planets and asteroids shown below, it isn't as difficult as you may think.

The asteroids were roughly cut chunks of polystyrene (the dense stuff used for insulating is best as you won't get bits everywhere) which is available from any DIY shop. These were covered in textured paint (which you can buy or make by

mixing some fine grade sand with ordinary paint). The asteroids were undercoated with Bestial Brown, which was then highlighted with successive coats of drybrushing. The first highlight was with Snakebite Leather, then progressively lighter shades of brown were added by mixing in more and more Bleached Bone until the last coat was pure Bleached Bone.

The planets were just as simple to create. The smaller moons started off as table tennis balls, while the larger ones were originally spheres of a material called oasis – it's normally used for flower arranging! Like the asteroids, these were covered in textured paint to seal the globe and allow the paint to stick.

The planets below were painted by dabbing the colour on with a sponge, but cans of different

coloured spray paints or an old brush you don't need any more will do the job just as well.

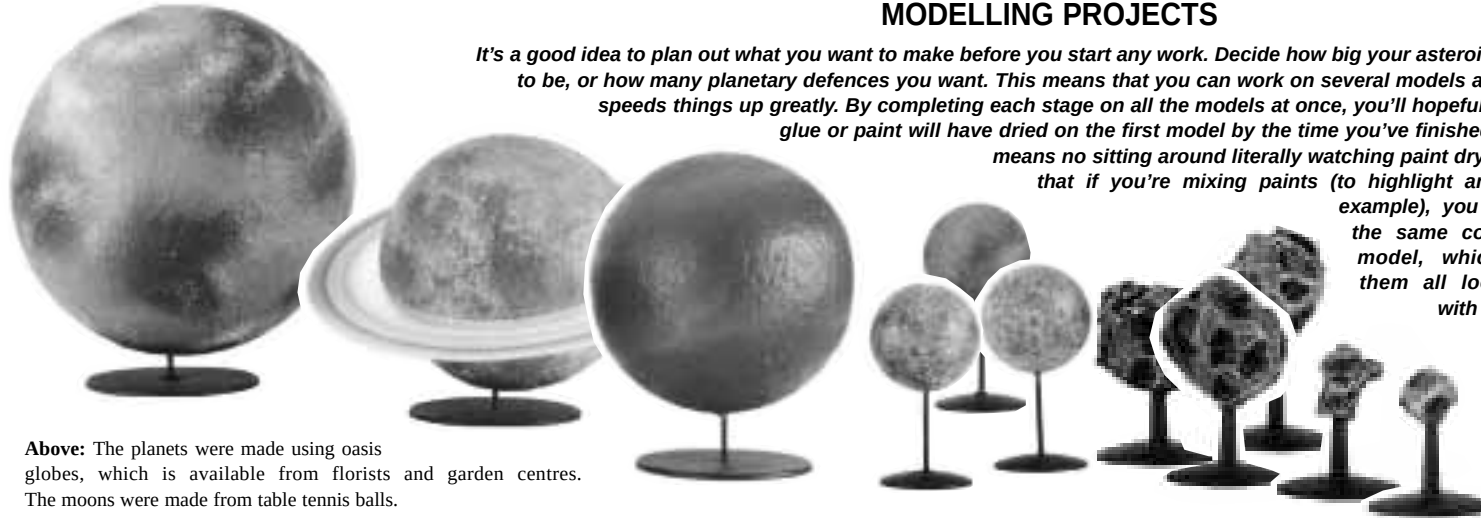
The rings were added by cutting a circle of clear plastic, and then cutting another circle out of the middle so that it fitted snugly around the planet's middle. This was then glued into place using PVA glue and then the rings were painted on.



Above: Astronomy books are a great source of ideas for making celestial phenomena.

MODELLING PROJECTS

It's a good idea to plan out what you want to make before you start any work. Decide how big your asteroid field is going to be, or how many planetary defences you want. This means that you can work on several models at a time, which speeds things up greatly. By completing each stage on all the models at once, you'll hopefully find that the glue or paint will have dried on the first model by the time you've finished the last. This means no sitting around literally watching paint dry. It also means that if you're mixing paints (to highlight an asteroid, for example), you will be using the same colour on each model, which will make them all look consistent with each other.



