



Chuck Davenport

Die Cast Report

Cretaceous Collectibles

Here's a "mini-tour" of painted models from Safari Limited and b2b Replicas.

Though not specifically within the purview of die cast, "pre-painted" collectibles offer retailers an exciting and profitable option when considering new product lines. The growth of the collectible market over the last 25 years has been atmospheric to say the least. I know of one company that left the model kit arena to focus on its burgeoning collectible pre-paint business. Other companies have joined the "already painted" party, too, offering an incredible array of product to suit the tastes of a wider customer base.

Now I'll introduce you to a line in this new genre, the Carnegie Museum of Natural History Dinosaurs, which are marketed exclusively by Safari Limited. Many shoppers have seen the open-box display of dinosaurs for children, but these are models with a difference. The models are all authentically scaled based on Carnegie Museum masters. Each model is meticulously hand painted and masterfully sculpted. Just as important, each animal is realistically posed based on current scientific knowledge.

You really notice the fidelity to detail when you start looking closely, and then the eyes get you. I mean it. I was pleasantly surprised when those eyes just popped out at me. The *Giganotosaurus* and *Tyrannosaurus rex* never met in reality as far as we know, but they make for a menacing duo in the shot in the center of this page.

These two dinosaurs are joined by a large stable of creatures from different epochs and different parts of the world. I have never seen anything like them in this scale. Made from phthalate-free polymer, these animals are sure to capture hearts and interest.



A prehistoric *Giganotosaurus* prepares to challenge a *T-rex* in an already painted lineup from the Carnegie Museum and Safari Limited.



The new Striker Fire Truck from b2b Replicas is modeled in 1/50 scale, and production is limited to 500 pieces. Order now.

Safari also has another model series called Mythical Realms. One of my favorite movies as a child was *The Minotaur*, which told the myth of the half-man, half-bull creature that roamed and terrorized the island of Crete. Naturally, I was thrilled like a 12 year-old when Safari's Mythical Realms Minotaur showed up on my doorstep. It's another one of those models that really takes you by surprise. I spotted a few metallic-looking objects as I was

composing the photo. I stopped to have a look, and found the same objects on the model. You can see these objects, too, as the metal trim at the bottom of the Minotaur's leather armor. The detail doesn't stop there.

Getting up close to the figure, I noted the presence of muscular striations in the sculpting — I'm talking some serious detail for a 4-inch figure. Currently, the Mythical Realms already-painted Minotaur is joined by a Poseidon figure and a Mermaid figure. Next I'll be bring in the dragons.

Ever on the cutting edge, b2b Replicas has the market locked on the some of the hottest series of collectible airport fire trucks in the world. In fact, earlier this year at the American International Toy Fair in New York City, TWH named b2b Replicas as its worldwide distributor for the Striker series of collectible fire trucks. The Striker Fire Truck is the follow-up to the 1/50-scale Oshkosh Striker 3000 ARFF truck.

Each model is limited to 500 pieces for each individual airport livery, like the Metro Washington Airports Authority Fire Truck shown here. The full-size truck is configured to dispense aqueous film forming foam (AFF) — that white stuff that is sprayed on airplanes and runways.

Functions and features of the Striker models include elaborate details such as a steerable first and third axles, functional suspension, roof and bumper tourits, swiveling



Half-man, half-bull, the Minotaur is now part of Safari's Mythical Realms line.

hose reels, 15 roll-up and compartment access doors, a removable extension ladder, cab interior, a chassis sprinkler system, a chrome exhaust muffler, accurate decals and a detailed diesel engine.

In 1/50 scale, it's a double-whammy for sales because O-gauge enthusiasts now have something very elegant to park on their layouts. Contact b2b as soon as you can; these models sell out very quickly and become instant high-demand collector items. **HM**