Above: The planets were made using oasis globes, which is available from florists and garden centres. The moons were made from table tennis balls.

Left: Asteroids made from chunks of polystyrene with craters cut into them.

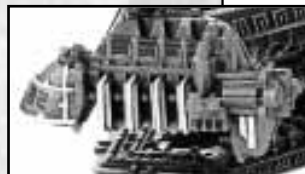
CONVERSIONS

WHAT ARE CONVERSIONS?

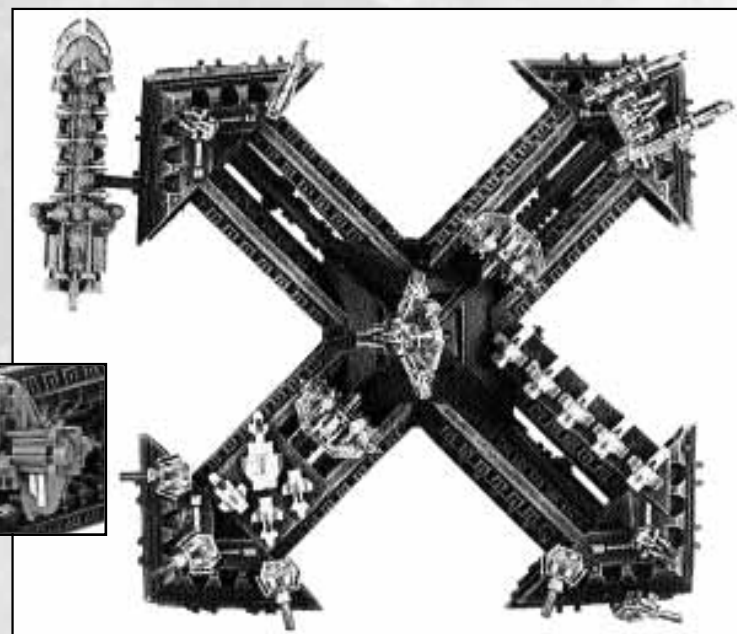
A conversion is simply a model that has been changed in some way. It can be as simple as sticking on some spare masts, or as complex as chopping up several ships and gluing the bits together to make one or more new ships. There are various different conversions on this page, which will hopefully serve as some inspiration for you. For example, the Blackstone Fortress to the right has defence turrets and launch bays added, to better represent the way the Fortresses looked when they were still under Imperial control. Wrecked ships, like the ones below, can be an interesting addition to an asteroid field or used to represent ships that have been reduced to hulks.



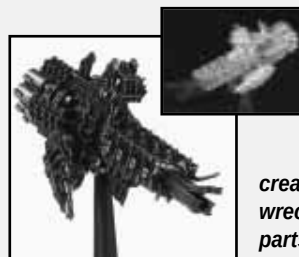
Tools like a pin vice, clippers, modelling putty (known as 'green stuff') and a modelling knife are very useful for converting models.



This transport ship has been glued to the side of the Fortress to look as if it is docking.



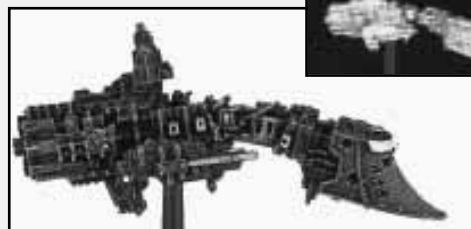
WRECKS AND HULKS



As well as chopping up perfectly good ships, you can create hulks and wrecks from the parts of the plastic cruisers that you

haven't used. You can glue these parts on to a central 'spine' made of balsa wood or plastic, to give the appearance of a battered vessel.

Note the internal structuring on these conversions.



Brass wire has been added to these ships to represent extra scanner arrays and communications antennas.

SCRATCH BUILDING

Scratch building is the pinnacle of the modeller's craft – creating something out of nothing! Whilst converting makes modifications to existing models, scratch building involves building models from a pile of bits and pieces.

Using fairly ordinary materials and a little imagination, you can build giant space stations and asteroid bases. Plastic rods and plasticard sheets are available from modelling shops, and you'll find all manner of other interesting

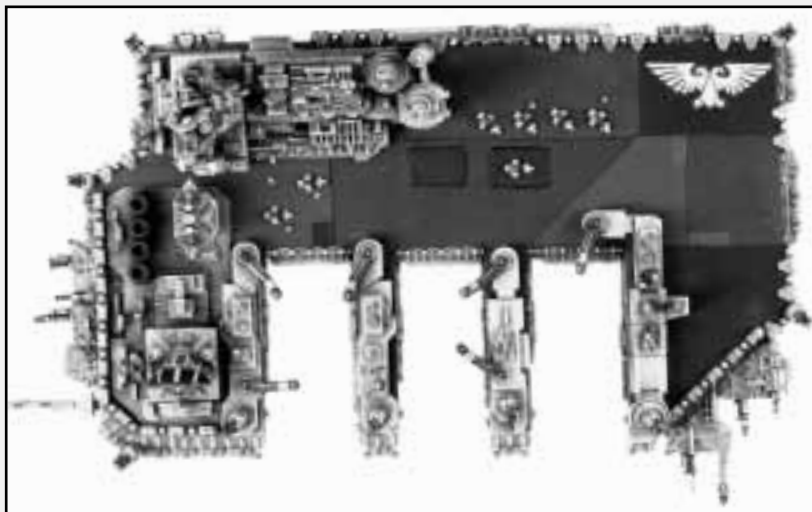
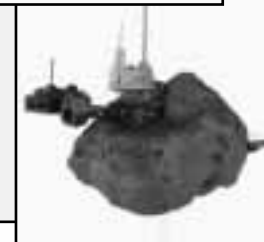
materials there, especially in the model railway department. The orbital platform below was mainly constructed using beads from a hobby shop!

Battlefleet Gothic has tremendous scope for all kinds of scratch built models, such as ground-based missile silos and ancient warp gates. The Showcase pages that follow include many models which have been converted or scratch built, including Dave Andrews' amazing space dock.

Right: You can easily turn an asteroid into an asteroid base. Add a few spare pieces of spaceships or bits from old kits and you're there. Don't be disheartened if it looks rough before you paint it, paint covers a multitude of sins.

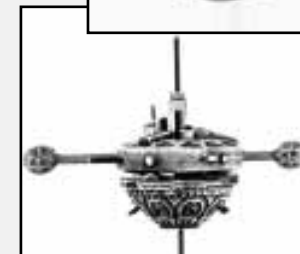


Left: Dave Andrews' scratch built space dock just goes to show what you can build out of squeeze bottles and old cereal packets when you're a talented miniatures designer!



Right: The planetary defence platform was built from a selection of beads and buttons bought at a craft store, and also uses plastic rods which are available from most model shops.

Below: Torpedoes, bombers and mines which have been put on bases to replace the markers supplied with the game. The torpedoes have been stuck directly onto the marker, whereas the bombers and mines have been mounted on Epic 40,000 infantry bases.



SHOW CASE



Left: An Ork space hulk scratch built by Andy Chambers. This monster piece (all twenty three centimetres of it!) was built from wire, polystyrene, lots of bits of spaceships, plus less identifiable detritus.

Below: Illuminator-General John Blanche has painted this Dauntless class light cruiser and Cobra destroyer in the same colour scheme he used for the cover painting for Battlefleet Gothic.

Below: This impressive Chaos battleship was scratch built by Chris Smart. Chris raided parts from Epic 40,000 miniatures for his ship.



Above: Imperial Retribution class battleship and Dauntless class light cruiser painted by their designer, Dave Andrews.

SHOW CASE



Top Right: A light cruiser and escorts painted with blue and black banding.

Above: This huge and magnificent space dock makes a splendid display piece!

Left: The turrets and other features of this converted Blackstone Fortress were left over from an Imperial cruiser plastic sprue, while the docked ship is a transport pinned into place with metal wire.

Below: Transports are often merchant vessels, so you can mix lots of different colours and markings in a squadron, adding variety to your fleet.

